



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



Inspection Report

Palestine Private Academy

Academic Year 2013 – 14

Iqraa

Palestine Private Academy

Inspection Date	27 – 30 January 2014
School ID#	170
Licensed Curriculum	Ministry of Education (MoE)
Number of Students	1169
Age Range	3 to 16 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Mahmoud Hijah
School Address	Al Sudan Street, Al Ain, P.O. Box 41466
Telephone Number	+971 (0)3 767 8914
Fax Number	+971 (0)3 767 1420
Official Email (ADEC)	palestine.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	www.palestinepvt.ae
Date of last inspection	26 – 29 February 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 response to the issues identified in the last inspection report
- the attendance rates of students
- the behaviour of students
- the quality of relationships within school community.

The main areas for improvement are:

- further development of students' 21st Century skills
 - the breadth of the curriculum
 - rigorous evaluation of the school's performance
 - use of assessment data to provide appropriate challenge in lessons.
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Introduction

The school was inspected by a team of 5 inspectors who observed 96 lessons. They met with school and subject leaders, teachers, parents and students and also observed assemblies, break periods and students' arrival and departure. Inspectors analysed data and documents supplied by the school. In addition, 431 responses from parents to a questionnaire about the school were analysed.

Description of the School

Palestine Private School opened in January 1981 in Al Ain. The school's mission states that it is looking forward to building a generation of students able to learn and acquire knowledge, be responsible and create the interaction between students, administration, teaching staff and families to create an attractive educational environment and benefitting from the wider society and its purposes.

There are 1169 students on roll: 645 boys and 524 girls. There are 175 in Kindergarten (KG), 371 in Grades 1 to 3, 342 in Grades 4 to 6 and 281 students in Grades 7 to 9. Of these, 97% of students are of Arab heritage and 99% are Muslim. There are no Emirati students; 37% of the students are from Jordan, 23% from Palestine, 22% from Syria, and a smaller number of students from Yemen and Egypt. There are 35 non-Arab students from Afghanistan. The school has identified 7 students with special educational needs (SEN) and a further 43 students with language difficulties.

The school follows the Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum. Student admissions procedures include an interview and assessment.

The three owners are new since the previous inspection. The Principal was appointed in 2005 and the Vice-Principal in 2013. There are 66 teachers, and 11 administrative and technical staff. Annual fees range from AED 2,000 to AED 5,750 and are in the very affordable to affordable categories.

The Effectiveness of the School

Students' attainment & progress

Standards in mathematics are close to best international practice and in Arabic close to ADEC expectations. Attainment in all other subjects is below the levels expected of students of similar age and aptitude. Progress is satisfactory in Arabic and unsatisfactory in all other subjects.

In Arabic, students demonstrate effective speaking, listening and reading skills. Standards are higher in the lower grades. In English, listening skills are stronger than speaking skills due to few opportunities to develop speaking skills and group work which is dominated by single students. In most grades students speak confidently; Grade 8 and 9 girls can write sentences consistently and with increasing confidence; in all other grades writing skills lack sufficient development. In mathematics, attainment is satisfactory and students demonstrate appropriate calculation skills, especially those in the older grades. Their problem-solving skills are weaker. Students in the lower grades progress at a slower rate because there is too much repetition and practice of work that they already know. The level of challenge in Grades 8 and 9 leads to more consistent progress. In science, progress is often less than satisfactory due to a lack of challenge, especially for the younger and more able students. With the exception of Grade 9, the knowledge and understanding of older students are close to expected standards. In Islamic education and social studies, students' rate of progress is unsatisfactory because work does not meet their needs and they are not given sufficient opportunities to make connections with their own experiences.

KG children are effectively developing their gross motor skills through outdoor play. Progress in all other areas is restricted because the activities provided do not build on prior attainment.

Students are failing to develop 21st Century skills because there are insufficient opportunities provided in lessons. The school does not use high quality standardized tests and the results of the assessments which are made are not used effectively to establish students' skills and understanding in order to measure progress over time.

Students' personal development

Attendance is high. By contrast, punctuality at the start of the day is weak. The school does not do enough to encourage parents to bring children on time. Most students are confident and have positive attitudes to learning in all subjects. They relate well to each other and are courteous and respectful towards teachers and

visitors. Their behaviour in lessons and assemblies is good, especially that of girls. Rare incidents of behaviour that is less than acceptable occur in some senior boys' lessons when the level of challenge does not meet their needs. The school provides limited opportunities for students to develop leadership roles and this limits the development of the personal skills, such as persistence, that will prepare them for the next stages in their learning. Students show respect for UAE values. Many students show limited practical understanding of healthy eating habits.

