



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



New School Inspection Report

Al Rawafed Private School

Academic Year 2013 – 14

Iqraa

Al Rawafed Private School

Inspection Date	5 – 8 May 2014
School ID#	229
Licensed Curriculum	American
Number of Students	1,670
Age Range	3 to 18 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Fadia Alkalla Jibreel
School Address	Khalifa City A, Abu Dhabi
Telephone Number	+971 (0)2 666 2663
Fax Number	-----
Official Email (ADEC)	Rawafed.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	www.rawafedschool.com
Date of opening	1 September 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
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The main strengths of the school are:

- the director and leadership team have enabled the school to make an appropriate start in its first year of operation in the new building
- students' attainment is approaching international age expectations in most core subjects
- effective specialist subject teaching accelerates progress in the upper grades
- the school climate is positive and students of different nationalities mix well and are acquiring a sound understanding of UAE culture and values
- the school is developing effective links with outside partners.

The main areas for improvement are:

- the need to ensure safety issues are addressed without delay
- the deficiencies in the new building to be completed in time for the next academic year as planned
- the focus on extended writing in English and Arabic throughout the school
- the behaviour of boys in middle grades
- the school's self-evaluation processes
- students' punctuality.

Introduction

The school was inspected by 5 inspectors. The inspectors observed 100 lessons, conducted several meetings with senior staff, middle leaders, the Board representative, teachers, support staff, students and parents. They analysed test and assessment results and scrutinised students' work across the school. They considered the 171 responses to the parents' questionnaire and many of the school's policies and other documents. The director was involved throughout the inspection process and engaged in a joint lesson observation with the lead inspector.

Description of the School

The school opened in a new building in Khalifa City A, on 1st September 2013. It had been in operation since 1993, first as a villa school, then in a school building in the Bateen area of Abu Dhabi. Around 600 students transferred from the old school to the new site. About 200 students are from the local area, Khalifa City A, Baniyas, Shahamah and Mohamed bin Zayed City. Other students are from Abu Dhabi Island. The school aims are to 'create a safe and caring environment to foster the all-round development of students, enabling them to be effective members of the world community.'

There are 942 boys and 728 girls. These break down into: 266 children in kindergarten (KG), 598 in the junior section (grades 1 – 5), 472 in the middle section (grades 6 – 9) and 334 in the senior section (grades 10 – 12). Of the 15 students who are identified as having special educational needs (SEN), 9 have learning difficulties, 3 are 'slow learners', 1 is on the autistic spectrum and 1 is visually impaired. The school has identified a further 70 students who require support with language.

The proportion of students of Arab heritage is 90% and 98% are Muslim. 43 different nationalities are represented in the student population with 44% of students from the UAE, 15% from Jordan, 9% from Palestine, 10% from Egypt, 6% from Syria, 4% from the USA, 4% from Lebanon and 3% from Canada. Further small proportions are from 35 other countries.

School fees are in the medium to high range, from AED 19,000 in KG rising to AED 28,000 in grade 12.

The Effectiveness of the School

Students' attainment & progress

Attainment is broadly in line with international standards by the time students leave the school in grade 12, except in writing in both English and Arabic. Progress in the senior grades is more consistently in line with expectations in all core subjects, including information and communication technology (ICT). There is clear evidence of progress in other subjects, such as physical education (PE), French and psychology. The majority of grade 11 and 12 students take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (ToEFL) and Scholastic Aptitude Test 1 (SAT) and move successfully to university when they graduate. Emirati students also take the Common Educational Proficiency Assessment (CEPA).

Boys' progress lags behind that of girls in English and Arabic. Higher order thinking skills are less well developed, particularly in junior and middle grades. More able students do not make the rapid progress of which they are capable because they are given insufficiently challenging work.

Students make adequate progress in English. KG2 children understand initial letters and sounds and can write their names. In grade 6, students have an understanding of English grammar and use an appropriate range of vocabulary, so that by grade 11, most students speak spontaneously with confidence. Their extended writing skills are below expectations because they lack opportunities to build their skills in a systematic way throughout the grades.

A National Identity Initiative in KG, coupled with effective teaching in Arabic literacy, prepares children well for the next stage of their education. By grade 5, students can classify nouns and correct spelling mistakes by applying grammatical rules. They can write sentences using the appropriate adverbs. In the upper grades, students' extended writing skills remain underdeveloped.

Students develop adequate numeracy skills. By grade 5, students understand how to divide large numbers and are beginning to grasp the use of 'remainders' and 'quotients'. By grade 11, students are gaining sound understanding of trigonometry. In science, grade 5 students work collaboratively to compare and contrast mixtures and solutions, and can explain their findings. Effective teaching in grade 11 develops students' understanding of the effects of pollution and anoxic water. This represents a satisfactory level of progress.

In Islamic education, younger students have sound understanding of the 5 pillars of Islam. They continue to make appropriate progress so that in middle grades they have a good knowledge of the life and work of the Prophet Mohammad and

understand the meaning of verses of the Holy Qur'an. In social studies, students make adequate progress from understanding basic facts about the United Arab Emirates (UAE) culture, its traditions and core values to making the link between moral stories about co-operation and the setting up of the UAE.

The school uses Iowa standardised tests in grades 3 to 11 to chart attainment against international expectations. The considerable data generated by the tests is currently underused, so the potential for tracking progress and identifying gaps in learning is missed. The school's substantial internal assessments are not moderated sufficiently by teachers to standardise their marking and increase reliability.

