



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



Private School Inspection Report

Horizon Private School

Academic Year 2016 – 2017

lqraa

Horizon Private School

Inspection Date	January 30, 2017	to	February 2, 2017
Date of previous inspection	February 16, 2015	to	February 19, 2015

General Information	
School ID	103
Opening year of school	2008
Principal	Aida Nemer Saada
School telephone	+971 (0)2 5560310
School Address	Khalifa City, Abu Dhabi
Official email (ADEC)	Horizon.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School website	Arabichorizonprivateschool.com
Fee ranges (per annum)	Very low to average (AED 9,000 to AED 22,090)
Licensed Curriculum	
Main Curriculum	MoE
Other Curriculum (if applicable)	-----
External Exams/ Standardised tests	External Measures of Student Achievement (EMSA) Thanaweya (Grade 12)

Students		
Total number of students	1282	
%of students per curriculum	Main Curriculum	100%
	Other Curriculum	-----
Number of students in other phases	KG	228
	Primary:	553
	Middle:	278
	High:	223
Age range	5 to 20 years	
Grades or Year Groups	KG to G12	
Gender	KG boys and girls mixed Grade1 to12 boys and girls	
% of Emirati Students	28%	
Largest nationality groups (%)	1. Syrian: 14%	
	2. Jordanian: 8%	
	3. Palestinian: 6%	
Staff		
Number of teachers	88	
Number of teaching assistants (TAs)	4	
Teacher-student ratio	KG	1:20
	Other phases	1:25

Accreditation	-----	Teacher turnover	20%
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Introduction

Inspection activities	
Number of inspectors deployed	5
Number of inspection days	4
Number of lessons observed	120
Number of joint lesson observations	6
Number of parents' questionnaires	(22; return rate: 2%)
Details of other inspection activities	Inspectors held discussions with the principal, vice principal, other senior managers, a governor, teachers and other members of staff, students and parents. They reviewed a wide range of school documentation and students' coursework. They observed assemblies, school activities, arrivals, departures and intervals.

School	
School Aims	'School is characterised by building personal leadership able to keep up with the creative spirit of the age and its innovation'
School vision and mission	'Developing and applying international, practical and educational process that contributes in building integrated creative leading personality that is proud of their national identity, mother tongue, local history and heritage, committed concept continual education and be able to compete in the labour market which is competitive locally and globally.'
Admission Policy	The school is non-selective and admits students whose parents are aware that all lessons except English will be taught in Arabic.

Leadership structure (ownership, governance and management)	Leadership comprises the principal and two vice principals. The middle leadership team has seven subject co-ordinators. Governance is through a board of governors which includes the owner and the principal of the adjoining school.
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SEN Details (Refer to ADEC SEN Policy and Procedures)

SEN Category	Number of students identified through external assessments	Number of other students identified by the school internally
Intellectual disability	0	0
Specific Learning Disability	2	10
Emotional and Behaviour Disorders (ED/ BD)	0	0
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	0	0
Speech and Language Disorders	0	1
Physical and health related disabilities	0	5
Visually impaired	0	0
Hearing impaired	0	0
Multiple disabilities	0	0



G&T Category	Number of students identified
Intellectual ability	60
Subject-specific aptitude (e.g. in science, mathematics, languages)	5
Social maturity and leadership	22
Mechanical/ technical/ technological ingenuity	10
Visual and performing arts (e.g. art, theatre, recitation)	30
Psychomotor ability (e.g. dance or sport)	10

The overall performance of the school

Inspectors considered the school in relation to 3 performance categories

Band A	High performing (Outstanding, Very Good or Good)
Band B	Satisfactory (Acceptable)
Band C	In need of significant improvement (Weak or Very Weak)

The school was judged to be:	Band B	Acceptable
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	Band A High Performing			Band B Satisfactory	Band C In need of significant improvement	
Performance Standards	Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Acceptable	Weak	Very Weak
Performance Standard 1: Students' achievement						
Performance Standard 2: Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills						
Performance Standard 3: Teaching and assessment						
Performance Standard 4: Curriculum						
Performance Standard 5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students						
Performance Standard 6: Leadership and management						

