



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



Summary Inspection Report

Emirates Private School, Bani Yas

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Iqraa

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Inspection Date	11 th – 14 th March, 2013
School ID#	107
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	Ministry of Education
Number of Students	1677
Age Range	4 – 16 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Khaled Ismael Abu Sali
School Address	Near the Bani Yas Cooperative Building, Bani Yas
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Introduction

The school was inspected by 5 inspectors who observed 82 lessons and scrutinised students' written work. They also met school leaders, teachers, students, parents and a representative of the owner. The Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) questionnaires sent out to parents were analysed. Inspectors examined documentation relating to planning, assessment, the curriculum, health and safety, maintenance and the care and protection of students.

Description of the School

Emirates Private School, Bani Yas, opened in the late 1980s and was established in its present building in 1999. It is one of three schools of the same name owned by the same proprietor. There is no formal governing body or other supervisory Board. It was originally licensed for Kindergarten (KG) 1 - Grade 6 but has now extended to Grade 9. The school's medium of instruction is Arabic. Its stated aims are 'to graduate a generation of students who are very well-educated and with good behaviours who are to be effective citizens in their communities'.

There are 1,677 students of whom 926 are boys and 746 girls. Classes are mixed until Grade 4. Emirati students form 13% of the student population. The largest single national group comes from Yemen, 23%. There are significant smaller groups from Syria 14%, Egypt 14%, and 11% are from Sudan and Jordan. There are 22 other nationalities in the school. Students seeking admission for Grade 1 onwards, take entry tests in Arabic, mathematics and English. Student numbers have increased by 20% in this academic year and the school is now significantly overcrowded. The majority of students live close to the school and mobility is low.

The school fees range from AED 6747 in KG1 to AED 9111 in Grade 9, which is low. Most students come from relatively disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. All teachers have appropriate qualifications, but 47% of them are new to the school this year. Most of these 43 new staff are working without contracts as the applications to employ them are still being processed. Staff salaries range from AED 30,000 to AED 60,000, which are low. The school does not officially identify any students as having special educational needs or as being gifted and talented.

The Effectiveness of the School

Band C

Grade 7

Inspectors judged Emirates Private School, Bani Yas, to be in Band C, that is a school that is in significant need of improvement.

At the previous inspection the school was judged as requiring significant improvement against all Performance Standards. Two Monitoring Visits judged the school to be making poor progress. Since then there has been some minor

improvements in students' standards and progress, due to small advances in the quality of teaching. The school's self-evaluation (SEF) judged all areas of the school's performance to be good or very good. No evidence was provided to support any of these judgements, which contradict all external assessments. Leadership and management are poor. Coordinators want to improve teaching and learning, and make some attempt to support colleagues. This desire does not produce focused action because, they have little understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and were not involved in producing the school's self-evaluation form (SEF) or its improvement plan (SIP), which was prepared by a consultant. In fact these documents are unknown to coordinators or other teachers, and have not been implemented in any way. The information provided to the inspection team by the principal was sometimes inaccurate as it was contradicted by school documentation.

Students' progress and attainment are well below international standards. The school employed a consultant from September-December 2012, who provided teachers with some professional development. This has helped teachers bring about a slight improvement in the standards and progress of students since the last inspection. Despite this, attainment is still very unsatisfactory in most subjects, and poor in information communication technology (ICT). In Arabic, students have no opportunities to practice extended writing or to develop research skills. Speaking skills are better than listening. The reading skills of students in the upper grades, while still very unsatisfactory overall, compare slightly better to internationally accepted levels than those of the younger students. In social studies, students memorise a good deal of information about the United Arab Emirates from textbooks. They lack any opportunities to link this to real life. Similarly, students are taught the central concepts of Islam by rote learning. This does not give them the opportunity to engage fully with the moral and spiritual guidance made available through the scriptures). In mathematics, many students rely too heavily on calculators and as a result their numeracy skills are not good enough. They have little opportunity to develop mental mathematical strategies. Similarly, students acquire scientific knowledge but no investigative skills in science. Standards in English are unacceptably low overall, but are slightly better in reading than in writing. Teachers' poor pronunciation and grammatical errors impede learning. Students are seldom asked to write or speak in complete sentences. Progress and attainment in ICT are poor. There are very few computers, and few lessons actually make use of them. Music and art appear in planning, but music is not timetabled. Art lessons have not taken place for some time. During the inspection art was replaced by Islamic studies. Physical education (PE) mainly consists of a series of warm-up exercises, particularly for

girls. Boys play football without any instruction from the teacher. Standards overall are very unsatisfactory.

Teaching is generally limited to leading students through the Ministry of Education textbooks. In the weakest lessons, teachers repeatedly shout facts or individual words for students to repeat after them several times. This is particularly the case in KG classes. There is no attempt to match activities to students individual or group needs. The curriculum is delivered through the textbook with all students doing the same activity at the same time without regard to their differing abilities. There is no attempt to develop students' independent thinking or investigative skills. ICT, art, music or PE do not have a planned curriculum. Marking of students' work is limited to ticks, sometimes of incorrect work. Teachers sometimes rub out wrong answers and insert correct ones. They do not assess students' progress and attainment during lessons. There is no child initiated learning in the KG classes, and no opportunities to learn through play. Children have very little chance to leave the building and their break times are spent indoors. The curriculum consists mainly of the repetition of individual letters or numbers, and colouring in worksheets.

Attitudes to learning are adversely affected by the formulaic and repetitive teaching strategies used in most classrooms. Despite this discouraging environment, many students, mainly girls, show a willingness to learn and try their best. Some satisfactory relationships between teachers and students exist. Students greet visitors warmly to their classrooms. Able students provide all the answers to teachers' questions, finish their work quickly, and then sit in idleness. Weaker students are often completely disengaged. They rely on copying the work of classmates without understanding its meaning. In KG classes, children sometimes fall asleep unnoticed by their teachers.

