



مجلس أبوظبي للتعليم
Abu Dhabi Education Council
التعليم أولاً Education First



Summary Inspection Report

Zakher Private School – MOE Division

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إقرأ



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Inspection Date	25 th - 28 th November, 2012
School ID#	174
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	Ministry of Education
Number of Students	290
Age Range	Grades 1 - 12
Gender	Boys
Principal	Hassan Ahmed Al Hyuti
School Address	Bldg.No. 4, 15th Street, Magar Al Dhabi, Falaj Hazza, Al Ain
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Introduction

The school was inspected by three inspectors. They observed 37 lessons and met with senior leaders, teachers, students and parents. The inspectors observed assemblies, break periods and students' arrival at and departure from the school. Data and documents supplied by the school were analyzed. In addition, responses from the parental questionnaire and the views of parents have contributed to this report. The inspectors considered the school ethos, the quality of students' learning experiences, personal development and the relationships they enjoyed with teachers and their peers.

Description of the School

Zakher Private School is situated in the Falaj Hazaa schools' complex in its own walled grounds surrounded by other private schools. The school shares the car park with the adjoining Zakher British School. The school follows the Ministry of Education (MOE) curriculum and aims to 'nurture and prepare students academically and behaviourally for their future academic education and to become good citizens'. The school caters for Grade 1 – Grade 12 students and is for boys only. Currently, there are 290 students on roll: 95 students in the primary section (G1 – G5), 69 in the middle primary section (G6 – G9) and 126 in the upper school section (G10 - G12). Over half the students are Emiratis. The remainder are from Jordan, Syria and Egypt; almost all are Muslim and of Arab heritage.

Fees range from AED 4,900 in the primary section to AED 8,700 in the secondary section. These are in the low category. Teachers' salaries range from AED 2,200 to AED 2,400 per month with an additional local living allowance for all staff and an 'excellence' payment, awarded for additional contribution to the school. These are in the low category. The school's board of directors is comprised of six members, including the owner and the principal, and is supported in its management role by a planning committee. The school does not have processes in place to identify students with special educational needs or those who are gifted and talented.

The Effectiveness of the School

Band C

Grade 8

Inspectors judged Zakher Private School-Boys to be in Band C; that is a school in need of significant improvement.

At the time of the previous inspection in April 2010, the school was asked to address the following issues:

- i. establish a robust system for self-evaluation;
- ii. improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school;

- iii. review the breadth and balance of the curriculum; and
- iv. improve the protection, care, guidance and support of students.

On all of these issues, the school leadership's action has been poor. In addition, almost all performance standards are poor or very unsatisfactory and the school has made inadequate progress in raising students' achievement and improving their performance.

Following the inspection, a new principal was appointed from within the staff. He has now been in this post for two years. As a result of his appointment, a child protection policy and a behaviour policy have been written. Although behaviour has improved, it is still very unsatisfactory. The security of the school has been improved but is still unsatisfactory. Parents say that behaviour has improved and that they feel their children are safe at school but the inspectors did not find this to be the case. Child protection remains poor. The school's information and communication technology (ICT) equipment has been improved and upgraded and there has been investment in additional resources for science. The owner and the principal are aware that more investment is needed.

Students' basic literacy skills are satisfactory and they can read and understand undemanding factual text. However, they are not developing higher order skills of analysis and evaluation so that they can become independent learners. By the time students leave the school, the standards they have attained in mathematics, Arabic, Islamic studies and social studies are poor. Similarly, the standards attained in English and science are poor. Students' ICT skills are underdeveloped because there are too few opportunities for them to apply their skills in a range of situations in other curriculum areas.

Over time, progress is very unsatisfactory in Arabic, social studies and Islamic studies because students are unquestioning, lack curiosity about their beliefs and values, and do not think for themselves. Progress is slow in most lessons. There is an excessive focus on knowledge rather than understanding and the application of principles to everyday life. Most students in the primary section develop age-appropriate knowledge about Islam. This is not built upon in the secondary section. Secondary school students have weaker understanding because the curriculum does not challenging their thinking sufficiently. Most students develop basic knowledge about key people, events and places in the UAE and the wider Gulf region during social studies lessons. Skills of effective citizenship are underdeveloped.

