



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



Summary Inspection Report

Ibn Khaldoun Islamic Private School

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Iqraa

Ibn Khaldoun Islamic Private School

Inspection Date	12 th – 15 th February 2012
School ID#	195
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	Ministry of Education
Number of Students	763
Age Range	3–18 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Moeen Ismael
School Address	North Al Yahar Area, Al Ain City
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Introduction

The school was inspected by four inspectors, who observed 62 lessons. They considered the school ethos, the quality of students' learning experiences, personal development and progress, and the teaching they receive.

Description of the School

Ibn Khaldoun Islamic Private School was established in 1998 to provide subsidised general education for boys and girls in Al Ain. It is part of a cluster of four similar schools that share one supervisor and are managed by the same education council. The school is not for profit and charges low fees; some parents pay a percentage of these fees and for some, the fees are waived. Annual tuition fees are AED 2550 throughout the kindergarten, AED 3150 for the elementary school, AED 4425 for the preparatory school and AED 7500 for the secondary school. Additional fee for transport is AED 2000. Any surplus income generated is reinvested for improvements. The school is set within a purpose-built Islamic cultural centre and has a mosque on site.

The school's vision is to 'provide opportunities for every student to achieve their best'. Students are taught in mixed classes in the kindergarten and single-sex classes from grade 1. The school is divided into two sections. One includes the kindergarten, boys from grades 1 to 3 and girls from grades 1 to 12; the other has boys from grades 4 to 12. The school roll currently includes 55% boys and 45% girls. There are few girls in grades 10, 11 and 12. All but three of the students are Muslim and of Arab origin. Nearly half are from the UAE and the rest come from a range of countries including Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Yemen, Lebanon, Somalia and Sudan. The majority of parents are employed in the military, police or Civil Defence, and many of the boys aspire to a career in these institutions. The school has a non-selective entry policy. Three students are wheelchair users and the buildings are accessible to them. The teaching staff come from a number of different Arab nations.

The Effectiveness of the School

Band C

Grade 6

Inspectors judged the Ibn Khaldoun Islamic Private School to be in Band C, that is a school in need of significant improvement.

The last inspection of the school in March 2010 made recommendations for improvement which included developing a middle management structure, using assessment information to identify underachievement, challenging the more able students, and providing professional development for teachers in planning and

delivering the curriculum. Since then the new principal has created a new leadership and management team that is beginning to take positive steps to improve performance in these areas, but teacher turnover remains high and the overall impact has so far been limited. Assessment data has been analysed to identify underachieving students and new strategies put in place to support them, but this analysis is informal and not as robust as it should be; for example, it does not distinguish between the performance of boys and girls. Teachers have had some professional development, but this work lacks a clear focus so teachers still do not clearly understand what they need to do in the classroom to have an impact on students' learning. Also, it is not clear how leaders will evaluate teachers' delivery and performance.

The principal has been in post for less than a year and it is too early to see the impact of his work. He has a clear vision for the school; however, his ability to bring about some of the changes needed is limited by a shortage of funds. There has been a significant turnover of teaching staff as the principal strives to improve standards. He has created a senior leadership team to support him in overcoming some longstanding problems. Since he arrived behaviour has improved; the environment is now caring and welcoming, and lessons are better managed. In these aspects senior leaders have demonstrated satisfactory capacity to improve, but their actions have not had the same impact on the quality of learning. The school does not yet fulfil its vision to provide educational opportunities so everyone in the school reaches their potential. The standards and progress of the students are too low as a result of the uninspiring teaching of a narrow curriculum. Limited resources contribute to the students' limited personal development. Some plans to improve teaching have been implemented with insufficient training for teaching staff. The support provided by subject co-ordinators is not effective or consistent enough to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

The school does not evaluate its strengths and weaknesses sharply enough to identify the key priorities for improvement, and the planning that does exist is not sufficiently robust to drive change. Although the staff share a commitment to improving the school to meet the needs of the students, low salaries for teaching staff lead to low morale. Relationships with parents are satisfactory. When the school has a concern about a student's academic or personal progress, it works closely with the parents to support the student to improve. There are few external links with the private sector or the local community to benefit the school, or to enhance students' learning in the classroom.

Most students make satisfactory progress throughout their school life in comparison to other schools using the MoE curriculum, but attainment is below international standards in English, mathematics, science, and Arabic. Standards and progress in Arabic and Islamic studies are unsatisfactory as teaching focuses mainly on the content of undemanding textbooks. There is no entry test for kindergarten children to assess their readiness to learn. Consequently there is a very wide range of abilities in all year groups. The failure of teachers to take account of this in their planning contributes to students' limited progress. Gifted students are not challenged, so they do not achieve as well as they should. The development of students' practical and independent skills is a general weakness. Students' learning in music and physical education is unsatisfactory. There are few differences in achievement between boys and girls, or between different nationalities.

Behaviour is satisfactory, and sometimes good, particularly in the girls' section. Students show respect to each other and to their teachers. They are polite and cooperative and a credit to their school. They demonstrate very positive attitudes towards school life and work, and a clear enthusiasm for learning, especially in the older grades. Some play the role of teachers in giving presentations to their classmates. The confident way they take questions during this time is a useful preparation for their future lives. However, there are too few chances for students in all grades to develop such personal skills, to support each other in learning, or to listen to each other's viewpoints.