Summary Evaluation: The school's overall performance						
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The Performance of the School

Evaluation of the school's overall performance

The overall quality of the school's performance is acceptable. Students' attainment, progress and personal development are acceptable and this is matched by the acceptable teaching, curriculum, care, welfare and support provided by the school. Under the direction of the newly appointed principal, senior leaders have taken the initiative and provided the right strategic direction to enable the school to move forward. Parents and students are clear about the impact this is having on the better overall provision. Leaders are also rightly aware that they have yet to remove the variability in teaching, improve resources and encourage students, particularly boys, to gain deeper understanding and curiosity in their learning.

Progress made since last inspection and capacity to improve

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The core of improvement is due to the professional leadership provided by the principal and other senior staff pursuing the correct priorities. Boys' behaviour has significantly improved and, with good professional development, the large majority of teachers have a clearer understanding about how to improve their own teaching practice. Many more lessons are at least acceptable and provide wider opportunities for students because of a better breadth in the curriculum, especially in subjects such as physical education (PE), art and science. While the improvements have made a difference, not all students make the highest level of progress or attend as regularly as they should. Overall, school leaders' capacity to improve the school further is good.

Development and promotion of innovation skills

The school does not develop innovation skills well enough in everyday lessons. Some improvements have been made through innovation days. Students want to become more creative and innovative and have produced some interesting investigations in their own time. This willingness is not exploited by teachers in daily lessons such as science and information and communications technology (ICT), so displays of work show little imagination. Older students do not exploit leadership roles well enough in group work or initiate new ideas. Overall, the school is not developing innovation skills as effectively as it needs to.

The inspection identified the following as key areas of strength:

- positive decisions made by the senior leadership and governing board about developing the school's provision
- the improvement the school has made since the last inspection
- the school's development of stronger partnerships with parents
- the growing number of students who want to achieve well because of their better attitudes to learning.

The inspection identified the following as key areas for improvement:

- students' attainment and progress to ensure they reach their full potential
- the quality of resources to ensure learning is stimulating and exciting, especially raising the interest and motivation of boys
- teachers' planning and delivery of lessons in order to challenge all levels of ability
- opportunities for students to use real-life problem solving, experimentation and research so they gain deeper understanding and curiosity about the world
- procedures to encourage good attendance and punctuality.



Performance Standard 1: Students' Achievement

Students' achievement Indicators		KG	Primary	Middle	High
Islamic Education	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic (as a First Language)	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic (as a Second Language)	Attainment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Progress	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Social Studies	Attainment	N/A	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	N/A	Acceptable	Acceptable	Weak
English	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Acceptable
Mathematics	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Science	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Language of instruction (if other than English and Arabic as First Language)	Attainment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Progress	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other subjects (Art, Music, PE)	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Learning Skills (including innovation, creativity, critical thinking, communication, problem-solving and collaboration)		Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

The overall quality of students' achievement is acceptable. Most students now attain in line with curriculum expectations in all subjects. In the MoE examinations for term 1, students in Grades 5, 7, 9 and 12 gained at least acceptable standards. Attainment in these examinations was very good in Islamic education and social studies, good in middle phase English and Arabic and middle and high phases in science. These levels of attainment are not borne out in lessons or students' ongoing coursework. Overall, standards have improved markedly since the last inspection for all groups of students, although girls generally perform better than boys.

Students' achievement in Islamic education is acceptable. From KG, children establish an acceptable foundation of Islamic values which continues through other phases. By Grade 3, most students can recite Hadeeth correctly and relate it well to real-life situations. In Grade 6, most students recite the Qur'an with acceptable application of 'Tajweed' rules. In Grade 10, most students continue to recite verses of Holy Qur'an applying 'Tajweed' rules in line with curriculum expectations. Students make less progress in applying Islamic values to understand wider world affairs and to think critically about how Islam is applied across the world.

