



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



Private School Inspection Report

International Academic School

Academic Year 2016 – 2017

International Academic School

Inspection Date	May 1, 2017	to	May 4, 2017
Date of previous inspection	May 29, 2016	to	June 1, 2016

General Information	
School ID	285
Opening year of school	1996
Principal	Acting principal during the inspection: Tahani Abdul Rasheed
School telephone	+971 (0)2 205 0400
School Address	Shakhbout City MFW 14, 8th Street Abu Dhabi
Official email (ADEC)	intacademic.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School website	www.iasac.ae
Fee ranges (per annum)	Average to high (AED29,000 to AED39,000)
Licensed Curriculum	
Main Curriculum	American
Other Curriculum (if applicable)	---
External Exams/ Standardised tests	International Benchmark Test (IBT); Grade 12 Ministry of Education (MoE) examinations
Accreditation	AdvancED

Students		
Total number of students	362	
%of students per curriculum (if applicable)	Main Curriculum	100%
	Other Curriculum	---
Number of students in other phases	KG	18
	Primary:	94
	Middle:	132
	High:	118
Age range	4 to 18 years	
Grades or Year Groups	KG to Grade 12	
Gender	Boys and girls	
% of Emirati Students	36%	
Largest nationality groups (%)	1. Jordanian: 19%	
	2. Egyptian: 13%	
	3. Palestinian: 9%	
Staff		
Number of teachers	40	
Number of teaching assistants (TAs)	1	
Teacher-student ratio	KG/ FS	1:12
	Other phases	1:9
Teacher turnover	25%	

Introduction

Inspection activities	
Number of inspectors deployed	3
Number of inspection days	4
Number of lessons observed	71
Number of joint lesson observations	6
Number of parents' questionnaires	42; return rate: 11%
Details of other inspection activities	Inspectors held discussions with the governing body, principal, vice principal, other senior managers, 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	'To provide a strong academic program based on national and American standards in which students can develop their academic potential to the full To provide students, through curricula and co-curricular activities, with quality education experiences which will enrich their lives and build foundations for them to become life-long learners To offer students a sense of citizenship, patriotism and appreciation of the UAE.'
School vision and mission	'To create a safe and caring world class environment where students are empowered by high quality education and are proud of their own culture and able to adapt to a rapidly changing world.' 'To seek high quality international learning for a community that investigates, discovers and innovates in order to create empowered citizens of the world.'



Admission Policy	The school has an inclusive and open admission policy.
Leadership structure (ownership, governance and management)	Leadership comprises the principal, vice principal, and the manager of finance and administration. Governance comprises the owner, the owner's brother, financial director, principal and vice principal.

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	3	0
Emotional and Behaviour Disorders (ED/ BD)	2	0
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	0	0
Speech and Language Disorders	0	0
Physical and health related disabilities	0	0
Visually impaired	0	0
Hearing impaired	0	0
Multiple disabilities	0	0

G&T Details (Refer to ADEC SEN Policy and Procedures)

G&T Category	Number of students identified
Intellectual ability	0
Subject-specific aptitude (e.g. in science, mathematics, languages)	0
Social maturity and leadership	0
Mechanical/ technical/ technological ingenuity	0
Visual and performing arts (e.g. art, theatre, recitation)	0
Psychomotor ability (e.g. dance or sport)	0

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 performance of the school is acceptable. The school opened in September 2016 in purpose-built facilities after moving from temporary premises. Approximately one quarter of the student roll, half of the teachers, and the principal are new to the school. The vice principal has managed the school effectively during the principal's recent absence in April. School leaders and staff have quickly established effective routines so that the school is now fully operational from KG to Grade 12. They work closely together and are determined to improve teaching and learning. As a result, achievement across all subjects and phases is broadly acceptable. Students' behaviour is good and their attendance is outstanding. They show appropriate respect for Islamic values and UAE culture and heritage. Although leaders are focused on improving students' achievement, analysis of assessment information does not yet provide information on the attainment of different ability groups in ways which would enable teachers to challenge and support all students to greater effect. Governors do not yet hold the school sufficiently to account for students' performance and outcomes.

Progress made since last inspection and capacity to improve

This is the school's first inspection in its present location and structure. Leaders have used an earlier inspection report of the previous school to help shape improvement. This has been an effective approach. Senior leaders have ensured that lessons make better use of resources to support learning. They have installed interactive whiteboards in almost all classrooms and these are being used appropriately by teachers and students. The school has developed its extra-curriculum provision to include music, art and physical education (PE) clubs. Acceptable improvements have been made in students' writing in Arabic and English, although this is not as well developed as students' reading skills. Senior leaders know the main areas for further improvement and what they need to do to achieve them. Overall, school leaders' capacity to improve the school is acceptable.

