



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



Inspection Report

Pearl Primary School

Academic Year 2013 – 14

Iqraa

Pearl Primary School

Inspection Date	28 – 31 October 2013
School ID#	29
Licensed Curriculum	English National Curriculum
Number of Students	670
Age Range	5 to 11 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Maureen Chapman
School Address	PO Box 128484, Abu Dhabi
Telephone Number	+971 (0)2 641 8887
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Official Email (ADEC)	pearlprimary@adec.ac.ae
School Website	-----
Date of last inspection	8 – 9 May 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 A;	GRADE 2
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The main strengths of the school are:

- strong teaching and well above average attainment in the English National Curriculum
- outstanding leadership, personal development of students and other key elements of the school's provision
- very good progress in addressing the issues raised in the previous inspection report
- exemplary relationships and attitudes of students from 47 countries to each other, and their strong commitment to learning.

The main areas for improvement are:

- continued focus on raising standards in Arabic, Islamic and Social studies.
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Introduction

The school was inspected by 4 inspectors. They observed 66 lessons, conducted several discussions with senior staff, the heads of faculty, co-coordinators, teachers, support staff, students and parents. They analysed test and assessment results, scrutinised students' work across the school, analysed the 157 responses to the parents' questionnaire about the school and considered many of the school's policy and other documents. The principal was involved throughout the process.

Description of the School

The Pearl Primary School opened in a refurbished ex-government school in 2007. It aims to provide an education that:

- develops the highest attainment and standards
- promotes lifelong learning
- maximises the learning potential of every student through creative, imaginative and challenging experiences
- develops knowledge and skills
- instils a sense of responsibility and understanding of the need for courtesy and consideration of others.

The diverse school population comprises 670 students from 47 nationalities. 27% are Emirati, 20% British, 7% Canadian, 6% Jordanian, 5% Egyptian and 5% Australian. There are further small proportions from many countries around the world. There are 360 boys and 310 girls. 63% of the students are Muslim and 43% Arab. 63% are identified as having English as an additional language (EAL). 6% of students have special needs (SEN). The main needs identified are moderate learning difficulties and one student on the autistic spectrum. In addition, 23% of students are identified as gifted and talented (G&T). The school educates students from the foundation stage (which corresponds to kindergarten) to grade 6, using the English National Curriculum, with adaptations to meet the needs of the diverse student population. The majority of teachers are British. All are well qualified. The fees are set for all students at AED 39,600. The principal has been in post since shortly after the school opened. She is supported by two assistant principals, the head of Arabic and head of learning support, which between them, comprise the senior leadership team. Recently introduced year group leaders complete the leadership structure.

The Effectiveness of the School

Students' attainment & progress

Students' attainment and progress in English, maths and science are outstanding. They are good in Arabic, Islamic and social studies. The school collects an extensive range of performance data. It is thoroughly analysed. Efficient tracking systems are in place to monitor the attainment and progress of students. This data is used to identify learning targets and intervention groups to accelerate learning. Able students receive challenging activities which extend their thinking and progress. Entry assessments indicate 43% of students have little command over English when they arrive. Very effective provision in the foundation stage accurately targets and meets all needs. Progress is rapid. By year 6, all are articulate, fluent English speakers and are able to write extended passages in a variety of genres. These obey grammatical conventions. Students in year 6, for example, wrote sensitively about being an evacuee during the Second World War. They were able to explain the passive and active tenses. Over 50% achieve level 5 in validated standard attainment tests. The school value added score is 103.8. This puts them in the top 5% of English schools. The school meets and frequently exceeds international standards. Progress in maths and science is similarly outstanding. Students are able to accurately manipulate number by the end of key stage 1 (KS1). Numeric proficiency acquired in KS1 underpins the rapid progress in key stage 2 (KS2). Year 6 students are able to solve algebraic equations and understand trigonometric shapes. There is a strong emphasis on investigational science. Foundation stage (FS) children carry out simple investigations, for example, using a magnifying glass to look at the structure of a growing flower. Results are recorded using a digital camera. Knowledge and understanding of scientific practices develop systematically throughout the school. By year 6, students have an excellent technical vocabulary. They talk with confidence about issues such as adaption and interdependence. Technology is used skilfully to support and extend learning. Students confidently access websites as part of research projects.

