



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



Inspection Report

Indian School Al Ain

Academic Year 2013 – 14

Iqraa

Indian School Al Ain

Inspection Date	3 – 6 February 2014
School ID#	161
Licensed Curriculum	Indian (Central Board Secondary Education)
Number of Students	1944
Age Range	3 to 17 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Neelam Upadhyay
School Address	Building No.22, Manasir District, Al Ain
Telephone Number	(+971) 03 767 8915
Fax Number	(+971) 03 767 2186
Official Email (ADEC)	Indian.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	www.indianschoolalain.org
Date of last inspection	29 October – 1 November, 2012

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 ‘family atmosphere’ of the school is valued by students and staff
- students are well motivated, have positive attitudes to each other and to learning
- the care and protection of students is thorough
- the CBSE curriculum requirements are fully followed
- the high levels of parent satisfaction and their strong support for the school.

The main areas for improvement are to:

- strengthen teaching by making lesson objectives precise, setting targets, improving questioning and marking of students’ work
- implement strategies to analyse grade 10 and 12 CBSE examination results and set targets to improve standards
- improve self-evaluation processes by increasing the rigour in monitoring students’ progress
- improve safety by ‘first day calling’ parents of all absent students
- develop a long term plan to address the building limitations.

Introduction

5 inspectors inspected the school. They observed 97 lessons, conducted several meetings with senior staff, the heads of subjects, school co-ordinators, teachers, support staff, students and parents. They analysed test and assessment results and scrutinized students' work across the school. They evaluated the 1,239 responses to the parents' questionnaire and considered many of the school's policies and other documents. The principal was involved throughout the inspection process. She and other senior staff undertook joint lesson observations with inspectors.

Description of the School

The Al Ain Indian School was opened in 1977 and moved to its current premises in Manasir district in 1982. The school is run by a Governing Council. The present principal joined the school in 1985 as a headmistress and took over as principal in 2000. A director of administration joined the school in 2010 to oversee the school's development. The school aims to *'develop every student to his/her highest potential with due regard to physical, mental, spiritual, moral and cognitive development'*.

The students are from mixed socio-economic backgrounds, with many from low income families. 89% of the students are of Indian origin. In addition, there are 6.37% Bangladeshi, 2.67% Pakistani and a very small minority from Afghanistan, Iran and Nepal. There are no UAE national students. 45% of students are Muslim. Of the 1944 students, there are 995 boys and 949 girls. There are 323 children in Kindergarten (KG), 869 students in primary grades 1 to 5, 479 in middle grades 6 to 9 and 281 in upper grades 10 to 12. The school has identified 25 students with special educational needs (SEN), mainly moderate learning and physical difficulties. Entry to the school is by selection, based on proficiency in English and mathematics.

The school fees range from AED 3,222 to AED 6784 per annum.

The Effectiveness of the School

Students' attainment & progress

Attainment and progress are unsatisfactory. Results in the Indian Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) examinations in grade 12 are slightly above similar schools in Al Ain. The results are at a level which enable most students (those for whom the school has data) to enter universities and higher education institutes in India and other home countries. In the last three years, grade 12 CBSE subject results have fluctuated and there is no overall rise in performance. In grade 10, the proportion of students gaining Cumulative Grade Point Averages (CGPA) of 10+ and 9+ in 2013 showed a decline on those of the previous year. The school does not undertake systematic analysis of attainment data and is not sufficiently clear about the causes of fluctuations in performance, or why the results are not rising. As a consequence, there is no target setting at a whole school level or for individual students. The school has begun analysing internal summative and other assessments to identify weaker areas of learning and to address those in the teaching. Attainment in English and mathematics is below international standards in lower and middle grades. It approaches international levels in grades 10 to 12. In science, attainment is broadly in line with international standards. Attainment and progress in social studies are satisfactory and meet Ministry of Education (MoE) expectations. In Arabic, they are unsatisfactory. A small number of grade 10 students who took CBSE Arabic in 2013, achieved well. In Islamic education, attainment is unsatisfactory. Progress in this subject is satisfactory.

In Arabic, children in KG1 can pronounce and write some letters correctly. Grade 1 students can write most Arabic letters. By grade 5, they can read short stories. Students cannot speak confidently and their writing skills are under-developed. In grade 9, only a few students can read long texts and identify singular and plural verbs.

In English, standards in speaking and reading are stronger than those in writing. In KG, children learn their initial letters and sounds. They begin to form letters and build words. As they move up the grades, students develop a secure grasp of grammar, punctuation and spellings. They speak confidently and fluently. Their extended writing skills are less well developed. Grade 10 students can write short essays. They do not draw on evidence from texts or relevant factual information sufficiently to back up their points.

In Islamic education, students in grade 6 show respect for the gifts of Allah. Their understanding of how to apply the tenets of Islam to their lives is limited. Older

students show more in-depth knowledge, for example, they can name the number of ‘Rakkah’ in Eid prayers.

In social studies, students in grade 5 have appropriate understanding of the UAE. They know the seven Emirates and their rulers and are familiar with the map of the region. In grade 9, students understand the impact of colonial rulers on the Arabian Peninsula.