Development and promotion of innovation skills

The school promotes innovation skills generally effectively. For example, students use information and communications technology (ICT) to learn how to program computers to create animations. Older students use ICT to create web pages. Recycling projects demonstrate students' imaginative learning and creativity. In lessons, students are not always given sufficient opportunities to research and

enquire for themselves. Overall, the school is making acceptable progress across the curriculum to develop and teach the skills that underpin innovation.

The inspection identified the following as key areas of strength:

- students' attendance and their behaviour in lessons and around the school
- students' respect for UAE culture and heritage
- senior leaders' management of the school and their success in establishing effective new routines
- successful leadership of recent changes to the premises and provision enabling the school to operate fully in its first term of opening.

The inspection identified the following as key areas for improvement:

- students' attainment and progress in all subjects and grades at all levels
- consistency in the quality of teaching and teachers' use of assessment information
- the provision of challenging tasks in lessons which are well matched to students' needs, particularly for those who require special support or who are more-able
- governors' accountability for student performance and outcomes to further raise achievement.

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	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic (as a Second Language)	Attainment	N/A	N/A	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	N/A	N/A	Acceptable	Acceptable
Social Studies	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	N/A
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	N/A
English	Attainment	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mathematics	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Weak	Acceptable
Science	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Weak	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 children start KG with skills below those expected for their age, particularly in English. By the time they leave the school, students attain broadly in line with age-appropriate curriculum expectations across subjects. Progress in most lessons and phases is acceptable. Despite outstanding attainment by Grade 12 in recent MoE exams in Islamic education and very good attainment in Arabic, students' attainment in coursework and lessons shows that achievement in these subjects is acceptable. IBT data shows that students attain below international standards in English, mathematics and science. Internal examination and continuous assessment data indicate improvement in students' achievement in all subjects. However, inspection evidence suggests that these assessments are not always accurate or robust. Students who have special educational needs (SEN) and those who are more-able could be doing better with improved support and challenge. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Students learning Arabic as a second language (ASL) show acceptable achievement in Islamic education, Arabic and social studies in lessons, despite outstanding attainment in Grade 12 MoE examinations in Islamic education and Arabic.

Students' achievement in Islamic education is acceptable. Most students are achieving age-appropriate curriculum expectations. For example, in KG, most children can identify what a good deed is and give examples. By the end of Grade 5, most students can explain good citizenship and the importance of Islamic values such as showing mercy. In Grade 9, most can explain Islamic teachings and guidance to Muslims on matters of daily life. In Grade 12, most students can demonstrate knowledge of Islamic rules and recite verses of the Holy Qur'an following 'Tajweed' rules, in line with age-related expectations.

Students' achievement in Arabic as a first language (AFL) is acceptable overall. Most students are achieving age-appropriate curriculum expectations. For example, most children in KG can identify Arabic letters and write them in different forms. By the end of primary, where progress is good, most students can read texts correctly and speak in standard Arabic to express their points of view. By Grade 9, most can recite poetry confidently with acceptable expression. By Grade 12, most can apply grammar rules appropriate to their age. They can speak confidently in standard Arabic. Writing skills are not as well developed as other skills because students are not given enough writing opportunities in lessons.

Students' achievement in ASL is acceptable. Most students are achieving age-appropriate curriculum expectations. For example, in Grade 8, most demonstrate listening, understanding, reading, speaking and writing skills in line with expectations. They can answer comprehension questions in standard Arabic and

write simple sentences accurately. By Grade 12, most students can speak and write in full sentences using the correct vocabulary and adhering to grammar rules appropriate to their age.

Students' achievement in social studies is acceptable. Most students are achieving age-appropriate curriculum expectations. For example, in KG 1, most children are becoming familiar with UAE heritage and traditions, and can recognise traditional Emirati clothing. In Grade 4, most can locate the seven Emirates on the map and talk about the impact of UAE unity on industry and transportation. By Grade 8, most can research and discuss the quality of life in the UAE in regional and global contexts.

Children's achievement in English is acceptable in Grades 1 to 12. In KG, attainment is weak and progress is acceptable. By the end of KG, children can recognise and sound letters. They can speak using known words but do not always use full sentences. Beyond KG, most students are achieving age-appropriate curriculum expectations. By Grade 5, most can read and understand simple texts and speak confidently. In Grade 9, most can communicate their ideas effectively, identify and use rhetorical devices in English and understand the purpose these serve. Most can write using paragraphs to express points of view. By Grade 12, most students write coherently using more complex sentences and paragraphs. They can articulate an argument expressing their opinions and beliefs. Students' writing skills are not as well developed as their speaking, reading and comprehension skills.

