



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



Inspection Report

Horizon Private School

Academic Year 2014 – 2015

إقرأ

Horizon Private School

Inspection Date	16 – 19 February 2015
School ID#	103
Licensed Curriculum	Ministry of Education (MoE)
Number of Students	1162
Age Range	3 to 20 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Mahmoud Attiya
School Address	Khalifa City A, Abu Dhabi
Telephone Number	+971 (0)2 556 0310
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Official Email (ADEC)	horizon.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	-----
Date of last inspection	5 – 9 May 2013

The overall effectiveness of the school

Inspectors considered the school in relation to 3 performance categories

Band A High performing (overall effectiveness grade 1, 2 or 3)

Band B Satisfactory (overall effectiveness grade 4 or 5)

Band C In need of significant improvement (overall effectiveness grade 6, 7 or 8)

The School was judged to be:	BAND C;	GRADE 6
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The main strengths of the school are:

- the effective policies to protect students from harm, to combat bullying and improve attendance, successfully promote satisfactory behaviour and friendly relationships
- students demonstrate satisfactory understanding of and respect for UAE values, culture and heritage
- the more varied teaching strategies employed in some lessons in some subjects and in the KG are beginning to encourage better progress.

The main areas for improvement are:

- the breadth of curriculum delivery to meet the needs of all students
- the level of challenge in teaching to ensure the most able students and those who find learning difficult make adequate progress in these lessons
- better use of available data by managers and teachers to identify strengths and weaknesses in student performance in key subjects
- provision of sufficient facilities for recreation, sport and physical education (PE)
- the range and quality of learning resources for older students in classrooms and specialist areas, especially in science
- the implementation of robust evaluations of teaching and learning, and the impact of the actions taken to improve the quality of education.

Introduction

A team of 5 inspectors carried out the inspection over a period of 4 days. They observed 81 lessons, conducted several meetings with senior staff, teachers, parents and groups of students. Inspectors analysed students' examination results and scrutinised samples of their written work. They considered other data provided by the school and a range of documents about policies and procedures. Inspectors surveyed the work of the school as a whole, including its extra-curricular activities. They analysed the 116 responses to a parents' questionnaire. The principal and leadership team were involved throughout the inspection and undertook 4 observations of lessons alongside inspectors.

Description of the School

The school opened in 2003 in Khalifa City, Abu Dhabi . Its stated mission is to 'build personal leadership able to keep up with the creative spirit of the age and its innovation'. The school is licensed to offer the UAE Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum from Kindergarten (KG) to Grade 12.

There are 1162 students; 59% are boys, all are Muslim and speak Arabic as their first language. About 45% of students are UAE nationals. Almost all of the rest come from a wide range of Arab countries, with other major groups from countries including Egypt (11%), Syria (10%), Yemen (7%) and Palestine (7%). There are 161 children in the Kindergarten (KG); 445 in Grades 1-5; 307 in Grades 6-9; and 249 in Grades 9-12. Boys and girls are taught in mixed classes in the KG and otherwise in separate boys' and girls' sections. No students are formally identified as having special educational needs (SEN) or as gifted and talented.

Children of all ages are tested on entry in Arabic, English, mathematics and science and very few are refused admission. Students in grades 6-11 take examinations set by the MoE in all subjects, which are marked internally. Students in Grade 12 take examinations set and marked externally by the MoE.

Members of the school's governing body (trustees) are appointed by the owner and include 2 representatives of parents. The senior leadership team comprises the principal, who has been in post for 11 years, and 2 vice-principals. Staff turnover has been very low in recent years.

Annual fees are in the low to medium ranges: from AED 9,000 for KG to AED 22,000 for grades 11 and 12, including transport, books and uniform.

The Effectiveness of the School

Evaluation of the school's overall effectiveness

Horizon Private School provides education of unsatisfactory quality. Students' attainment in all key subjects except information and communications technology (ICT) is below age-related expectations. More able girls reach levels that match international standards for additional language learners in English, assisted by some good teaching in that subject.

Students' personal development and behaviour is satisfactory. Students of many different nationalities enjoy cordial relationships with one another. They demonstrate an understanding of and strong respect for UAE values. The effective implementation of approved policies satisfactorily protects students from harm. The facilities, supply and quality of learning resources for older students are insufficient to support further improvements to the teaching and to promote better student progress in most subjects.

The senior leadership team have initiated and led an extensive programme of training for teachers. Its impact is beginning to be seen in better teaching and learning in the KG and in some lessons in some subjects across all cycles.

