



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



Summary Inspection Report

German International School

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Iqraa

German International School

Inspection Date	19 th – 22 nd November, 2012
School ID#	048
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	German
Number of Students	338
Age Range	3 - 19 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Gerald Miebs
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Introduction

The school was inspected by three inspectors. The inspectors observed 61 full lessons and parts of lessons in the core and other subjects. Inspectors observed two assemblies, break periods and students' arrival and departure from the school. They held meetings and had discussions with senior staff members, students, parents and members of the school board. The inspectors also analysed data and documents supplied by the school.

Description of the School

The German International School, which was opened in 1976, is situated in the Zaab district of Abu Dhabi City. The grounds and buildings, which were previously occupied by a Ministry of Education (MoE) girls' school, were presented by the Abu Dhabi Education Zone in exchange for accepting ten local Emirati students each year without fees. The school's aims are 'to provide students with inter-cultural competence which is a key for taking part and interacting in global economic processes'. The school is under the jurisdiction of the German authority for schools outside Germany. It has an independent governing body consisting of five members of the local community, three of whom are parents of students at the school and the other two have high status positions in industry and academia. The school expanded in 2010 and 2011 to include Grade 11 and 12 students.

There are 85 children in the kindergarten (KG), 113 in the primary section (Grades 1 to 4), 117 in the secondary section (Grades 5 to 10) and 23 in Grades 11 and 12. Of the 338 students on roll, 167 are boys and 171 girls. Sixty three percent of students are German and twelve per cent Emirati. Eight percent of the students come from other European countries with a few students from other Arab countries. A very small number, 0.5% of students have been identified as having special educational needs. Thirty three per cent of students are Muslim.

Most parents are from professional backgrounds. Many are German expatriates working on contracts in the UAE. Annual school fees are AED 17,000 for a half-day in KG and AED 25,000 or a full day; AED 31,000 in Grades 1 to 4; AED 35,800 in Grades 5 to 10 and AED 40,000 in Grades 11 and 12. These fees cover textbooks, disposable resources and trips. Admission to the primary school is determined by an assessment test of basic skills. The salary scales for teachers from Germany range from AED 10,000 to AED 30,000 and the average is 12,000 AED. The salary scales for local teachers range from 5,000 AED to 10,000 AED and the average is 6,000 AED.

The Effectiveness of the School

Band A

Grade 2

Inspectors judged the German International School in Abu Dhabi (GISAD) to be in Band A; that is a high performing school.

The previous inspection in May 2010 judged the school to be good. Since then, it has made good progress in the key areas for improvement. Nearly all teachers now explain precisely to students what they are going to learn in lessons and students know their targets. Higher attaining students are now fully challenged in most subjects, especially in English and physics. The analysis of the German national tests in the core subjects shows a steady improvement in standards in the last two years. The school now has more effective systems and procedures for evaluating how well different groups of students and subjects perform. The school also has a clear picture of patterns of student absence. The school still does not meet the stated Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) guidelines for the number of minutes Arabic, Islamic studies and social studies are to be taught, but argues that it cannot extend its already long school day to accommodate this, because of parental resistance.

Children in KG make good progress in most basic skills. By the end of KG they are well prepared to learn reading, writing and arithmetic in the primary section of the school. Their attainment and progress in listening and speaking in English are very good. They can follow lessons conducted entirely in English and can express themselves confidently using simple, familiar language. Their information communication technology (ICT) skills are below international standards, however, because of lack of access to computers. The progress of the Emirati children in German is very good. They are immersed in the German language and well supported by the teachers and fellow students if they don't understand. Children in KG develop well socially and become independent and confident learners.

Most learners continue to make rapid progress in the primary section. By the end of Grade 4, standards in reading and mathematics are good. Writing is less well developed, but generally in line with international standards. Emirati children are well supported by specialist lessons in German as an additional language, which enables them to make satisfactory progress in most subjects. These specialist lessons in German effectively focus on vocabulary-building in semantic sets such as verbs of motion: stroll, dash, wander, rush and race. In the early primary grades, most learners have a very good grasp of letters and sounds, which helps them to gain confidence in reading. Most students' progress in English is very good and their attainment is well above international standards. By the end of Grade 6, standards in most subjects are above age-related expectations in the

core subjects. In mathematics, higher attaining students have a secure grasp of number operations and can analyse data and interpret graphs well. Their progress and attainment in English are very high. They understand English when spoken at normal speed and can engage fluently in conversations using present, past and future tenses on a range of familiar topics such as hobbies, likes and dislikes. In primary and secondary, standards in Arabic for Arabs are good and broadly in line for non-Arabs. Standards in Islamic studies and social studies are slightly above average, overall. Progress in Arabic is good for Arab students and satisfactory for others. Progress in Islamic studies and social studies is good overall. Most listen carefully and respond well to the teacher's questions or prompts. They show a good awareness of the rules of grammar and apply them well when reading or speaking, because almost all speak in classical Arabic with correct pronunciation and intonation. Students' writing is less well developed and most students do not write legibly. Progress in Islamic studies and social studies is good overall. All students memorise the text book requirements of the holy Quran and the Prophet saying "Hadith". They are able to apply the Islamic values they learn in Social studies and know and understand useful information about the UAE traditions, culture and heritage. They also have the ability to explain significant information about UAE geography and nature.