Progress in mathematics is poor. Too many students are not making the progress of which they are capable. Students perform functional mathematical calculations well but struggle when presented with more complex mathematical principles

that require a deeper understanding and application of formulae. In almost all lessons, students do not have the opportunity to apply learning and skills in real-life situations and this makes much of the learning irrelevant.

In English, standards are poor and progress is very unsatisfactory. Students' speaking and reading skills are better than their writing skills. By the time students are in Grades 10 and 11 they have acquired a limited vocabulary because there is little opportunity for students to use their speaking skills. The majority of students are reluctant writers and avoid the task if possible. The reading material offered is limited to the textbook and this does not excite their interest or curiosity.

The progress that students make in other areas of the curriculum is poor or very unsatisfactory. The activities provided in ICT lessons are not challenging enough and do not build on previous learning and, as a result, there is no progression in terms of skill acquisition and, overall, student progress is poor. The lack of resources in science prevents students from exploring scientific concepts in a practical way. Instead, students systematically follow the textbook and opportunities to motivate them as learners and excite their curiosity in science are lost. Progress in science reflects students' poor understanding of scientific language and concepts. Students enjoy their lessons in physical education (PE) and achieve well in local competitions but lessons are not sufficiently skills-based to develop their understanding of the science of sports and the importance of techniques to achieve improvement.

The curriculum is poor. It is too narrow to provide students with the stimulus needed to inspire their curiosity in the world around them and promote creativity. All lessons, with the exception of PE and ICT, adhere to the Ministry of Education textbook, so reducing the opportunities for teachers to provide activities that are more relevant and purposeful to students. There is insufficient attention given to the progression of skill acquisition within individual subjects to ensure satisfactory and better progress. In addition, there is a lack of focus on links between subjects which would help students understand how subjects relate to each other and how skills used in one can be transferred to another. The principal has made some partnerships to enrich the curriculum. These opportunities are potentially beneficial but are not yet sufficiently integrated into the curriculum plan so that it is coherent across all year groups. The opportunities for creative expression within PE, ICT and art have not been exploited and as a result the curriculum lacks balance and is failing to prepare students adequately for the next stage in their education, employment or training.

Although standardised tests are used to measure attainment in the core subjects, the data gathered is not robust and does not present a clear picture of what

students have achieved over time. The results of coursework which has been marked by the school are not consistent with that marked externally because teachers do not have a clear understanding of the standards students should be attaining. This disparity in marking makes it difficult for the school to accurately evaluate standards in relation to other schools. Using international comparators, standards across core subjects are poor overall.

Many teachers work hard and are committed to the care of students. In spite of this, weaknesses in teaching continue throughout the school and overall it is very unsatisfactory. Teachers understand their subjects but give little regard to differences in what students know and can do already. This is because assessment practices are poorly developed. Teachers test students' knowledge regularly, but do not use this information well enough. Lessons are not planned to build on students' strengths and focus on areas of weakness. This means most teachers do not ensure that their students receive appropriate challenge and support through effective questioning which makes them think and check their comprehension. Consequently, teaching has a limited impact overall on students' achievement, progress and personal development. Students rarely get opportunities to work independently because teachers dominate lessons and talk too much. In all classes, for all students, teachers maintain a traditional layout of desks, in rows that prevent active collaboration. In all lessons, teachers follow the activities in the textbook without variation or deviation. As a result, lessons are dull and much learning is irrelevant to the lives of the students. Most students are well behaved in lessons and listen patiently to overly long explanations that require no contribution or effort from them. Teachers' expectations of what students can do are not high enough and there are insufficient demands placed on students' independent learning and thinking skills. As a result, students do not take enough responsibility for their own learning and progress.