Students are very aware of UAE values and traditions, and those of students from different cultural backgrounds. They have regular school journeys within Al Ain and the other Emirates to extend their knowledge. They are not involved in community service, and have very few opportunities to experience social, scientific and sporting activities to develop their social and team building skills. They receive insufficient health education and guidance to actively promote healthy lifestyles.

There are important weaknesses in teaching. Teachers' appropriate academic qualifications are not matched by their knowledge of how to teach their subjects, so they are not able to vary teaching strategies in order to make learning stimulating. Activities in the classroom are limited to those in the text books or completing worksheets that place very limited demands on the students, whose learning is mostly limited to basic facts. They do not always develop a clear understanding of how to apply their knowledge, or engage in problem solving. The whole class style of teaching does not readily allow for paired and group work, so students are not given sufficient opportunities to develop collaborative

skills. Recently there has been some professional development for teachers on how to engage students more actively in their learning. Lessons were observed where students in grades 11 and 12 were able to discuss concepts and communicate their knowledge of properties of gases and the parts of the eye. They were encouraged to share ideas, and were well motivated to learn more. This active learning does not happen often enough across the school.

Assessment systems are very limited. Data available from end-of-unit tests and termly MoE exams identifies the most able and least able students, but little use is made of it by individual teachers when they plan lessons. As a result students do not make enough progress, particularly in the development of skills, because lesson activities are not matched closely enough to their abilities. Some students report they find the work easy while others struggle. The consistent lecture style of teaching, lesson by lesson, reduces students' motivation and progress. In mathematics, worksheets are produced for lower and higher ability groups, but those analysed were similar in content and had little impact in the classroom. A tendency to teach to the slowest group was observed in Arabic and Islamic studies lessons. There are no effective systems to check how well individual students are making progress over time or from lesson to lesson.

The MoE curriculum is strictly adhered to and delivered using appropriate workbooks and teacher produced worksheets. This style of delivery slows down the pace of lessons. There are few opportunities for independent learning such as research, or for students to apply their knowledge and skills. The absence of extension activities limits students' progress and achievement. In English, for example, students follow a sequential curriculum that provides breadth, but they have too few opportunities to practise the language and have little exposure to variety in the use of the language.

There is no effective overall management of the curriculum. It is not reviewed to ensure that the content meets the needs and the abilities of students across all grades. There is an appropriate emphasis on science and mathematics for senior students, but there are far too few opportunities for students to broaden their studies through art, music or sporting activities. There is little within the curriculum or in extra-curricular activities to enrich their studies. The curriculum meets MoE basic requirements, but has insufficient depth to provide a rich learning experience for all students and falls well short of international expectations. Its limitations results in a lack of interest and engage by children and students in the classroom and is partly responsible for the unsatisfactory progress throughout the school towards international standards.

Provision for students' care and welfare is satisfactory, but the systems for tracking their personal and academic development are weak. Students receive very little guidance regarding their future beyond school. Attendance has improved as a result of the school's commitment to serving the families in this community and the use of 'first day calling' if any student is absent.

The building provides spacious classrooms for the small number of students in each class. Outside play areas are large, and there is adequate covered space for kindergarten children to learn through play outdoors. There is no gymnasium, or specialist music room. Unsatisfactory resources are a major contributory factor to the unsatisfactory quality of educational provision. Basic classroom resources are unsatisfactory. The school has recently improved the quality and quantity of information and communication technology (ICT) resources by providing good quality computers in both the boys' and girls' areas, but poor timetabling means that they are having little impact upon students' learning. The library is not resourced or used well enough to develop students' independent learning skills.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - i. ensuring that professional development has a clear focus on equipping teachers with a range of strategies to improve learning;
 - ii. developing a framework for lesson planning that addresses the needs of students of all abilities and interests;
 - iii. including effective assessment strategies so students' progress can be measured;
 - iv. using teaching methodology that actively involves students in their own learning, reduces the reliance on published texts, and encourages them to grow into more independent learners;
 - v. including questioning strategies so that students can further develop their critical thinking skills; and
 - vi. providing consistently challenging activities for the more able students that extend their skills and deepen their knowledge and understanding of each subject.
2. Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - i. providing regular planned opportunities for teachers to observe best practice, and focused training so that they are clear about what they are observing in each lesson and what they need to do to improve their own practice; and

- ii. providing training for subject leaders so they can rigorously and accurately assess the quality of teaching and progress students make, especially against the agreed improvement points.
3. Improve the range and quality of resources to support learning in all classes by:
 - i. investing in classroom resources in all subject areas to promote active practical activities and enable students to develop independent learning skills
 - ii. provide resources that support the use of paired and group work that reinforces students' communication skills, enrich their learning and deepen their understanding.
4. Improve provision and outcomes for the kindergarten children by:
 - i. providing staff with focused training to improve their knowledge and understanding of how to meet the educational and other needs of this age group, particularly to explore and experiment;
 - ii. providing regular access to outdoor areas for outdoor learning;
 - iii. providing opportunities to develop language skills through sharing books and engaging in role play;
 - iv. creating opportunities for writing independently;
 - v. using counting and construction resources for developing concepts of number, size and shape; and
 - vi. encouraging freedom to choose activities so that children become independent learners.