Students continue to make good progress in the secondary section. Standards in most subjects are high with many students exceeding expectations. In English and physics, standards are well above international expectations. In English, they can write a credible CV and discuss their career aspirations and they show a very sound understanding of the laws of physics.

The first cohort of senior students started in 2009. Results for the past two years in the German school leaving examination (Abitur) were high and standards observed in the current Grade 12 class are above international standards in most subjects, but especially English, mathematics, physics and Arabic for Arabs. In all four of these subjects, they are able to discuss complex concepts displaying deep understanding. They also make presentations to the class with confidence and fluency.

The school ethos, with its focus on internationalism, is very strong. Parents are very supportive of the school and really appreciate the caring family atmosphere, the very positive teacher student relationships, the high standards and the final German qualification, which provides access to both German and international universities. The school responds very effectively to the needs of all students and there are rigorous procedures to ensure that students are safe in school. A school counsellor provides good support for students with emotional problems. No inappropriate behaviour was observed, but there are clear procedures to deal

with it if it should occur. Mutual respect and very warm relationships with their teachers underpin students' very positive behaviour and attitudes to learning in lessons. Students are very proud of their school and clearly respect the values and culture of the UAE. There are no tensions between students from different backgrounds and cultures and the Emirati children feel fully integrated. Students collaborate extremely well in pairs and groups because they listen to, and respect, the views of others. Students want to learn and are confident, articulate and courteous. Advice from the school about future careers and universities helps students choose which courses are most suitable.

Nearly all teachers are highly qualified and all have a secure command of their subject. They generally make students aware of what they are expected to learn and ensure that tasks are suitable. In most lessons, the content is interesting and students are very motivated and keen to take an active part in the class. Most teachers use questions that probe students' critical thinking and help them to gain higher order skills and understanding. In many lessons, especially in the upper grades, students take over the role of the teacher and make planned or impromptu presentations to the class. Very occasionally, lessons do not have a stimulating content or the expectations are unclear or inappropriate, as in one Arabic lesson observed. Nearly all teachers have high expectations of students and use effective strategies to enable students to work independently. The teachers of German as an additional language use carefully targeted strategies to motivate and challenge the Emirati children which develop their language skills so that they can take part successfully in the full curriculum.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets individual students' needs very well. It is based on the German Thuringian curriculum with additions to meet the requirements of the UAE context. It provides suitable challenge, is interactive and focused on real life, which motivates students and enhances learning in many lessons. The curriculum for Arabic, Islamic studies and social studies closely follows UAE MoE guidelines, but does not meet the requirement for the minimum number of minutes for Arabic for non-Arabs. Students participate in a wide range of visits and some after-school activities but there is not the opportunity to join a school choir, orchestra or sports team. The school also offers students in Grade 10 the opportunity to gain work experience in local companies. The range of courses in Grades 11 and 12 is appropriate for the size of the school. The school day starts and ends at different times for different groups of students which makes it very difficult for parents with more than one child at the school. Equally, the school day for older students ends very late, which has an impact on the amount of homework they can reasonably be expected to do. There is considerable

movement of both students and staff in and out of school which sometimes has a negative effect on curriculum continuity.

The school buildings and grounds are very impressive and provide a high quality environment that is conducive to learning. They are very safe, clean, and hygienic. The specialist facilities for science, physical education, art, handicraft, music and the library are of very high quality. There is a large prayer room for Muslim students. The curriculum is generally well resourced for learning. Many classrooms and all specialist rooms now have smart boards, which teachers are starting to use to enhance their teaching. There are insufficient computers. The location of computers in the two specialist suites makes it more difficult for teachers to teach ICT skills than if they had access to them in the class room. The quantity and quality of books in the library are suitable. All buses are well maintained and students wear seat belts.

The school is very strong in strategic planning and has continued to improve over recent years because of the drive and determination of the leaders to continually improve learning and raise standards. The principal is a very effective leader, who is well supported by his largely new team of middle managers. The director of administration offers very strong support in non-academic areas. The principal is particularly successful in developing links with the local business community, the German Embassy, ADEC and the Abu Dhabi political world, which promotes a positive image of the school. Responsibilities for key areas of the school are devolved well to ensure all aspects are effectively managed. The vice principal ensures the efficient day-to-day running of the school. The integration programme for inducting local Emiratis into the school is managed very well. Attendance is excellent. The fees are considered fair by parents and the school offers excellent value for money in view of the high outcomes. The school has very good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Meet the MoE requirements regarding the minimum time for teaching of Arabic and offer more staff development for teachers of Arabic.
2. Improve the provision of computers so that students develop sound ICT skills from KG upwards.
3. Arrange the school day so that there are fixed times for arrival and dispersal.
4. Evaluate the amount and quality of the homework expected from students.
5. Develop strategies to ensure continuity in view of the high turnover of students and staff.