The school does not provide a favourable climate for learning. Although behaviour has improved since the last inspection, it is still very unsatisfactory. The introduction of a new behaviour policy has helped students to become more aware of rules but it is inconsistently applied. Some teachers still resort to oppressive methods to manage challenging behaviour and occasionally resort to corporal punishment. The effect of this is to damage relationships, inhibit learning and undermine the confidence of students. This prevents students from taking the risks needed to become successful learners. There is insufficient advice and guidance provided for those students who are entering the world of work, training or further education to ensure that they have made an appropriate choice and that their transition is a success.

The principal has improved the overall security of the school. Visitors now sign in and a register of students is taken at the gate. Attendance and punctuality are poor. Students regularly arrive late for assembly and there was significant absence in almost all classes. The lack of a clear policy on 'study leave' obscures the extent of absenteeism. For example, only half of the Grade 12 students attended school prior to their examinations. Students' attendance is checked daily and students with persistent absence are monitored by the school's social worker. This is a positive step which is developing better relationships and communication with parents. Although there is now a child protection policy, staff have had insufficient training and are unaware of their roles and responsibilities regarding the protection of children and have not been made aware of corporal punishment as a child protection issue.

Although the outdoor areas are adequate for the school's current needs, the number of toilets is insufficient for the total student numbers. The standard of safety and care is poor. The leadership and management of the school have failed to address a number of health and safety issues, indicating a complacency regarding the day-to-day running of the school in this most important area. For example, chemicals are still not housed securely, two plugs were loose and a fire door was locked at break time.

Material resources available in classrooms, laboratories and in the library are very unsatisfactory and do not support learning effectively. The textbooks used for almost all subjects continue to limit the curriculum rather than enhance it.

The leadership and management of the school are poor. The principal is well meaning and committed to the school but does not have an adequate understanding of the process of school improvement. In particular, he is unclear about what constitutes good teaching and learning. The vice-principal and co-ordinators do not have well defined roles and responsibilities regarding the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school, nor is there a salary structure to recognise additional management responsibilities. Since the last inspection, teaching staff have not received the professional development needed to enable them to become more effective classroom practitioners and, as a consequence, teaching remains very unsatisfactory. The school's leadership has not instigated a means of using assessment to track student progress and, thus, are not able to intervene to address underachievement. Some of the issues identified at the time of the last inspection have been partially addressed, for example, establishing external links to broaden the curriculum, introducing an appropriate behaviour policy and the writing of a child protection policy. However, they have not been implemented in a coherent or consistent way so that the impact on the learning, behaviour and safety of students is at best very

unsatisfactory. In the absence of a leadership and management team, the principal has undertaken some school self-evaluation on his own but it is neither systematic nor rigorous. As a result, he is inaccurate in his assessment of the strengths of the school and he is not sufficiently held to account for student outcomes by the proprietor. The school improvement plan has not been costed or implemented with the vigour and determination needed to bring about the necessary improvements in student outcomes. A culture of quality assurance and self-evaluation is lacking in the school and the current leadership does not have the capacity to ensure that improvement is decisive and sustained. The school is not providing value for money.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Eliminate all use of corporal punishment. Ensure that in all classrooms there is a climate that is conducive to learning based on mutual trust and respect.
2. Take prompt action to address the outstanding health and safety issues, monitor the work of those staff with responsibility for health and safety within the school and hold them to account.
3. Improve the quality of classroom teaching and learning by:
 - i. ensuring that good quality assessment data is available for teachers so that they can plan stimulating and relevant learning activities that are closely matched to the needs of students;
 - ii. improving the use of teachers' questioning skills so that students are challenged in their thinking and encouraged to think for themselves; and
 - iii. extending the range and variety of strategies employed by teachers to motivate and engage students in their learning.
4. Improve students' access to a broader, more stimulating and relevant curriculum which includes more physical and creative opportunities to balance the current academic subjects.
5. Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - i. establishing a clear structure of leadership roles and responsibilities, with appropriate job descriptions, salary and accountability frameworks;
 - ii. using the inspection framework to implement a cycle of monitoring and evaluation so that school priorities are clearly identified;



- iii. setting clear expectations for improvements in the quality of teaching and the curriculum and provide those responsible for bringing about improvements with appropriate training; and
- iv. reporting the impact of actions on student outcomes to the appropriate authority so that the management committee can hold the school leadership to account.