Students' attainment & progress

Students' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory in all the key subjects except ICT, in which they are satisfactory. The progress of those with additional needs or students who are more able is very unsatisfactory. The attainment and progress of children in the Kindergarten (KG) have improved markedly since the last inspection. This can be attributed to a greater variety of classroom activities and a better range of resources. Attainment in ICT matches national expectations. Students at all grades and in the KG can use computers competently to find, select and store information. Students at Cycle 3 can present information for specified purposes, using a range of ICT applications.

Attainment in speaking, reading and writing English is below expectations for additional language learners. Many students join the school with little or no English proficiency and many of them make unsatisfactory progress. Their progress is limited because the work in many lessons offers too few opportunities for students to use English for practical purposes. Some of the more able girls reach levels of spoken English close to international standards at Cycle 3, because of some imaginative teaching that enables them to practise all language skills for authentic purposes and for a variety of audiences.

Attainment in Arabic is below expected curriculum standards. Children's reading is in line with expectations when they leave the KG. They can read words with short

and long vowel sounds. In grades 1 – 12, students make less than satisfactory progress in speaking, reading and writing Arabic. Many are unable to apply grammar rules, reflected by weak sentence structure and spelling mistakes. Progress is unsatisfactory because teachers talk most of the time in many lessons and students do not have enough opportunity to practise language skills.

Attainment and progress in Islamic education and social studies are below curriculum expectations. Students at all grades are able to give only brief answers to questions about Islamic principles. They do not develop the ability to discuss issues or reach their own conclusions. Students at all cycles gain a satisfactory knowledge of UAE history and geography. Their understanding of key concepts in social studies and their ability to think critically are far weaker. Progress is limited because learning is restricted to listening to the teacher and completing written tasks that extend knowledge rather than develop understanding and skills.

Attainment in mathematics and science in all cycles is below curriculum expectations. Progress in mathematics is strongest in the KG and Cycle 1, where the teaching benefits from the variety of interesting resources. In many lessons at other cycles there is too much reliance on workbooks and work sheets. The tasks are often too easy. They do not challenge able students or support the progress of those who find mathematics difficult. Progress in science is unsatisfactory because the emphasis is on memorising scientific information without real understanding. Investigation and experimentation skills are not developed well.

Grade 12 external examination results in all subjects are similar to those of other schools that teach the MoE curriculum. The school makes little practical use of its analysis of these results and other internally marked examinations, beyond identifying the weakest performing students who might require additional assistance.

Most students acquire the basic language and ICT skills they need to work and learn competently in all subjects. Many students' grasp of basic numeracy operations is insufficient to allow them to solve problems in mathematics and science. The 21st century skills required to become successful independent learners who think logically and creatively to solve problems, are underdeveloped.

Students' personal development

Most aspects of students' personal development have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now satisfactory. The behaviour of boys and girls is satisfactory overall across all cycles. Most students display positive attitudes to learning and many are developing self-confidence. The boys' behaviour and attitudes are unsatisfactory in a small number of lessons when teachers have low expectations and the work is repetitive and uninteresting. There is some

unsatisfactory behaviour at break times among boys in grades 1-7. They have very little space for recreation, nowhere to sit and nothing to engage them during these break times. Many boys are late to morning assembly and some lessons. The attendance rate has improved since the last inspection and is now average at 91%.

Students show strong respect for the values of the UAE in their contributions to assemblies and through their participation in celebratory events during the year. A heritage area in the girls' section is regularly used for teaching. Most students of all nationalities develop a secure understanding of the history of the UAE and the traditions of its people.

There are relatively few leadership roles for students. The school council offers its members little opportunity to take the initiative and to contribute to decisions about how the school works. The range of social, cultural, sporting and other activities on offer for students is fairly narrow. The school delivers a narrow curriculum and many students do not develop the 21st century skills and personal qualities to prepare them effectively for their future education or employment. Motivation is low among many of the older boys, particularly those in the Arts stream.

The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory overall. Lessons ranged from good to very unsatisfactory; the large majority were deemed unsatisfactory or very unsatisfactory. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection, markedly so in the KG, where they are now satisfactory in the majority of lessons. Girls in Cycle 3 benefit from some good teaching in English where they develop speaking and reading through conversation and interaction with one another. Learning in one subject sometimes supports work in another, for example when students in ICT learn how to operate a program they will be using in mathematics or English. These improvements demonstrate the early impact of the teachers' participation in an extensive training programme.

Teaching remains insufficiently challenging in the majority of lessons as teachers' expectations are often not high enough. Too much time is devoted to low-level tasks that are too easy and fail to capture the interest of most students. The most able and those who find learning difficult make very little progress in these lessons. Too much talk by teachers, limits the opportunities for students to engage actively with what they are learning. In the less successful lessons in the KG, teachers direct much of the learning. Children seldom choose their activities or learn through investigation in these lessons.