Achievement in Arabic is acceptable. Most students attain levels that are in line with curriculum standards. In KG, children anticipate what happens in stories, and respond by speaking, reading or writing with relevant comments. Most recognise letters and long and short sounds in line with expectations. By Grade 3, most can read with proficiency and explain the meanings, demonstrating reading, speaking and comprehension skills in line with curriculum expectations. They can write their own recount of a story acceptably. By Grade 9, most students can write suitable texts for their age, but achievement is not higher because, in a few cases, paragraphs are not always well structured and the vocabulary used is limited. They make acceptable progress in reading, comprehension and writing and by the time they reach Grade 12, most can read text fluently, discuss main ideas and write structured, sequenced text, in line with curriculum expectations, although boys are less confident in writing than girls.

Students' achievement in social studies is acceptable overall. While most students make acceptable progress across the grades, their progress slows in high phase due to inconsistent teaching. In Grade 2, most students can identify and locate on maps the historical and current attractions in UAE accurately. By Grade 6, most develop acceptable understanding of UAE history and past civilizations in line with curriculum standards. By Grade 12, although students' attainment is acceptable, most do not make acceptable progress in understanding the past and modern economy of UAE by relating it to current world affairs. Students make less progress in applying their knowledge to debate and discuss world affairs beyond what is

provided in the text book.

Students' achievement in English is acceptable overall. From a low baseline, children soon respond to simple questions, write letters and know initial sounds in KG. Through primary and middle phases, students continue to develop all their English skills, and can discuss key ideas and read and write simple stories. Attainment and progress are good through middle phase. By Grade 12, students debate and discuss ideas related to subjects such as marketing and business when reading and writing English. Speaking is stronger than reading and writing. Students do not develop all their English skills when applying them in independent projects. Although teachers always talk in English, they do not encourage students to do the same when working together.

Students' achievement in mathematics is acceptable overall and progress is good in the high phase. Children in KG have an increasing knowledge of numbers, can apply simple calculation methods and are beginning to understand how mathematics can be used in other situations. Through Grades 1 to 9, students gain increasing confidence in numeracy and can apply this knowledge in problem solving. They have more difficulty in using this knowledge in unfamiliar situations and often need their teachers' help to understand what method should be used, for example when trying to use sine, cosine and tangent. Through Grades 10 to 12, progress in the general stream is less than that in the advanced stream where girls attain more highly than boys.

The quality of students' achievement in science is generally acceptable. In line with curriculum expectations, most KG children can describe farm animals, their physical characteristics and what they provide for humans such as milk, wool and eggs. The majority of students make good progress through primary phase. By Grade 6, girls draw detailed diagrams showing the percentage of water on earth, and its uses and benefits. By Grade 9, most students can classify and compare autotrophs and heterotrophs in line with curriculum expectations. Students' ability to plan and carry out scientific investigations individually remains underdeveloped due to limited resources and practical opportunities.

Achievement in other subjects is acceptable. In the recent introduction of art, a few students have shown some real talent while most are learning techniques appropriate for their age. In physical education and music, students develop relevant skills, knowledge and understanding in singing, ball and teamwork skills. A few students perform very well and take part in local and national teams. ICT skills develop acceptably although students do not have enough opportunity to use these skills across a range of subjects.

Students' development of learning skills is acceptable but variable. Most students generally have positive attitudes to their learning. They work well together in groups and share their ideas readily. Students have recently had better opportunities to make connections between different subjects and can use their previously acquired knowledge to help them transfer their learning across subjects, However, these skills are still underdeveloped for the large majority of students who find difficulty in using research, experimentation and critical-thinking skills.

Performance Standard 2: Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills

Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
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Personal development	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

Students' personal and social development is acceptable overall. Almost all students can take responsibility for their learning when given challenging activities but a minority of primary and middle phases boys are not inspired to work well in lessons. Behaviour, while greatly improved amongst this group, still has to be closely monitored. For others, especially girls, behaviour demonstrates increasing maturity. Relationships are courteous except in a few lessons where weak teaching occurs. Students understand how to maintain healthy and active lifestyles through well-integrated sessions provided by the nurse. For example, girls in the primary phase held a healthy food picnic to apply what they had learned. At 95%, official attendance figures indicate attendance is good. However, this was not reflected during the inspection where attendance and punctuality were much lower and particularly for those in the boys' general stream in Grades 10 to 12.

