



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



# Inspection Report

International community School Branch 1

Academic Year 2014 – 2015

إقرأ

International Community School Branch1

|                                |                                                                |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection Date</b>         | 1 – 4 March 2015                                               |
| <b>School ID#</b>              | 238                                                            |
| <b>Lead Inspector</b>          | Denis Pittman                                                  |
| <b>Licensed Curriculum</b>     | English National Curriculum                                    |
| <b>Number of Students</b>      | 658                                                            |
| <b>Age Range</b>               | 3 to 11 years                                                  |
| <b>Gender</b>                  | Mixed                                                          |
| <b>Principal</b>               | Samar Murad                                                    |
| <b>Proprietor</b>              | Mohamad Al Shamma                                              |
| <b>Chair of Governors</b>      | Mohamad Al Shamma                                              |
| <b>School Address</b>          | Fatima Bint Mubarak ( Najda) Street, Abu Dhabi                 |
| <b>Telephone Number</b>        | +971 (0)2 644 4003                                             |
| <b>Fax Number</b>              | -----                                                          |
| <b>Official Email (ADEC)</b>   | <a href="mailto:Int.comm1@adec.ac.ae">Int.comm1@adec.ac.ae</a> |
| <b>School Website</b>          | -----                                                          |
| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 5 May 2014                                                     |

## 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 B;**

**GRADE 5**

### The main strengths of the school are:

- the vision, passion and competence of the principal and vice-principal give a clear sense of direction
- the strong commitment to ensure the safety and care of students, allied to the positive relationships, create an enjoyable experience for students
- students are actively engaged in school life through their efforts in lessons, involvement in assemblies and extracurricular activities
- effective involvement of parents helps to develop common objectives
- the increasing impact of regular and focused professional development to increase teaching skills.

### The main areas for improvement are:

- continued focus to raise standards and improve progress in all core subjects
- matching planning to, and embedding the use of, English national curriculum levels
- adapting the curriculum to more effectively meet the needs of more able students
- ensuring greater consistency in the quality of teaching through the use of differentiation and established procedures related to behaviour management.

## Introduction

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The school was evaluated by 4 inspectors. They observed 70 lessons, conducted several meetings with senior staff, subject coordinators, students, parents and the school owner. They scrutinised students' work across the school, analysed 288 responses to the parents' questionnaire and considered many of the school's policies and other documents. The principal and other senior staff were involved throughout the inspection process and conducted 4 joint lesson observations with inspectors.

## Description of the School

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The school is located in central Abu Dhabi and occupies a former government school building. It opened in September 2013 with students from 27 different schools. It is part of the International Community School group. The school's mission is to be committed to encouraging the best from students, staff and parents and the community. It aims to nurture a passion for learning and a culture of achievement.

There are 658 students; 56% are boys, 93% are Muslim and most are of Arabic heritage. The student population represents 29 different nationalities: Egypt 33%, Jordan 21%, Syria 15%, Palestine 10%, Lebanon 5%, UAE 4% and the remaining 12% are from a broad range of Arab nationalities. The foundation stage (EYFS) and Years 1-6 have 3 classes in each year group. There are separate classes for boys and girls in Years 5 and 6. The school has identified 50 students as having special educational needs (SEN). These needs mainly relate to moderate learning difficulties; 3 students have speech and language needs, and 1 student has a visual disability.

The principal and 2 senior leaders comprise the senior management team. There are 42 teachers, 16 of whom joined the school during the current academic year. The school follows the English National Curriculum (ENC); Arabic, Islamic education and social studies are delivered using the Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum.

Annual fees are in the low to medium range from AED 11,578 to AED 16,353. The school holds a valid provisional license, which runs from 2013-2016. All supporting licenses are in place.

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## The Effectiveness of the School

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### Evaluation of the school's overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness of the International Community School Branch is satisfactory. Children enter the school with very low competence in English language and weak number skills. They make steady progress and by Year 6 their achievement is broadly average compared to age-related international benchmarks. A significant factor is students' positive attitudes to learning and a willingness to participate in activities at every level. Students show their enjoyment of being in school through above average attendance and their good punctuality.

The positive relationship between students and teachers is demonstrated by their active engagement in lessons. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. Students are aware of routines and they follow these well. Day-to-day procedures are very effective and confirm the high priority that the school gives to the safety and security of its students. Parents are fully appreciative of this. The school has established productive and supportive links with parents. The principal and senior leadership team (SLT) provide a clear sense of purpose and direction for the school.