Older boys regularly behave aggressively towards younger ones, and fighting is commonplace. Boys deny that any of this takes place. Girls, however, say they feel unsafe in the playground. They claim that boys mistreat them both there and on the buses. Staff make little attempt to manage behaviour around the school. They did not intervene when a KG child repeatedly kicked several classmates and made them cry. Students display a lack of pride in their surroundings. This results in litter and graffiti. Students push each other in corridors and on the stairs. There is no sign, however, that this unsatisfactory behaviour is in any way related to the mix of different nationalities. There is a student council but it has little or no effect on the school. Students stated that they were aware of what is needed to lead a healthy life. This knowledge is not reflected by the unhealthy food choices made in the lunches brought from home.

The school makes appropriate checks on the background and qualifications of staff. There is a central register with the details of all staff. The clinic offers satisfactory provision for first aid. The nurse is appropriately qualified. However, the school's pastoral system remains weak. Although the Principal states that there are no students with special educational needs, the coordinators have lists of such students and a disabled student who is unable to walk is delivered to his classroom every day and left there. No provision is made for him to join his classmates elsewhere. The social worker has no information on his needs or the nature of his condition.

Social workers claim that there are no problems with behaviour. Their own log of incidents contradicts this, particularly for boys. The lack of any recorded actions taken to address these issues confirms students' comments, (not clear what is being said here . . . is it 'confirms the view expressed by students to inspectors that action is not taken to address aggressive behaviour) and explains their unwillingness to report bullying. Students also report that corporal punishment is sometimes used. There is no child protection policy and staff have no guidance on what to do if they suspect abuse. The monitoring of attendance is unsatisfactory. Registers are taken once a day and absences followed up only on the second day. Attendance is said to be 95%, which is well above average. No evidence to support this figure was produced by the school. Arrangements for the arrival and departure of buses are very badly managed and pose a high risk to safety of both students and staff. This has not improved since last inspection. Buses drive into the courtyard, regardless of whether it is being used by students. Those departing run between moving vehicles. Although the school owns at least half the buses, there is no maintenance contract for them. Some are overloaded, so that students remain standing whilst in transit. There are few seat belts, fire extinguishers, or first aid kits on board.

The building is not suitable for educational use. At the pre-visit many classrooms were severely overcrowded. One Grade 3 classroom contained 40 students and in several rooms students' desks were jammed up against the whiteboard. During the inspection, numbers appeared to have been reduced. Classroom sizes are still barely adequate even for small classes. Cleanliness has a low priority. During the inspection, toilets were still very dirty, litter is scattered everywhere and cockroaches were seen. The library, computer room and art room are neglected and too small for the number of students. The science laboratory is an ordinary classroom with no specialist furniture or fittings. The school has very recently been repainted with an oil-based paint. This is not permitted for schools as it produces toxic fumes. The courtyards' tiled surface is broken and a source of trip hazards. The courtyards are not suitable for use either at break time or for PE.

They are too small for the number of students, particularly for the boys. The area for KG children is not shaded. The one improvement since last inspection is that there are now two prayer rooms available for student use.

The school pays very little attention to health and safety. The main gate stands open throughout the school day and students run in and out. The landing of the main fire escape is piled with flammable materials. Electrical plug sockets have been installed in the walls of the courtyard. Water sometimes runs down the walls which makes this even more dangerous. The three fire doors from KG are locked. The school was notified of this but no action was taken. Although fire extinguishers actually in place are within date, there are notices on the walls indicating fire alarms that do not exist.

Temporary dwellings have been constructed on the roof of the school to accommodate two families, including small children. These contravene Abu Dhabi building regulations. The open access to the roof poses a significant danger to students. Both students and the families in these temporary dwellings are at risk from the many dangerous items scattered about on the roof, including sharp metal objects and a substance that may be asbestos. Cleaning materials, including bleach, are stored in toilets.

Resources for learning are very limited. Those used in lessons consist almost entirely of textbooks and pencils. Some use was made of instructional posters. In some KG lessons a few toys were used, although not for free play. The resources for science are insufficient both in quality and quantity. Some outdoor play equipment is provided for the KG classes, but is seldom in use.

Since the last inspection the school has provided prayer rooms for students as well as a relocated and properly managed first-aid clinic. However, the building is now severely overcrowded and the school's neglect of health and safety issues makes it a dangerous environment for students and staff alike. The school employed a consultant for one term who gave teachers some professional development. This has done very little to improve students' attainment and progress, and the standard of teaching and learning remains very unsatisfactory. The senior leadership team have not demonstrated that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve without external support and the school does not provide satisfactory value for money.

Leadership and management are poor. The school has no ownership of its improvement agenda and the principal has no clear understanding of the problems facing the school or how to address them. In many instances he is unprepared to accept that these problems exist. His optimistic account of

standards across the school is not based on any monitoring or performance evaluation.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Ensure that the building is fit for purpose both inside and out; that it complies with ADEC regulations and all other UAE laws, particularly those relating to health and safety.
2. As a priority, ensure that the school abides by all ADEC rules and regulations, especially those pertaining to renewal of license and staff employment.
3. The Principal and leaders at all levels must identify clear priorities for improvement and develop effective systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, and students' progress.
4. Provide continuous professional development for teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school, especially in:
 - i. planning tasks that offer suitable challenges to different groups, particularly those with special educational needs and the gifted and talented
 - ii. developing students' 21st –century skills-
 - iii. providing and using a range of resources to develop interactive learning skills
5. Provide a clear and effective pastoral system that identifies students' academic and personal needs, and gives appropriate support in all cases.