Most students have a clear understanding of how Islamic values influence their

society. They come together to celebrate Islamic occasions, such as the birth of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). The many nationalities celebrate both UAE culture and heritage and their own cultures with each other by, for example, sharing different foods and costumes. Students' knowledge of the wider world is more limited.

Students contribute to the life of school through planned responsibilities and they have a commitment to their environment. For example, they painted the corridor walls and drew scenes to add colour and warmth and have taken part in sustainability ventures. However, these opportunities are limited to special projects and are not a consistent feature of daily lessons or within the local community.. Consequently, students do not exercise their entrepreneurial and creative skills as a matter of course and rely heavily on adults to lead them towards enterprising and innovative tasks. As a result their innovation skills are underdeveloped.

Performance Standard 3: Teaching and Assessment

Teaching and Assessment Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
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Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak

The overall quality of teaching is acceptable but assessment is weak. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge and recognise that successful learning takes place when there is active engagement, effective questioning and meaningful discussion. Time management is mostly acceptable except in a few lower grades and boys' lessons. The effectiveness of the use of resources and ICT is variable in science, mathematics, English and Arabic lessons. Opportunities for students to develop independent learning, research and investigation skills are limited. Teaching is slightly better for girls than boys and good in primary in science and Middle phase in English. Teachers' interactions are limited to accepting one word answers rather than extending discussion and promoting deeper understanding through secondary questions. Lessons are often aimed at the middle ability rather than stretching the higher and lower achievers. Consequently, the full range of teaching strategies is constrained. In most everyday lessons, there are few opportunities for students to become active learners and take responsibility for their own learning. Consequently, students' critical-thinking, investigation, problem-solving, innovation and independent learning skills are not developed well.

The school has established systems of continuous assessment across grades, phases and subjects to gather data about students' achievement and progress. The recent use of improved data analysis of external examinations has been shared amongst middle leaders and teachers. However, teachers do not always use this information to reshape lessons so they are matched to the individual needs of students. The majority of teachers encourage self- and peer-assessments and mark work. They share objectives but do not base the next steps in learning on what has gone before. In KG, assessment of learning is stronger.

Performance Standard 4: Curriculum

Curriculum Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
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Curriculum design and implementation	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Curriculum adaptation	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

The overall quality of the curriculum is acceptable. The school has been taking effective measures to manage the revisions of the MoE curriculum as well as it can. The curriculum delivery tends to focus more on acquiring factual knowledge than building skills and greater understanding between all subjects. Students' knowledge increases as students move up the school. Some careers guidance is offered which is more frequent this year. For example, Grade 10 students can go into the general or advanced stream depending on whether they have reached a minimum requirement. There are some initial signs of successful cross-curricular links such as in KG2 where science and Arabic language combine when learning about habitats.

Recently, the school has implemented an intensive review about adapting the whole curriculum, particularly to look at the impact of the revisions from the MoE. It is ensuring a better balance of work within subjects and beginning to mean that students of different ability levels are given the correct level of challenge. Delivery of this in individual lessons is variable. The curriculum identifies opportunities for students to undertake independent and creative learning and to think more deeply about a subject. These tasks are often superficial with too much direction provided by the teacher. There is an increasing range of extra-curricular activities including the Scouts, football and basketball clubs, breast cancer awareness and a cake sale.

Appropriate learning experiences are provided to develop students' understanding of the UAE's culture and heritage but these are not always fully integrated through independent work. Curriculum planning identifies some different work for students with special educational needs and for those who are gifted and talented. This is not carried through well enough into the delivery of lessons.