Learning objectives are unclear or unambitious in many lessons. Teachers are consequently unable to check students' progress accurately. Teachers seldom refer to learning objectives when describing and assessing the progress that students have made. Their marking of written work is often superficial; it rarely makes clear how work could be improved or what the student should do to achieve a better outcome next time.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The implementation of the curriculum does not satisfactorily meet the needs of many students, particularly boys. Curriculum delivery is comprised almost exclusively of academic subjects from Grade 1 to Grade 12. There is no vocational element for older students and no opportunities to study creative subjects such as art, drama or music beyond Grade 7. Physical education is limited to games sessions in the quadrangles. These deficits contribute significantly to low motivation among the older boys, particularly those in the Arts stream. Activities in the KG include too few opportunities for children to learn by exploring and investigating and through imaginative play. Many of the activities at KG2 make the same demands of children as those at KG1.

The school delivers a narrow curriculum, much of which focuses exclusively on the content of a single textbook in each subject. As a result, important skills necessary for further education and employment are not progressively developed. These include proficiency in spoken and written Arabic and English; investigation in science and mathematics; and independent research and critical thinking in all subjects. This leaves students short of the skills, knowledge and understanding to enable them to solve problems, work in teams and work independently.

The school offers only a very limited range of extra-curricular and other enrichment activities. It makes some use of the surrounding community as a resource for learning through occasional links with Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), local universities, the police and the military.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

Most of the recommendations of the previous inspection report have been implemented and the school now makes satisfactory provision for the protection, care, guidance and support of its students. The school operates in a calm atmosphere, in which students say they feel safe, happy and well cared for. The prayer rooms are of adequate size. Older girls feel their prayer room is unsuitable because it is also used as a play area.

All staff have received training in child protection procedures and there were no breaches of health and safety regulations observed during the inspection. The

small clinic operates very effectively. The nurse is active in promoting healthy living among the students. There is very little bullying and students know that any incidents will be dealt with quickly. Attendance has improved. Registers are taken daily and any absences followed up promptly. The behaviour policy includes clear procedures and sanctions.

Support for students' academic progress is far less effective. Information about individuals' academic performance is rarely used to set targets for improvement. Older students rely on visits to and from local universities for information about post-school destinations. The degree of guidance given to individuals when they make choices about the courses they will study and their career options is unsatisfactory.

Provision for students with learning difficulties and those with particular talents remains unsatisfactory. The methods used to identify these students are weak. Recent training for teachers in matching the work in lessons to the learning needs of individual students has had little practical impact.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The buildings and premises provide an unsatisfactory environment for learning. Some improvements have been made since the last inspection. Security arrangements to supervise the school site, check all visitors and deter intruders are now satisfactory. There are no serious hazards to the health and safety of students. School records show electrical equipment is tested regularly and kept in safe working order. Potentially dangerous substances and equipment are stored and used safely. Some classrooms are too small for and others require maintenance. Some areas of the school are not kept sufficiently clean. Accommodation in the KG is cramped and the toilets are unsuitable for small children.

Many of the school's specialist facilities are of insufficient quality to effectively deliver the curriculum and promote high standards. The science laboratories are small and not well maintained. Sports facilities are inadequate: the floors of the outdoor play areas are unprotected, which places students' safety at risk. The clinic and the library are both far too small. The premises incorporate no adaptations to accommodate any physically disabled students.

The school's resources to support its aims

The quality of the school's resources is unsatisfactory. Teachers are sufficient in number and suitably qualified for the subjects and age-ranges they teach. Some have attended external training sessions on aspects of modern pedagogy and

shared what they have learned with their colleagues. The impact of these is beginning to be seen in some classrooms.

Classrooms and specialist areas have too few learning resources of good quality to enable older students to make satisfactory progress in some aspects of their education. There are very few authentic English language resources from which students can learn. The science laboratories have insufficient equipment and materials to allow students to adequately develop their practical and investigative skills. The library is organised well. Its stock of books is too small and it is not readily accessible to the girls. There are very few resources to support the progress of children who find learning difficult.

Learning resources in the KG are satisfactory. There are enough materials of good quality for children to undertake a fair range of activities, make choices about which to use and learn in a variety of ways. Teachers are beginning to make effective use of them. The 3 computer suites, the data shows in most classrooms and the interactive white boards (IWB) in several rooms in each section of the school ensure that all students have satisfactory access to ICT. Teachers and students make effective use of them in some lessons.