Students' achievement in mathematics is acceptable overall. Most students are achieving age-appropriate curriculum expectations. For example, in KG1, most children can count, find and write numbers up to 14. In Grade 4, most can use a protractor accurately. Most Grade 8 students can find the length of the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle. The majority of middle school students make weak progress because teachers' expectations of them in lessons are too low. By Grade 11, most can explain how to calculate the product of two vectors on a plane.

Students' achievement in science is acceptable overall. Most are achieving age-appropriate curriculum expectations. For example, in KG2, most children understand that magnets attract metallic objects. In Grade 4, most know the phases of the moon and understand that it reflects the sun's light. By Grade 8, most know that there are different types of energy. Most students in Grade 11 understand the concept of polymerisation. At all grades, students' practical and investigative science skills are largely underdeveloped.

Students' achievement in other subjects is acceptable overall. Most are achieving age-appropriate curriculum expectations. For example, in KG1, most children can run, hop and jump with control in completing an obstacle course safely. In Grade 2



art, most can identify key features of painting used by an artist and begin to use these in their own art work. In Grade 10 ICT, most can create their own webpages using programming tags.

The overall quality of students' learning skills is acceptable. Students demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and collaborate effectively together in many lessons. When opportunities are given to discuss and present their work, they display acceptable communication skills, particularly in English. Students make connections between areas of learning in different subjects and relate this to their understanding of the world. Their research, problem solving and critical-thinking skills are now developing.

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	Good	Good	Good	Good
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

The quality of students' personal development is acceptable. Most demonstrate self-discipline and responsible attitudes towards others and their work. They display good behaviour. Bullying is rare. Most students are courteous and are respectful towards others. Most demonstrate understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Students participate in sporting events such as sports day. Most eat healthy foods. Student attendance is outstanding at 99%. Punctuality is good.

The quality of students' understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures is good. Students recite from the Holy Qur'an and Hadeeth and lead assemblies confidently. They demonstrate a good understanding of Emirati heritage and culture. Students sing the national anthem and celebrate events such as National Day and Flag Day. They have an age-appropriate understanding of their own and other world cultures, for example when they participate in events such as International Day and celebrate traditions from around the world.

The quality of students' social responsibility and innovation skills is acceptable. Students make various contributions to the local community, for example they volunteer in the local hospital when in Grade 12. They participate in events that promote innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurship, and help to raise money for The Red Crescent and Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign. The school council has yet to make an impact in improving the school. Students are aware of important environmental issues. They actively support sustainability, for example through organising a fashion show on Recycle Day to demonstrate how objects can be used in new ways.

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 quality of teaching is acceptable. Most teachers demonstrate secure knowledge of their subjects. They actively involve students in their learning, but the minority still rely on textbooks and worksheets. In a few lessons, this slows the pace of learning. Teachers use resources, including ICT, appropriately. Questioning engages students because teachers often ask for answers at a brisk pace to check their understanding. While the majority of teachers ask challenging questions, the minority have yet to use questioning in this way. Most teachers plan work which meets students' needs to promote acceptable outcomes. However, not all tasks are yet sufficiently well matched to all groups' abilities, particularly for SEN and more-able students, to accelerate their progress. Overall, while the school has been successful in raising teachers' expectations about what students can achieve, this has still to have sufficient impact in English, where, in the minority of lessons, students are required to write only single sentences when their work in books shows that they are capable of writing at greater length.

The quality of assessment is weak. Internal assessment processes do not yet provide reliable data about students' achievement. The school's own assessment tests are not sufficiently demanding or rigorous. Teachers do not benchmark data effectively to compare achievement to national and international standards. Assessment data is analysed by school leaders and gaps in students' knowledge are identified. However, the use of this information does not yet fully inform lesson planning or influence teaching. Consequently, the needs of students are not always met as well as they could be and achievement is not accelerated beyond acceptable. Teachers' knowledge of students' personal development and their strengths and weaknesses is acceptable because they know their students well. The quality of marking in books is variable, and students do not always know how to improve. Students are not yet sufficiently involved in the assessment process, for example through assessing their own or their peers' work.

Performance Standard 4: Curriculum

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

The quality of curriculum design and implementation is acceptable. The curriculum is broad and balanced and follows Virginia State standards. Continuity and progression across all subjects is acceptable and improving as teachers become more familiar with curriculum content and the significant steps to learning which each subject is structured around. The curriculum builds on prior learning and prepares students for their next phase of education adequately. Older students have the opportunity to learn physics, biology, chemistry, business studies and economics, but are not yet able to study modern languages, music or art to a higher level beyond curriculum requirements. Cross-curricular links are planned adequately through themed links such as those in the ‘My Identity’ programme, which explores ways subject topics can relate to the UAE. The school’s curriculum is reviewed periodically.