The school has worked effectively to raise attainment in Arabic subjects since the last inspection. There is more to do to raise the attainment and progress to the level of other core subjects. Detailed analysis of performance data is used to adapt provision and provide timely interventions. Most FS children are able to identify Arabic letters and link them to an object. Year 4 students produce power point presentations relating to everyday situations such as 'playing in the park'. Year 6 non native Arabic speakers engage in role play and are able to speak and write simple sentences. Overall, non-native speakers are still hesitant in speaking Arabic spontaneously. In social studies, students gain a good understanding of the

changes that have occurred in the UAE. Students develop a good understanding of Islamic values and their importance to their lives. Students have frequent opportunities to work in groups and independently. Self and peer assessment is securely embedded in daily routines. Attainment in other subjects is good or better. The instrumental and choral performance of students is exceptional.

Students' personal development

Students' personal development is outstanding. Students state that they 'thoroughly enjoy school' and are 'excited by the education they receive'. They readily grasp the opportunities to be leaders. The school's council, prefect and house system enable students to assume responsibility and gain independence. They are proud to do so. There is an extremely positive ethos in the school. Students know the difference between right and wrong and reflect this in the way they interact with each other. Behaviour is exemplary. Students are very sensitive to others' needs irrespective of ethnicity, nationality or gender. They state that there are no incidences of bullying. All students know the words of the UAE national anthem. They stand respectfully when it is played and sing with passion and feeling. Students are immensely proud to represent their school and to take part in the extensive extracurricular programme. They have highly developed interpersonal skills and the personal qualities required for the next stage of their education.

The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching in most lessons is very good and quite often outstanding. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. Objectives and success criteria are an integral part of every lesson. They are frequently revisited to reaffirm the high quality of learning that is expected. Students have a clear understanding of the purpose of their learning and the expectations of them. Teachers expertly employ a wide range of teaching strategies and techniques. Students are exceptionally well motivated and highly engaged in their learning. Challenging tasks are clearly matched to learning needs and build on prior knowledge. This ensures continuous progress and high attainment. Highly trained teaching assistants support intervention groups very effectively. Staff use skilled questioning to challenge students' thinking. Regular use of self and peer assessment further encourage critical thinking. Students refine and adapt their work to make considered improvements. Teachers of Arabic have received additional professional development. They have made good progress in extending their skills and teaching strategies which lagged behind those in other subjects. This is beginning to have a positive impact on learning. Relationships at all levels are particularly good. There is an obvious trust between all concerned underpinned by an ethos

of continuous improvement. In many cases, classrooms are exemplars of outstanding practice.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The school has developed a 'creative curriculum'. Students are given opportunities to use learned skills in a practical way. Skills are not taught in isolation. A thematic approach gives meaning and purpose to learning. For example, the elements of instructional writing were taught discretely. Students then practised the skill to explain how to 'mummify' fish. They subsequently followed the instructions and carried out the mummification. Progress has been made in delivering the Arabic curriculum. This is particularly evident in the FS where skills taught are practised during activity sessions. This is not yet consistent across the school. Curriculum provision in the FS is outstanding. Children are highly engaged and concentrate on purposeful activities for extended periods. Enjoyment is high and progress rapid. The English curriculum has clearly defined levels and outcomes. These are regularly exceeded. The school has made significant progress in promoting understanding of the values and culture of the UAE. The national anthem is sung and the oath recited daily. Arabic features in all assemblies. Residential visits enable students to explore the country's heritage. The wealth of extracurricular experiences develops students' talents and greatly enriches curricular provision.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