Transport arrangements now achieve a satisfactory standard of safety. Evacuation procedures and fire drills are satisfactory. The canteens are hygienic though there are very few places for students to sit and eat their food.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Their effectiveness has improved in some important respects since the last inspection. The principal expresses the school's strategic direction in terms of raising standards by creating a safe environment, improving teaching and better teamwork. This is a satisfactory vision for a school improving from a very low base. It now requires a more ambitious and detailed set of targets to take it to the next level.

Parents generally support the work of the school. Some are critical of the quality of the information they receive about their son or daughter's progress and of the quality of the buildings and facilities. The parents' and students' councils play only minor roles in representing the interests of these groups, and so they play little active part in decision-making. The Board of Trustees is independent of the school's professional leadership. It supports the work of the school through effective legal and financial supervision on behalf of the owner. It does not hold the leadership effectively to account for the school's educational performance.

The principal and vice-principals have taken the necessary steps to rectify many of the serious weaknesses highlighted in the last inspection report. The severe

deficiencies in the protection and care of students have been remedied and the school is now satisfactory in those respects. Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning have improved as a result; the atmosphere is calm and relationships are mostly cordial.

The academic vice-principal has provided effective leadership for an extensive programme of training aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning which is beginning to have an impact in the KG and in some lessons in some subjects. Senior leaders provide training for subject coordinators in key aspects of their role, including assessment, monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning and team building. This training has had little practical impact. Neither senior leaders nor subject coordinators make a sufficiently thoughtful analysis of the available data about student performance. There is no effective benchmarking with other schools. Subject coordinators consequently have only a limited impression of the attainment and progress of students in their subjects.

Senior leaders and subject coordinators monitor teaching and learning by observing lessons and discussing what they have seen with the teachers. Their evaluation and subsequent feedback to teachers on the quality of teaching and learning are weak. Similarly, the school has made no robust evaluation in its school development plan (SDP) and in its self-evaluation form (SEF) of its provision and of the impact of the actions taken to improve it. In both these documents, the evidence of impact is expressed as anticipated outcomes rather than an evaluation of what improvements have actually taken place and their effect on students' attainment, progress and personal development. The school's leaders consequently lack the information they need to identify in detail the areas in which the school needs to improve.

Progress since the last inspection

The leadership team have made determined efforts to tackle the issues identified in the last inspection report. The school's performance has improved in all standards since it was last inspected. Attainment and progress have improved since the last inspection when they were both judged to be very unsatisfactory in all subjects. There have been particularly significant improvements to the quality of the protection, care, guidance and support students receive and consequently in their personal development. The impact of a concerted training programme for teachers in aspects of modern pedagogy is beginning to be seen.

The school is now ready to embark upon the next phase of its development. This will involve securing more challenging teaching and learning in all subjects and improving the implementation of the curriculum so that it meets the needs of all students.

The leadership currently lacks the capacity to achieve substantial further improvement without significant external support. The senior team requires strengthening by the addition of expertise in effective strategies for school improvement and their rigorous evaluation.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Improve the quality of the curriculum the school delivers, particularly for boys, by:
 - i. ensuring that the skills necessary for further education and employment are developed throughout the school. These include proficiency in spoken and written Arabic and English; investigation and problem solving in science and mathematics; independent research and critical thinking in all subjects
 - ii. implementing a planned programme of activities to extend the range of opportunities for all students to develop their interests and capabilities beyond the prescribed syllabuses in academic subjects.
2. Increase the level of challenge in lessons in all subjects for students of all abilities by:
 - iii. employing clearer and more ambitious learning objectives for series of lessons on each unit of work
 - iv. using the learning objectives to check students' progress and set more challenging targets.
3. Enhance the quality of the school's facilities and resources by:
 - i. improving outdoor and indoor facilities for recreation, sport and physical education
 - ii. securing more learning resources of good quality for older students in classrooms and specialist areas, including the science laboratories.
4. Improve leadership and management by:
 - i. making more thoughtful analyses of student performance data so that subject coordinators and teachers can more accurately identify strengths and weaknesses
 - ii. making more robust evaluations of teaching and learning, and of the impact of the actions taken to improve the education the school provides
 - iii. strengthening the expertise of the senior leadership team to increase its capacity to achieve further substantial improvement.

Inspection Grades

	Band A High performing			Band B Satisfactory		Band C In need of significant improvement		
Performance Standard	Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory & Improving	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Very unsatisfactory	Poor
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Standard 1: Students' attainment and progress								
Standard 2: Students' personal development								
Standard 3: The quality of teaching and learning								
Standard 4: The meeting of students' needs through the curriculum								
Standard 5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students								
Standard 6: The quality of the school's buildings and premises								
Standard 7: The school's resources to support its aims								
Standard 8: The effectiveness of leadership and management								
Summary Evaluation: The school's overall effectiveness								