The quality of curriculum adaptation is acceptable. Although the implementation of the current curriculum is relatively recent, a few alterations have been made to meet the needs of all learners, including SEN students and those who are more-able. Curriculum enhancement and provision for enterprise and innovation is acceptable. The school provides opportunities for students to participate in a range of themed days to learn about the world around them. Community links include activities which support different community projects and raise money for worthy causes. Innovation and enterprise are emerging features of lessons, although project research and design are underdeveloped. Appropriate opportunities to develop understanding and appreciation of UAE heritage and culture are integrated through almost all subjects.

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 quality of health and safety, including safeguarding, is acceptable. Child protection procedures are in place and known by staff, parents and students. As the school currently lacks a social worker, a few students do not always feel that they know who to talk to about a concern. Students are taught how to stay safe online and participate in events such as Internet Safety Day. The school is clean and well maintained. Effective arrangements to ensure security, health and safety are in place, including procedures for students' use of transport. The school's nurse and health and safety officer keep records of documents and incidents, although these occasionally vary in quality. Lift access to all floors ensures the school is fully accessible for students with mobility difficulties. The school teaches students appropriately about the importance of healthy lifestyles.

The quality of care and support is acceptable. Courteous relationships and positive behaviour management systems produce a positive learning climate. The school is highly successful in promoting attendance and effective in promoting punctuality. It is still developing its new systems to identify SEN students and those who are gifted and talented (G&T) more robustly, although SEN students are identified effectively from external processes. Support for these groups of students is improving because of adaptations to the curriculum but the school recognises it has more to do to ensure all students make the progress they are capable of. Advice and guidance to older students about career choices and higher education is acceptable and improving.

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	Acceptable
Governance	Acceptable
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable

The overall quality of leadership and management is acceptable. The vice principal has managed the school effectively during the principal's recent absence. School leaders have established effective routines. Leaders and staff are committed to improving the school and raising students' achievement. They have a secure understanding of best practice in teaching, but are less confident in use of assessment data, for example to evaluate the impact of provision on learning. Leaders' success in setting up a new school in less than one year demonstrates their acceptable capacity to improve the school further.

The quality of self-evaluation and development planning is acceptable. The school's self-evaluation form (SEF) identifies key strengths and areas for improvement. The school has made effective use of the SEF rubrics to report its performance accurately. Leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching, although their focus is more often on teaching rather than learning. The school development plan (SDP) links closely to the SEF, setting achievable targets to raise standards. Leaders have quite rightly used recommendations from the former school's inspection report to make acceptable progress in improving this new school.

The quality of partnerships with parents and the community is acceptable. The recently established parent council is beginning to organise events and raise funds, and leaders are beginning to listen to the views of parents to improve provision. Communication with parents is developing well. Parents receive updates on students' performance through texts, email and social media in addition to termly written reports and optional meetings with staff. Local community links are at the early stages of development.

The quality of governance is acceptable. The governing body responds supportively and seeks stakeholders' views to improve provision. It does not yet hold school leaders sufficiently to account for student performance. However, now that the



school is operational and fully compliant with regulations, the governing body is well placed to focus more on raising student achievement.

The quality of management, staffing, facilities and resources is acceptable. Most aspects of the school run smoothly. All staff are qualified and benefit from some professional development. The school building has a range of specialist facilities for PE, music, art, science and ICT. Resources are adequate, but are not always used as effectively as they could be to enhance teaching and learning.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Improve students' achievement in all subjects by:
 - i. identifying the lowest performing aspects of each subject and implementing specific improvement approaches with precise targets to measure success
 - ii. improving support and challenge in lessons for students who have special needs, are more-able or who are gifted and talented
 - iii. raising expectations of all students, particularly in writing.
2. Improve teaching across the school by:
 - i. asking open-ended questions which deepen students' understanding in all lessons
 - ii. providing consistent and regular opportunities for students to work independently and collaboratively
 - iii. further developing critical-thinking, problem-solving and innovation skills in lessons
3. Improve the accuracy and use of assessment by:
 - i. providing assessment measures that are more challenging to accurately assess students' attainment against curriculum levels, and benchmarking student data against national and international standards in all core subjects
 - ii. using assessment information more accurately to plan lessons which meet the needs of different groups of students
 - iii. developing marking and feedback so that students know how to improve their work, including by involving students in assessing their own and each other's work.
4. Increase the impact of leadership and management on student achievement by:
 - i. improving systems to identify and plan for students who have special needs, are more-able or who are gifted and talented
 - ii. monitoring lessons with a greater focus on the impact teaching has on learning
 - iii. training governors to use school data so that they can hold leaders more effectively to account for students' achievement.