In mathematics, grade 1 students understand 3 digit numbers. They struggle to understand the concepts of bigger and smaller. In grade 5, students can calculate volume but find multiplying decimals difficult. Open-ended problem solving and applying mathematics to real-life situations are under-developed from KG to grade 5. Students’ progress increases from grade 6 to 10 because more challenging, open-ended tasks are provided. Grade 10 students are able to calculate the area of combined shapes and solve quadratic equations.

In science, KG children know about transportation and can buy consumer items in a role-play super market. In grade 5, students know about the nervous system. By grade 10, students working with prisms can competently measure angles of incidence and refraction. They can investigate and draw conclusions well from a set of results.

Students’ skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are unsatisfactory. They have limited opportunities to apply their ICT skills across the curriculum.

Students make satisfactory progress in the Indian languages studied. Their progress in art and physical education is unsatisfactory.

Students’ personal development

Students’ personal development has a number of strong features. Students enjoy school. They are eager and well-motivated. They readily undertake leadership roles, for example as prefects, and carry them out with diligence. In assemblies, students show they are proud to be in the UAE. They sing and salute the national anthem with enthusiasm. Students are aware of the pluralism of the UAE and the opportunities this provides. On UAE Environment Day, students led a very moving assembly, demonstrating real concern about, and action to address environmental issues. There is a strong element of mutual respect in the school. Students, staff and parents, speak highly of the ‘family atmosphere’. There is no bullying. Students feel safe and secure. Attendance, at 94%, is good. Students understand how to be safe and healthy. The students are not yet strong independent learners. There are too few opportunities for them to engage in critical thinking and problem solving activities.

The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is varied across the school. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure, particularly in the upper grades where they understand and apply CBSE requirements. The school has made considerable efforts to diversify the teaching styles since the last inspection. Professional development and focused planning in subject and grade teams have enabled teachers to extend their teaching approaches. This is evident in most lessons. Teachers provide more group work and active learning tasks. Too few of these activities are sufficiently challenging for most students, and particularly for the higher attainers. Activities such as colouring, pasting and labeling worksheets in middle grades do not promote progress.

Teachers have extended their planning to take account of different learning needs. This is not having sufficient impact in lessons yet. All teachers write lesson objectives on the board. These objectives are not always specific, explained to students or used to assess learning at the end of the lesson. Students collaborate effectively and engage readily with tasks. In a good physics lesson, grade 10 boys worked in a focused and scientific way to measure the focal length of concave and convex lenses. The teacher's questions challenged and deepened their understanding as the students worked collaboratively. Learning in primary grades is restricted by insufficient opportunities to apply knowledge to real life situations. In mathematics in the lower grades, the focus is on computation and number work. Investigative tasks that require students to discuss and apply their mathematical skills are under-used. Low expectations lead to limited tasks at times. In English for example, grade 6 students with skills and understanding well beyond a basic level, spent time composing sentences starting with 'I can'. There are few opportunities for students to converse in Arabic or listen to audio tapes. The pace of lessons is often slow.

Regular marking of students' work is minimal. It does not provide feedback on how to improve. The school conducts regular assessments in the form of Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation (CEE) and formative and summative assessments as required by CBSE. The information is analysed to identify weaker students. The follow-up in lessons has limited impact. Students are not provided with improvement targets. Teachers are loyal to the school and committed to its success. Most have been there for several years despite the limited resources available to them.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The curriculum is broadly satisfactory. The school follows the CBSE curriculum, including its assessment requirements. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of extra- and co-curricular activities, with a variety of clubs held on Saturdays. The clubs include, ICT, Eco Club, Performing Arts, literary, Quiz Club, Swimming and Health and Wellness Club, as well as, a variety of sports. Students from the Eco Club are part of the 'Save the Earth' campaign. The school celebrates UAE culture and has links with other schools, including those which offer other curricula. Students participate in competitions, for example the 'enviro spellathon', and are part of the sustainable school initiative. There are strong links with the local Indian community through the Indian Social Centre. This provides support and prizes to students. Students can opt to study their native language, such as Hindi, Malayalam, Urdu and Bengali. In addition, French is provided from grade 7. In grades 11 and 12 students opt for the science or commerce 'streams' where they study a range of subjects for CBSE external examination. In the science stream, physics, chemistry and English are compulsory and there is a choice between biology or computer science and mathematics or psychology. In the commerce stream, the subjects are English, business studies, accountancy, marketing, and a choice between economics and mathematics.

Teachers are committed to imparting the content of the curriculum. They do not take sufficient account of the needs of SEN students and higher attainers. CBSE puts a focus on higher order thinking skills but they are not adequately developed in lessons. Research, problem-solving and creative skills are also underdeveloped. While there is celebration of students' abilities and talent in music, dance and plays during Annual Day, Sports Day and UAE National Day, there is no timetabled music in the curriculum.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The protection, care, guidance and support of students are satisfactory. The school has a climate of care and support which underpins all its work and makes students feel safe. The clinic is well equipped. Students are provided with regular check-ups. Nurses provide appropriate health awareness sessions for students. All staff are thoroughly vetted. The school has a child protection policy. Staff have been briefed appropriately in its implications. Most students are regular in their attendance and arrive on time. Absence is followed up appropriately, with one exception. Bus supervisors do not report the absence of students in the middle and upper grades to the school on a daily basis. This is a potential hazard. The system of rewards and sanctions is fairly applied and motivates students. The students are able to enter various competitions and many achieve certificates.