### Students' attainment & progress

Attainment and progress are satisfactory. By the end of Year 6, when students leave the school, their attainment in Arabic, Islamic education and social studies is in line with curriculum expectations. Attainment in English, mathematics and science meets age-related ENC levels. Attainment and progress in non-core subjects are satisfactory. This represents satisfactory academic progress across the curriculum from students' starting points.

Children start school with a very limited command of English. By Year 1, they develop secure speaking and listening skills. They can follow instructions quickly and respond to questions with short phrases and sentences. Children use their phonetic skills to build up words and develop sight vocabulary at an appropriate range of levels. They show understanding and accuracy in numeracy, shape, and measurement. For example, children can count to 9, and add using a number line. By the end of Year 1, attainment levels in relation to early learning goals are satisfactory. Children make steady progress in acquiring basic skills and in their personal development.

In Arabic, students speaking, listening and reading skills are developed satisfactorily. In Year 2, for example, children were able to respond correctly to questions about time and place and read related words. Writing skills develop

more slowly but by Year 6 students are able to interpret text and write clearly, showing an understanding of grammar rules and using punctuation correctly. Progress in Islamic studies is satisfactory. Students demonstrate an increasing understanding of the 'Hadith'. In Year 5, students were able to relate sayings about good and bad actions to their own experience. In social studies, students develop a satisfactory, age-appropriate knowledge and understanding of the geography, history and politics of the region.

In English, many students develop confidence in speaking and an increasing fluency when reading. In the early years, they use their phonetic skills to pronounce single words correctly. Students' conversational vocabulary is relatively extensive for English as an additional language (EAL) learners. In Year 3, students can write independently and are able to add suffixes correctly to words. In some lessons, progress is more limited because of the teachers' own standard of English, particularly in pronunciation and sentence construction.

Progress in mathematics is satisfactory. Many students have a secure understanding of number. For example in Year 2, most students confidently count in 2s, some could identify a pattern and relate that to previous work on 5s. Progressively students show an understanding of how mathematical symbols are used to make connections between numbers. Older students are less confident in being able to interpret word problems into mathematical equations. More secure understanding is evident in spatial awareness. In Year 6, students could use the idea of reflection to transform a geometrical shape using coordinate framework.

Students gradually acquire a scientific vocabulary. Progress for some students is impeded by the lack of English language competence. In Year 2, students used a scientific approach to make predictions and form a hypothesis as to whether their tin-foil boats would sink or float. The acquisition of age-related scientific concepts is satisfactory; progress in developing the fundamental skills related to scientific enquiry is impeded by the lack of resources.

The individual education plans (IEPs) provided for students with special educational needs (SEN) are used effectively by teachers so progress for these students is satisfactory. The needs of the relatively few gifted and talented students are not addressed in a similar manner. A focus on 21<sup>st</sup> century skills of collaboration and cooperation is promoted appropriately through the extensive use of group work. There are more limited opportunities for the promotion of independent learning skills in lessons.

### **Students' personal development**

Students' personal development is satisfactory and improving. Students have positive attitudes to learning in lessons and are developing self-confidence. In the

foundation stage, children show confidence in making their own choices and demonstrate their ability to stay on task. Older students take on leadership roles through student and ECO council membership (the group responsible for organising litter removal campaigns and energy-saving initiatives). Attendance is well above average at 96%, demonstrating students' keenness and interest at being in school.

Most students are well-behaved, calm, self-disciplined, and enjoy being together. There is little difference between boys' and girls' behaviour, except in a few lessons where boys' are disruptive; this mainly results from the low expectations of teachers. Students develop moral viewpoints that reflect their own cultural backgrounds and are consistent with a Muslim upbringing. They are very respectful of UAE values illustrated in the respectful involvement in assemblies and enthusiastic singing of the national anthem. Students understand the benefits of leading healthy lifestyles through the school's promotion of healthy diets.

#### **The quality of teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and students' learning are satisfactory. The large majority of lessons were deemed to be satisfactory or better by the inspection team. Examples of more effective teaching were observed in all the core subjects, with the exception of social studies where lessons were consistently satisfactory. The least effective teaching was seen in Year 4.

Teachers' subject knowledge is usually secure and lesson plans are well structured. Learning objectives are shared and explained so students understand expectations. Relevant lesson preparation is evident through the effective use of the interactive whiteboards to stimulate discussion. In the better lessons, students are encouraged to use this technology to demonstrate their learning. Where there is a variety of teaching approaches, students are actively engaged. For example, in Year 3 science, students used mirrors to examine their teeth and make observations about them. Students were motivated, made good independent assessments and successfully met the learning outcomes. Conversely, in some lessons, ineffective classroom management and a reliance on teacher instruction created a less productive learning environment.

