



مجلس أبوظبي للتعليم
Abu Dhabi Education Council
Education First **التعليم أولاً**



Summary Inspection Report

Emirates Private School Al Ain

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Iqraa

Emirates Private School, Al Ain

Inspection Date	5 th - 8 th November, 2012
School ID#	155
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	Ministry of Education and British
Number of Students	1,310
Age Range	3 – 20 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Nabil Khelif
School Address	School Road, Al Manaseer, Al Ain
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Introduction

The school was inspected by five inspectors. During their time in the school, they observed 86 lessons, met with school leaders, administrative staff, social workers, teachers, students and parents. Inspectors analysed the outcomes from the Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) questionnaires sent out to parents. They examined documentation relating to planning, assessment, the curriculum, admissions, finances, health and safety, maintenance and the care and protection of students.

Description of the School

The school is part of the Emirates Educational Institute and was first established in 1988. It is located within an educational zone in Al Manaseer district, Al Ain. It has three main buildings including a new purpose-built kindergarten (KG) and a number of outbuildings which are used for the older male students studying the Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum. It offers education to both male and female students between the ages of three and twenty, from KG to Grade 12. Male and female students are separated from Grade 4 onwards. Of the 1,310 students on roll, 712 are boys and 598 girls. Forty-nine different nationalities are represented by 28% Egyptian, 26% UAE, 13% Jordanian, 8% Sudanese and 5% Palestinian. Almost all, 99.05%, students are Muslim and 96.23% Arab. The school identified 70 students as being gifted or talented and 45 with special educational needs (SEN). The school is served by 178 administrative and educational staff.

The school offers a dual curriculum of MoE and what it describes as ‘a British curriculum’. Students can choose which curriculum to follow from Grade 1, and those joining the school later have to pass an entrance examination and interview, as do students moving internally from MoE to British curriculum. School fees range between 5,000 AED in KG to 9,500 AED in the upper school for MoE Curriculum and 5,000 AED and 10,500 AED in the British Curriculum, representing the relatively low earnings of the parents. Teachers’ salaries range between AED 30,000 to AED 60,000; the average being AED 42,000. The owner is the Chair of the school’s board and its members are all school employees.

The Effectiveness of the School

Band C

Grade 6

Inspectors judged Emirates Private School Al Ain to be in Band C; that is a school in need of significant improvement.

The previous inspection report recommended that the school should:

- i. Improve student behaviour.
- ii. Improve teaching and learning to cater for the full range of students' abilities, independent and co-operative learning and their creative thinking.
- iii. Review and enrich the curriculum.
- iv. Improve the role of senior and middle leaders.
- v. Redevelop the premises.
- vi. Resolve urgent health and safety issues relating to locked doors and the safe arrival and departure of buses.

The principal and staff have introduced policies and practices that have made a significant difference to the behaviour of students. This improved behaviour is having a positive impact on standards and progress. Senior leaders are now conducting regular lesson observations and providing focussed in-service training. The impact of these changes is not yet evident in the quality of teaching and learning, standards or the curriculum. These all remain unsatisfactory. The principal is aware that teachers and leaders need to gain a clear, shared understanding of what high quality teaching and learning looks like. The school's strategic plan does prioritise this issue. A new management information system is being implemented and this has the potential to provide good support for management decisions.

Standards and progress are unsatisfactory across the range of subjects offered with the exception of English, Islamic studies and social studies where they are satisfactory. Literacy and numeracy skills are sufficient for students to access the curriculum. Independent learning and thinking skills are underdeveloped. The curriculum does not engage or stimulate students' interest and its delivery is often dull and uninspiring. Work is not differentiated to meet the learning needs of all students and they have few opportunities to develop practical applications or problem-solving skills. As a result, most students do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Literacy skills in English and Arabic are variable across the school. In KG and Grades 1-3, these are mainly unsatisfactory and characterised by poor phonics teaching and a weak understanding of its requirements. An over-reliance upon repetitive chanting of letters and sounds does not meet students' needs. In

Arabic, from Grade 5 onwards, girls achieve better than boys overall across both curricula. Students can understand the meaning of text and poetry and read it with correct intonation and expression. Their written work is minimal and they are not given enough opportunities to analyse, research and write essays. Mathematics skills are not developed well enough for students to apply learning to unfamiliar situations. Science is the main subject offered at International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and A level. Some students achieve well; many make unsatisfactory progress. There are too few computers in the school and they are not used in an integrated way across the curriculum. Within Islamic studies, recitation is a strength, with students being able to memorise and follow the ‘Tilawah’ and ‘Tajweed’ rules. Students in upper grades are working at age-appropriate levels. Their knowledge of the values of the UAE, its heritage, culture and traditions is satisfactory with students knowing how the Islamic government was formed.