Performance Standard 5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The protection, care, guidance and support of students Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
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Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection/safeguarding	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Care and support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

The overall quality of protection, care, guidance and support for students is acceptable. The safeguarding policies and procedures, including those for child protection, are effectively implemented, particularly in KG. Rewards and sanctions are clearly communicated. Students' behaviour is managed acceptably, but better for girls and the lower grades. Safety checks are regular and thorough and the supervision of students, particularly the older boys, has improved recently. The safe and secure premises have been improved and are now more attractive with murals and displays produced by students. The school promotes safe and healthy living through both specific lessons and extra-curricular activities. The nurse is very actively involved in promoting healthy lifestyles across all grades.

The acceptable care and support for students, including the management of behaviour, can be seen in the courteous relationships between students and staff. Innovative methods have been used such as having female supervisors in the senior boys' section to raise the level of respect. Older boys have responded well and students rightly say that they feel the school is much calmer and more orderly. The school's approach to promoting attendance has reduced absence from last year's levels through promoting rewards and increasing the engagement of students. A minority of students, mostly older boys, take days off or do not arrive punctually. Higher achieving students and those with special learning needs are identified acceptably with some activities providing appropriate support. However, teachers do not always identify the specific needs of these students in lesson planning or

provide them with work set to their particular level of ability. While the monitoring of personal and academic performance has improved, subsequent guidance is at an early stage of development.

Performance Standard 6: Leadership and management

Leadership and management Indicators	
The effectiveness of leadership	Acceptable
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
Partnerships with parents and the community	Good
Governance	Good
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable

The overall quality of leadership and management is acceptable. Since appointment, the principal and senior leaders have brought a new sense of urgency to school improvement and this is beginning to take effect. This vision, linked well to UAE priorities, is now shared fully by almost all staff and has seen the significant development of the provision for students' academic and personal performance. Intensive, good quality professional development has improved teaching. The priority of developing expertise among middle leaders ensures they now feel accountable.

The self-evaluation form (SEF) and school Development plan (SDP) focus on the correct priorities but judgements are not closely matched to national standards. Effective regular monitoring ensures teachers are aware of their own strengths and improvement areas which are then closely linked to training. As yet, the school has not embedded fully comprehensive and robust approaches to securing further improvements in lessons as might be achieved, for example, by enabling all teachers to visit each other's lessons to evaluate students' learning. However, the school has shown that it can improve and that it has the capacity to continue doing so.

Parents support the school and know that their views count. They praise the approachability of the new principal. They can access regular reports about their child's progress through electronic communications or discussion. Links with the local community are improving, such as teachers visiting other schools to improve



their practice and students attending local events.

The properly constituted governing board takes a strong lead and has provided good educational training expertise to develop better leadership and teaching. Governors have regular meetings and monitoring reports providing them with a good overview to direct their support correctly.

Management of the day-to-day work of the school is acceptable. The school is adequately staffed and the premises are fit for purpose. Resources are limited and some are worn out, especially for mathematics, science, ICT, sport and music activities. Consequently, a minority of students, mostly boys, do not feel so inspired, interested or motivated to learn.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Raise attainment and progress of students by:
 - i. ensuring all abilities are fully challenged in each lesson
 - ii. monitoring lesson plans to ensure they contain different activities for different ability levels
 - iii. ensuring lesson plans take account of previous learning
 - iv. monitoring teaching to check that all lessons are providing challenging work for all students and that they are fully engaged.
2. Provide good quality resources that will ensure learning is stimulating and exciting, especially to motivate boys by:
 - i. analysing, reviewing and evaluating the resources in each subject
 - ii. identifying all shortages or out-of-date equipment
 - iii. building a workable and realistic plan to improve resources.
3. Improve teaching and learning by:
 - i. questioning students in ways which make them think more deeply before answering
 - ii. improving the scope for all students to use real-life problem solving and other learning skills in lessons
 - iii. ensuring teachers provide opportunities for students to work on open-ended tasks that include research, innovation, and experimentation
 - iv. monitoring the effectiveness of teachers' delivery of these methods.
4. Ensure students attend regularly and punctually by:
 - i. monitoring attendance more closely and effectively
 - ii. continuing to improve the facilities and resources to make them more appealing for older students, especially the older boys s