Teachers maintain encouraging relationships with students. As a result, students are willing to offer their ideas and explanations. In the foundation stage activity about 'Goldilocks', children used role-play creatively to pretend and express ideas. Open-ended questioning is a strong feature of the better lessons. Opportunities are created for students to ask questions and encourage them to think critically. In a Year 6 information and communications technology (ICT) lesson, on Global Warming, students were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of their website as to

whether it was conveying the intended message clearly and succinctly. In some lessons, there is insufficient emphasis on differentiation. Consequently, the needs of more able students, in particular, are not met sufficiently well. Group work is a common feature of many lessons. This strategy is productive in encouraging and developing cooperation and collaborative skills. The outcome for some students is less productive as they do not understand how to take on different roles and responsibilities in this situation and so become passive observers.

The tracking of individual progress is comprehensive and detailed. Teachers adopt a variety of effective strategies for checking understanding such as the use of white boards in English and mathematics lessons. Constructive feedback is given through marking; the overall quality is inconsistent. Students' have appropriate individual targets set by teachers that are periodically reviewed. Students lack confidence in using self and peer assessment to identify targets for improvement.

### **Meeting students' needs through the curriculum**

The implementation of the curriculum is satisfactory. The school continues to make progress in mapping learning objectives for its students in the context of the ENC. Short-term subject planning is effective; medium-term planning lacks some cohesiveness. For example, there is insufficient coverage of handling data in the mathematics curriculum. The curriculum of non-Arabic students has not been adequately adapted to address their needs as additional language learners. Continuity and progression is evident in the foundation stage curriculum. The focus on early learning goals is met through a variety of learning centres which allows children choice, and promotes independent learning.

The curriculum provision appropriately develops students' personal qualities. It promotes an understanding of the values and pluralistic cultures of the UAE through social studies, assemblies and celebrations. Students with SEN are supported effectively and planning is adapted to meet their needs. The needs of more able students are not consistently addressed.

The range of extracurricular activities is adequate. Enrichment opportunities are provided through sport competitions, music and art. Productive links exist with other ENC schools to share ideas and moderate assessments. This is effective in gaining an understanding of relative progress in students' learning.

### **The protection, care, guidance and support of students**

Students' safety, security and well-being are satisfactory and improving and are high priorities for the school. Senior leaders have created a caring community that encourages and supports students, particularly in their personal development. The strategies to monitor individual student's progress are satisfactory.

The procedures for monitoring attendance are effective. An attendance register is taken twice a day; it successfully adds another level of monitoring. Supervision is caring and encouraging and involves active engagement between teachers and students during lessons and at break times. All relevant policies and procedures are clear, understood and effectively implemented by staff. There is some inconsistency in the implementation of the behaviour policy in lessons. The child protection policy is comprehensive and staff have received relevant training so are aware of procedures.

Students' confident interactions with staff and each other, allied to their enjoyment of school show that they feel safe and well cared for. Parents confirm this view in their meeting with inspectors. Students receive sensitive support from a nurse and a well-organised clinic provides appropriate medical care and health advice.

### **The quality of the school's buildings and premises**

The refurbished school buildings are satisfactory; they are well maintained and clean. The overall appearance of the building is enhanced with colourful displays of students' work and relevant information in corridors. The range of specialist rooms and areas are sufficient and adequately meet the needs of the curriculum. The large gymnasium is a particularly valuable facility. Key staff responsibly monitor health and safety requirements and procedures; they ensure accommodation is fit for purpose. Additional safety measures such as closed-circuit TV and refinements to the fire alarm system have increased levels of safety.

Some classrooms are small so this limits the opportunities for investigative practical work. Children in the foundation stage have limited access to covered outdoor facilities. The school does not have a lift; currently there are no students with physical disabilities

### **The school's resources to support its aims**

The quality of resources satisfactorily support the school in meeting its aims. There are sufficient, suitably qualified teaching staff, administration and support staff to deliver the curriculum. The staffing complement has been appropriately enhanced since the last inspection through the appointment of a vice-principal, special needs co-ordinator, and classroom assistants in the foundation stage. Classrooms have an adequate stock of relevant resources to support the promotion of learning activities. Interactive whiteboards are a feature of all classrooms. This resource effectively provides interest and acts as a stimulus for learning. Students have appropriate access to 2 well resourced ICT suites. This facility provides adequate research opportunities for students. The resources

available to support exploration and investigation in science are limited, impeding the development of these skills.

Relevant additions have been made to the library stock, with a focus on providing resources for the thematic approaches that are being developed within the curriculum. A range of books identifying different English language levels is a valuable resource for the library.