The British curriculum is based on a variety of textbooks. These form a disjointed curriculum which fails to engage students. This overreliance on text books, coupled with didactic teaching, does not provide opportunities for students to develop problem-solving and higher order thinking skills. The range of subjects offered at IGCSE and A level is very limited. The IGCSE data shows that pass rates and higher grades are below international expectations in all subjects. Results for 2012 are much better than those for 2011. The grade profile in external examinations is much lower than in internal exams, where all succeed with high marks. Hence internal tests lack validity and rigour and do not serve the school with a reliable indicator of either standards or progress.

Students’ personal development is satisfactory. Behaviour has improved significantly. Students generally behave well at break times and between classes. The behaviour of boys in some lessons in the upper grades and particularly in the MoE section is still not good enough. Students can explain their moral viewpoint in a reasonable way, participate enthusiastically in assemblies, and have a secure understanding of different cultures in the UAE. Students are polite, talk confidently and wish to be more engaged in the life of the school. Students respect the value of Islam and all students speak with pride about the UAE culture. Students of different nationalities get on well together. They know how to lead safe and healthy lives and are particularly aware of ‘e safety.’

Teaching is unsatisfactory. In the higher grades, most teachers’ subject knowledge is good. In a small minority of lessons, teachers use this knowledge to extend students’ understanding of the concepts involved by relating learning to real-life situations and promoting active involvement. For instance, English teachers emphasise communication well, and engage students by relating lessons

to their experiences out of school. In mathematics, they are beginning to use group work and student-led teaching methods to provide variety and interest. Students also have some opportunities to extend learning and research skills through the use of computers, but for the most part, teaching and learning methods lack the variety to interest or engage learners. Questioning techniques are often limited, with insufficient open questions to encourage higher order thinking skills or to monitor the understanding of all learners in a class. Most lessons are predominantly teacher-led and students remain passive, obediently doing as they are asked, without using their initiative. This restricts students' independence and their development of 21st century skills. In most lessons, teachers follow standard textbooks, and set the same work for the whole class. High achievers often finish quickly and spend excessive time unoccupied. Often, those who find learning difficult do not understand teachers' explanations and are unable to complete exercises. The support for students with special educational needs (SEN) is inadequate. Often, students get bored and restless because the teaching does not meet their needs, resulting in learning being disrupted for the whole class. In many lessons, support staff are under-utilised. They provide logistical support with classroom management, but do not assist with learning or behaviour modification strategies.

The curriculum is unsatisfactory for many students, particularly those in the upper grades, where it is unacceptably narrow. There is minimal or no choice for them to follow courses in creative arts, humanities or sport and no opportunities for examinations in these subjects. The lack of choice has an adverse effect on students' motivation, engagement in learning and academic progress. The school does not comply with the minimum number of teaching hours in Arabic and Islamic studies.

The learning needs of many students with SEN and those who are gifted and talented are not met. There was very little evidence in lessons of planned or delivered intervention work or additional challenge for these groups. Despite the high numbers of students who have been identified as gifted and talented, results show students achieving far less than those taking similar examinations internationally with few students achieving the higher grades. The KG curriculum, in most classes, is not appropriate for the developmental needs of young children. Teaching is didactic and for the most part children remain inactive and unstimulated because they do not have the opportunity to engage in active and creative learning processes. They have very limited access to practical resources that could enable them to learn through free choice, role play or by working in small groups. The provision of extra-curricular activities is far too thin.

The school recognises and encourages good behaviour. Parents and students say they are pleased that behaviour has improved and support the systems that are in place. Social workers have an extensive role. There has been no coordination of their work to ensure a consistency of approach, particularly in relation to students with special educational needs. There is no evidence of bullying. The school does not have a child protection policy. There is no apparent system for the school to identify and deal with suspected cases of abuse. Students' attendance is checked every morning and the school follows up with the parents on the first day. Parents feel well supported by the school and would like to have further involvement through representation on the board and through a parents' association. Older students are not fully prepared or supported to make informed decisions about their next steps in education or a career.