The quality of teaching and learning

Teachers maintain positive relationships with their students and behaviour management is mostly good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and this ensures accurate learning. Many teachers share lesson outcomes with their students. The range and effectiveness of teaching styles that are used have improved as a result of professional development. For example, most lessons include a variety of activities and opportunities for group work, and students enjoy working together. Often the group-work does not encourage collaboration and the activities are better suited to paired or individual working. A few teachers use worksheets that provide appropriate tasks for students of different abilities. This is not a consistent practice across the school and often the use of these differentiated tasks is limited to a small section of the lesson. There is a lack of challenge in many lessons. This is due to too much time spent on whole-class teaching when only one student has the opportunity to answer and the others are a silent audience. This leads to a slow pace of learning and restricts progress. There are too few opportunities given to students to develop research skills and other 21st Century skills. The monitoring and marking of students' work is not effective enough to ensure that students know how well they are progressing or what their targets are for improvement.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The school does not provide a sufficiently broad, balanced or relevant curriculum. It does not provide access to music and the timetable does not allow all students to take art. KG in particular has no provision for art, music or science. It does not provide continuity and progression and expectations are too low. There are inconsistencies in the number of periods allocated to subjects, between and within the same grade.

The curriculum has not been adapted to meet the needs of gifted and talented students or those with SEN. There are few extra-curricular activities provided to enhance students' interests and talents. The curriculum effectively promotes an understanding of the UAE and community values. The school does not adequately prepare students for the next stages in their education. This concern was raised

by some parents in response to the inspection questionnaire. The weaknesses in curriculum implementation contribute to why many students' academic progress is unsatisfactory.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The positive school ethos is reflected in high quality relationships and the caring atmosphere and support students receive from teachers. Student welfare in the school enables most students to feel secure, happy and looked after. The pastoral system does not sufficiently track each student's personal and academic progress. The guidance and procedures for students leaving school after Grade 9 do not adequately ensure a smooth transition to the next school. Rewards and sanctions are fair. There is no corporal punishment. The child protection policy is clear and effective in protecting students. A well-equipped clinic and qualified nurse ensure that provision of first aid is improving. The school is vigilant in safeguarding students, including when they arrive and depart.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

Buildings and premises are unsatisfactory in several major respects. Many of the classrooms are too small for the number of students, especially in the boys' section. This limits the range of activities that can take place. Management is aware of the deficiencies and there is some progress in addressing them. Some of the recent changes include new science laboratories, a computer room, library and reception area. A designated prayer room has been established for girls. The exterior of the boys' building has recently been repainted and the classrooms redecorated creating a more welcoming environment. KG children have access to indoor and outdoor play facilities. Toilet facilities are inadequate and not enough attention is paid to monitoring their cleanliness. There are no indoor facilities for physical education. Students' health and safety are taken seriously and the security of the site is good.

The school's resources to support its aims

Teachers are adequately qualified and sufficient in number. The quality, quantity and range of resources do not adequately support effective curriculum delivery. The recent installation of 25 Smart Boards in classrooms and training for teachers in their use has improved student access to information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning. .. In some lessons this has resulted in enhanced student use. ICT provision overall is still unsatisfactory. The library facility and low number of books provide a very limited resource. The new KG outdoor play area offers effective support for children's development needs.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The appointment of a Vice-Principal has strengthened leadership since the previous inspection; he has been the driving force for many of the improvements. The introduction of a curriculum committee has helped develop a better understanding that the curriculum requires adaptation. The impact on curriculum development and implementation is still limited. The change in ownership has resulted in clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the owners, Board of Directors and senior leaders. The processes by which the Principal is held accountable to the Board of Directors are effective and regularly invoked. Subject co-ordinators have been given an increased role in evaluating teaching and more non-teaching time to undertake these responsibilities. The self-evaluation form (SEF) is overly positive and provides little evidence to substantiate the grades. Monitoring and evaluating the work of the school lacks sufficient rigour. New systems for performance management have resulted in more effective evaluation of teaching. Evaluation of student performance and the quality of provision is limited. The use of performance data is not used to inform the planning for lessons. The school development plan (SDP) provides attention to the recommendations of the previous inspection. It is strong on aims and significantly more limited in its identification of strategies for their implementation. There is an effective system to deal with parents' complaints. Most responses from the parents' questionnaire were positive and supportive of the school.

Progress since the last inspection

The many areas for improvement that were identified in the previous inspection report provided major challenges for the school. An effective plan has resulted in many positive changes. There have been significant improvements in the quality and effectiveness of senior leaders and subject co-ordinators. The progress and attainment of KG children has improved as a result of new equipment for play. There is less reliance on textbooks by all teachers. A child protection policy has been introduced and corporal punishment is forbidden. Student behaviour has improved and is at least satisfactory. All of the identified breaches of ADEC regulations and health and safety concerns have been addressed.

The school and its leaders have demonstrated satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Develop students' 21st Century skills by:
 - i. increasing opportunities in lessons to develop independent learning skills
 - ii. developing collaborative skills by ensuring all students take part in relevant group-work
 - iii. increasing opportunities to develop research skills
 - iv. increasing opportunities to use ICT to support learning.
2. Broaden the curriculum by introducing music for KG and enable all students to have access to art.
3. Develop the use of assessment to:
 - i. identify skills and understanding in order to measure students' progress over time
 - ii. identify challenging targets for students to meet their different ability levels and raise attainment
 - iii. ensure that tasks set in lessons are matched to the needs of students, especially the gifted and talented and those with SEN.
4. Increase the rigour of evaluating the work of the school by:
 - i. providing further training for subject co-ordinators to effectively monitor the impact of teaching on learning so that activities in lessons match the needs of students
 - ii. providing evidence to support judgments made in the SEF.

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								