Procedures to keep children safe on school buses are thorough, highly detailed and carefully followed. All relevant staff have had appropriate training. The provision for storage and consumption of food is hygienic, and healthy choices are provided for.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The recently enhanced SLT demonstrates a shared understanding of the school's priorities. The SLT sets a clear strategic direction that is followed by staff. There is appropriate focus on improving the progress of students and the quality of teaching. The Board of trustees meets regularly and has a well-informed, objective view of the quality of the school's work. They hold senior leaders to account effectively.

The schools self-evaluation document (SEF) was systematically completed and provided relevant evidence to support its conclusions. Judgments in the SEF are realistic and accurate. The school development plan (SDP) reflects all features of the recommendations from the previous inspection report (PIR). It consequently focuses on improving the quality of teaching and learning, progress and leadership and management. The resultant goals and action plans are clear and set related interim targets for evaluation.

The SLT regularly evaluates the impact of teaching and learning and makes use of strategies such as walk-throughs and formal observations, with follow-up meetings, checklists and written comments. The evidence from this inspection indicates that the outcomes of these evaluations are broadly accurate. The SLT evaluations provide appropriate improvement targets for individual teachers. Professional development is carefully focused on identified school needs; teachers appreciate the close support given by the SLT.

The school maintains effective communication links and partnerships with parents. An active Parents' Council, with representative membership from each year group, is an effective conduit. A structured reporting cycle on students' progress is sufficiently frequent to ensure parents have enough information about their child's learning. Responses to the parent questionnaire and the

meeting with parents demonstrate a high level of satisfaction about safety, the value of informative workshops and the improvement in student achievement.

### **Progress since the last inspection**

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The school was last inspected in May 2014. Progress has been achieved in all of the recommendations from the previous inspection report and the SDP gives continuing priority attention to the recommendations. The improved clarity of understanding about early learning goals and ENC levels has led to improvements in planning outcomes related to assessment information. The appointment of a very experienced coordinator of special educational needs has significantly improved support for these students in the classroom.

The appointment of subject coordinators with ENC experience has supported the development of more systematic curriculum planning and mapping for student outcomes. The internal moderation of curriculum levels, allied to external moderation with partnership schools following the same curriculum, has raised staff confidence. The quality of investigative activities, particularly in science, remain an ongoing area for development.

The SLT has been expanded to include staff with experience at senior management level. The delegated responsibilities and associated accountabilities are reflected in the effective support and guidance programmes that have been initiated. Staff are appreciative of the influence and impact this is having in terms of practice within the classroom and from professional development. The school has committed financial resources to extending library facilities and providing additional classroom support.

The school, and in particular the SLT, demonstrates satisfactory and improving capacity for sustained improvement.

### What the school should do to improve further

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1. Raise standards and improve progress in the core subjects by:
    - i. ensuring rigorous evaluation of the quality of teaching by middle managers
    - ii. implementing systematic interim evaluation of subject area action plans to review targets
    - iii. matching curriculum planning to learning objectives to ensure continuity and progression
    - iv. developing students 21<sup>st</sup> century skills through more enquiry based, independent learning.
  2. Embedding the use of ENC levels by:
    - i. reviewing internal moderation within departments to ensure consistency of judgments
    - ii. ensuring that external moderation with partner schools continues to have a positive impact on teachers' understanding of the curriculum and students' achievement levels.
  3. Adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of the more able by implementing a comprehensive formal system for identifying students who are gifted and talented and ensure provision through lesson planning meets their needs.
  4. Ensure consistency in teaching outcomes by ensuring that work is consistently differentiated to meet the needs of individual students.
  5. Monitoring and reviewing behaviour management strategies to ensure all teachers consistently follow procedures.
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## Inspection Grades

| Performance Standard                                               | Band A<br>High performing |           |      | Band B<br>Satisfactory   |              | Band C<br>In need of significant improvement |                     |      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|------|--------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------------|------|
|                                                                    | 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: <b>The school's overall effectiveness</b>      |                           |           |      |                          |              |                                              |                     |      |

## Possible breaches of regulations and health & safety concerns

### International Community School Branch

| Regulations                                                                    |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1.                                                                             |     |
| 2.                                                                             |     |
| 3.                                                                             |     |
| The UAE Flag is raised/ flown every day?                                       | Yes |
| Is playing of the UAE National Anthem a daily feature at the morning assembly? | Yes |

| Fees: |
|-------|
| 1.    |
| 2.    |
| 3.    |

| Health and Safety Concerns: |
|-----------------------------|
| 1.                          |
| 2.                          |
| 3.                          |

|                       |               |             |              |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| <b>Lead Inspector</b> | Denis Pittman | <b>Date</b> | 5 March 2015 |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|