The competitions range from athletics events, to spelling bees and inter-school competitions, for example, ‘Rangoli’. There is insufficient support for students with special needs regarding their academic progress. Career counseling for older students in regard to employment opportunities and related subject choices is limited.

The quality of the school’s buildings and premises

The school’s buildings and premises are unsatisfactory. There are no obvious hazards that compromise students’ health and safety. The building is well maintained. It is clean and hygienic, with some attractive displays. The school has improved some aspects of the accommodation since the last inspection. There is now a provision for both a language and a mathematics laboratory. These are not having a substantial impact on learning. There has been no overall improvement in the quality of the buildings. Many classrooms are cramped. Teachers make the best use of them. There is no storage and very limited space to move around. The KG building is particularly limiting. There is no space for the development of gross motor skills. Some of the practical science lessons taught in classrooms are restricted by the cramped conditions. The school lacks a multi-purpose hall and indoor gymnasium. This affects physical education provision. There is no disabled access for students with physical difficulties. The playgrounds are only partially shaded. The primary and girls’ assembly area is too small for the number of students.

The school’s resources to support its aims

The school’s resources are unsatisfactory. The adequate number of appropriately qualified teachers does not include a designated special needs teacher. The school has invested in ‘data show’ projectors and laptops for teachers. School transport is safe. Medicines and other chemicals are stored securely. There are few manipulative resources for mathematics. Many science lessons take place in classrooms. When these are practical lessons, they are often inadequately resourced even though teachers bring materials from home. The library is not well resourced to provide a stimulating learning environment. The many books are not all usable. The school has made efforts to increase the play-based learning resources for KG children. There is still limited provision for child-initiated activities. Resources for physical education are very limited.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The school is well organized and managed. It is orderly and daily routines are well established. Strategic leadership for improvement is unsatisfactory. The principal and senior leadership team generate a sense of belonging in all members of the community. Parents are very supportive. The large number of parents responding

to the questionnaire about the school expressed high levels of satisfaction. The Board representative is present in the school and has a clearly defined role. Self-evaluation processes in place are not effective in addressing key weaknesses. The principal, senior staff and supervisors completed the self-evaluation form (SEF). The grades for several standards, including attainment and teaching, are over optimistic and the evidence for them is limited. Lesson observations are carried out by both middle and senior leaders. Peer observations by teachers also take place to share practice. The observations are not sufficiently rigorous in identifying the learning and progress of individuals and groups of students. They do not ask the question, 'is the learning good enough?' The school development plan (SDP) focuses appropriately on key areas and is linked with the budget. One appropriate priority is to develop teaching strategies and resources. The school has provided considerable professional development for teachers. These efforts are not having sufficient impact in improving learning. The staff appraisal process lacks rigour and has insufficient focus on impact in the classroom and outcomes for students. There is inadequate analysis of CBSE performance data. Staff do not know how to help all students to progress well. School leaders lack long term strategies to improve the buildings. The principal and senior leadership show clear commitment to improvement. They require further support with self-evaluation and other aspects of strategic leadership in order for them to continue to improve.

Progress since the last inspection

The school has made some improvements since the last inspection. The principal and senior staff have worked carefully to address issues from the previous report. The extent of improvement is not adequate. More variety in teaching strategies and improved resources in some areas is evident. These are having limited impact because expectations for teacher performance and students' learning are not high enough. The school leadership is very keen to bring about further improvements. Staff have had substantial training, including with the ADEC school improvement team. About 25 teachers attended training thrice a week at one stage. They cascaded the practice to the rest of the staff. The transfer of the strategies to the classroom is ineffective. Teachers require more guidance and better resources. Limitations in the building also affect what is able to be done. Another key weakness is the lack of rigour in monitoring the impact of the initiatives on students' progress. The school development plan has been refocused on key priorities. It has been costed and responsibilities are clearly indicated. It is not rigorously evaluated. Further support is required to enable the school to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

1. Improve teaching by:
 - i. making lesson objectives more precise about the skills and understanding to be developed, and use the learning objectives to check the extent of the learning
 - ii. ensuring group and other active learning tasks have sufficient challenge for all abilities
 - iii. providing higher order questioning to stimulate thinking, and enable students to extend their answers
 - iv. increasing the marking of students' work, providing them with feedback and targets for improvement.
2. Undertake systematic analysis of grade 10 and 12 CBSE examination data to:
 - i. determine how well the school is achieving in relation to other schools and its own previous performance
 - ii. identify relative subject performance and set targets for improvement, both for the school and for individual students.
3. Improve self-evaluation processes by increasing the rigour of lesson observation and other monitoring to identify the *impact* on the *progress* of individuals and groups.
4. Develop a long term plan to address the building's limitations.

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								