This is a very caring school where the protection, guidance and support for students are very thorough. Close assessment of all students takes place. Targeted provision follows. This ensures students academic and pastoral needs are fully met. Attention to students' health and safety is stringent. Training takes place on a regular basis to update staff on policies, procedures and practices. The school has numerous first aiders, in addition to the school nurse, whose training is monitored. Good communication with parents and their early involvement prevent issues becoming problems. Attendance and tardiness are strictly monitored. Parents are contacted if there is unauthorised absence. Students become excited in the 'rewards assembly' as they wait to see which class has won the 'bear' for best attendance. The ethos of the school is one of exceptionally high expectation for, and of, students. Since the last inspection, a large prayer room has been created for Muslim students. Staff and students have good access to this facility.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The judicious use of space to create learning and resource areas is an outstanding feature of a very well maintained building. It is further enhanced by the

exceptional quality of displays, and photographs of students engaged in learning. This creates an extremely rich educational environment. Classrooms are of a reasonable size, enhanced by large well used ‘shared areas’. The play space has shaded play and safety surfaces. The football pitch is all weather but lacks shade. A limited number of cubicles in the swimming changing rooms have been built. This was in response to requests from some parents. Risk assessments are carried out regularly. There is a planned maintenance and review schedule. There is no lift or other provision for students who have difficulty climbing stairs. The school is very clean. In all aspects it provides a healthy environment for the school community. The school is surrounded by a high wall which deters intruders. Security is high. Parents and visitors to the school are required to have passes before entry is permitted. Close circuit cameras monitor the building.

The school’s resources to support its aims

The school has high quality resources to support teaching and learning. They are closely aligned to the specific learning needs of the school population. There is an abundance of reading materials to meet the needs of the EAL students. Classrooms and shared areas are exceptionally well resourced with materials and interactive white boards. The latter are particularly well used. The school library is very well stocked with computers, reference and reading books of different genres. The stock of books in Arabic has been increased since the last inspection. The school has introduced iPads in the FS and lap tops for KS1 and KS2. This makes technology more readily available and increases access to the school wireless network. The provision for music and physical education are strong. They both have an excellent range of equipment. School numbers have increased significantly. The teacher student ratio remains good. Staff are well qualified. The number of support staff is high. The school has introduced Arabic staff to support learning. They are not available to support all classes which limits their impact on students’ language development as a whole.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The principal provides outstanding leadership. She has a very clear understanding of school strengths and development needs. The improvement plan clearly reflects the aims of the school. It succinctly outlines the strategies required to achieve them. The changed leadership structure accommodates the demands of significant growth in student numbers. The distributed leadership empowers all those who work in the school. The profile of Arabic has been raised with the appointment of the head of faculty to the senior leadership team. Leadership at all levels functions exceptionally well. Key issues raised in the last inspection have been addressed. The principal successfully strives to drive up educational

provision. There are very good communication structures in place for parents to express their views. Due diligence is taken to ensure there is compliance with all regulations. This is a very good school with several outstanding features. The progress already achieved in improving the Arabic dimension of the curriculum indicates the capacity of leadership to drive forward the further enhancements necessary to bring provision in this area in line with the outstanding educational experience offered to students elsewhere in the school.

Progress since the last inspection

The school has made very good progress in addressing the issues raised in the last inspection report. Training and continued support for teachers of Arabic has improved their practice. Additional resources and interventions have been put in place. Student attainment has risen. Smaller classes and additional teachers have resulted in increased joint planning with class teachers. This has enabled more cross curricular links and increased the relevance of tasks. The profile of Arabic has been raised. It is now an integral part of morning senior staff meetings. As seen above, the school is aware there is room for still further progress.

What the school should do to improve further:

Continue to raise standards in Arabic, Social and Islamic studies by:

- i. maintaining the support and training for Arabic teachers to improve the quality of teaching and student outcomes
- ii. increasing the level of Arabic classroom assistant support
- iii. using incidental Arabic as a daily part of school life to further promote bilingualism.

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 accommodation 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								