The original buildings are not all fit for purpose. Several classrooms and laboratories are too small for the effective delivery of the curriculum. Some are in disrepair and the outbuildings that are used as classrooms are unsuitable. The school is not compliant in several aspects: there are insufficient toilets in both KG and the rest of the school; Grade 1-3 boys have to share toilets with girls, separated only by a rattan screen; and there is overcrowding in some small classrooms. Minor maintenance and systematic cleaning are not carried out regularly. The school lacks sufficient sports and art facilities. Information and Communications Technology (ICT) facilities are inadequate. Systems to ensure the health and safety of students lack rigour. The school does not keep records of fire safety activities or of electrical maintenance. Inspectors identified one major and some minor electrical safety risks. The school does not have written procedures for storing chemicals safely. Some dangerous chemicals are kept in non-secure locations.

There is a satisfactory number of teachers and support staff. Resources in classrooms are very limited and are insufficient to support curriculum delivery. Few teachers use digital projectors effectively. The boys' section library is based in an uninviting room, with a limited stock of books and which is inaccessible for many weeks, as it is used for examinations. A good-sized girls' section library is relatively new, brightly decorated and houses three computers. An electronic cataloguing and coding system enables students to access books easily. Emergency washing facilities are not adequate in the boys' laboratories, and do not exist in the girls' section. Physical education facilities and resources are inadequate to develop appropriate skills and levels of participation. Both school canteens are poorly equipped and grimy with greasy walls and floors. Students eat their food in the playground areas. This highlights a litter problem that the

school is not addressing adequately. Not all of the school buses have seat belts and those that do are not in use.

There is no independent board to act as an objective critical support to the school leadership. Currently, all members of the board are employed by the school and there is no representation from parents or outside bodies. There is no one to provide strategic oversight or to hold the leadership to account. As a result, the leadership does not always act in a timely way to raise standards. There is a new system for tracking individual test results. This has not been used to inform strategic planning. The self-evaluation Form (SEF) is not completed until six months after the end of the academic year and leaders do not grade the school against ADEC standards. For these reasons, the school has been slow to address some of the recommendations from the previous inspection. Planned changes have not been systematically and effectively implemented. Self-evaluation is not rigorous enough and does not reflect the current reality nor the changes needed to bring about significant improvement in teaching and learning, the curriculum and assessment. The SEF relates to quantitative rather than qualitative outcomes. Financial planning is not realistic enough to improve resources to better support the curriculum and teaching and learning. As a result of all this, leadership and management does not demonstrate the capacity to bring about the needed improvements in the quality of education provided by the school.

Staff are loyal to the school, hard-working and appreciate the improvements in behaviour that have been made. Fee levels are appropriate. As the school's accommodation and resources are inadequate, the quality of teaching and student attainment and progress remain unsatisfactory and parents and students are not receiving value for money.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Ensure that planned and targeted interventions to improve teaching and learning achieve the desired outcomes and impact by:
 - i. providing high quality training for teachers on how to provide the right levels of challenge for all students, including those who have special educational needs or are gifted and talented;
 - ii. engaging students in their own learning to develop independent learning and thinking skills, asking more open and enquiring questions to deepen understanding and using assessment for to identify learning strategies;
 - iii. training teachers who observe lessons in using high quality teaching and learning criteria and providing developmental feedback; and

- iv. sharing existing good practice across both curricula and between boys' and girls' sections.
2. Strengthen the school's strategic leadership by:
 - i. widening membership of the school's board;
 - ii. ensuring that the school's self evaluation is rigorous and realistic and is used strategically to drive improvement;
 - iii. holding school leaders to account by setting clear and relevant objectives relating to key areas for improvement;
 - iv. involving the owner and other members of the board in a plan for reinvesting in improvements to accommodation and resources; and
 - v. ensuring that all school plans are focussed on improving the quality of education for all students.
3. Develop a systematic and rigorous assessment system that:
 - i. demonstrates clear progression of criteria in all core subjects;
 - ii. is understood by all teachers, students and parents;
 - iii. allows analysis of IGSCE, AS and A level examinations to inform strategic planning and offer comparisons against best international standards; and
 - iv. supports effective planning of learning that enables students of all abilities to make good progress.
4. Ensure all compliance issues, particularly those relating to students' health and safety, are addressed urgently and systems established to prevent them from re-occurring.
5. Improve students access to a broader curriculum including extra-curricular activities. So that:
 - i. KG children have a curriculum that meets their developmental needs and matches best practice;
 - ii. all students have regular access to good quality physical education, arts and humanities that support personal development, flair, talent or interest; and
 - iii. the school's links with the community and outside agencies are strengthened to heighten students' understanding of the world around them and to influence next steps in education or a career.