Students' personal development

The atmosphere in the school is friendly. Students feel safe. Most students, particularly girls, have positive attitudes to school and learning. Occasional disagreements are reported and dealt with quickly. Older students show sensitivity and awareness. For example, grade 11 girls enacted a drama about human problems, challenging stereotypes and showing insight. New students have been assimilated well. Students from different nationalities enjoy each other's company. They speak about the school being a community where there equality is promoted. The misbehaviour of a small number of boys in middle grades shows itself in disengagement in some lessons, litter dropped casually and, occasionally, graffiti on walls. Not enough is being done to encourage these boys to take pride in their work and the school environment.

Students are acquiring a sound understanding of the UAE, its culture and traditions. Opportunities such as an international business day help their understanding of the wide range of nationalities represented in the Emirates. Students undertake a number of enrichment activities such as a Math Fest, Science Fair and ICT design competition. Students are not showing sufficient awareness of the importance of healthy living and applying it in their own lives. They have insufficient opportunities to exercise leadership roles. The student council, comprised mostly of older students, is not active enough in its contribution to the school. Attendance at 95% is above average. Too many students arrive late for school and not enough is done to address this.

The quality of teaching and learning

The school has 35 new teachers this year to provide for the increase in student numbers and the transition to the new site. This has presented a challenge in terms of establishing consistency of teaching quality across the school. An external company provides an extensive professional development programme to

establish common expectations and practice. The consultants provide weekly sessions on aspects of good practice. The early impact of this is seen in teachers' planning which follows a common format and identifies clear objectives for lessons.

Most teachers have secure subject knowledge. The stronger teaching is found in the upper grades, where teachers make good use of their subject expertise to challenge and engage students. For example, in a grade 11 physics lesson, the teacher provoked students' thinking with a good starter question, 'How can we create a current without a power source?' This, and other questions, stimulated quick recall of previous learning, synthesising with new learning on electro-magnetism to grasp Lenz's Law. In an effective grade 3 English lesson, the teacher made learning about verb tenses fun and challenging at the same time.

There is still considerable variation in teaching quality. Many teachers are not clear about how to differentiate effectively to ensure students of all abilities are challenged. This often disadvantages the higher attainers who have to wait for others to catch up, or to engage in learning activities that are too easy for them. In several lessons, teachers rely too heavily on worksheets and repetitive exercises which provide limited new learning. There are weaknesses in the use of assessment to support learning. In too many instances teachers leave students' work unmarked or do not provide feedback on how to improve. Students have relatively few opportunities to use criteria or rubrics to assess their own or others' work.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The curriculum implementation is broad and balanced in most respects. The lack of specialist accommodation for art and music is affecting the provision in those areas. French is provided in grades 4 to 6 and elective subjects in the grades 10 to 12. Students choose from the three sciences, psychology, economics, and business. A 75% grade point average score is required for entry to the science pathway, as is common in similar schools.

Upper grade students have access to a good range of universities and higher educational institutions through visits out and extensive 'fairs' in school. This means they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The school has a good link or 'sharakah' with the American University of Sharjah (AUS) which it plans to extend next year in regard to mathematics and science provision. A number of enrichment opportunities are provided. For example, grade 9 - 12 students undertook an IT Fair Challenge recently. This is a competition through the AUS, with finals at UAE level. Students worked in groups to design ways of

using technology to improve aspects of everyday life. There are no extra-curricular activities after school.

There is relatively limited curriculum for higher attainers. There are limited opportunities for students to develop independent learning skills. There is some appropriate support for SEN students in grades 1 to 3. The school lacks a well-developed phonics programme in English which all teachers in KG and junior grades can be trained to use consistently. KG children have insufficient opportunities for child initiated or play-based learning.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The school has a supportive pastoral system with support staff, supervisors, a counsellor, 2 social workers and an SEN co-ordinator. A high proportion (95%) of parents responding to the questionnaire about the school say that their children are safe and well cared for. A caring and supportive approach gives children a secure start in KG. The clinic functions well with 2 nurses and a part-time doctor. Swift and effective first aid was given to a student who collapsed in class recently, enabling her to recover quickly. Thorough staff vetting procedures are in place. The school has an appropriate child protection policy. Whilst many staff are aware of its implications, updated training for all staff has not yet been provided.

The school's management does not always supervise the behaviour of some boys, particularly those in middle grades effectively. Teachers lack clear and consistent strategies for rewards and sanctions to address unacceptable behaviour. The attendance system works well with appropriate tracking of absentees. Processes to tackle lateness are not effective enough. Assessment and academic guidance do not provide students with targets and steps to improve their work.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

Overall, the school's buildings and premises are unsatisfactory. The refurbished building provides a range of bright specialist accommodation, such as the library, gymnasium and science laboratories which support learning appropriately. Stimulating displays in corridors and some classrooms further enhance the environment. Not all aspects of the building are fully completed yet. The school lacks some specialist rooms, especially for art and music, toilets for boys and prayer rooms. There is a lack of outside play areas, and areas such as the KG area are unfinished. Subsidence has undermined the canopy posts in 2 playgrounds adjacent to a large construction site. Currently, 2 KG classes move upstairs for lessons in Arabic which is against regulations. All of these issues are due to be rectified during the summer recess. The school security is vigilant with several security guards and close circuit television (CCTV) cameras. Classrooms are

cramped when used by large classes of students. Fire doors are kept locked which presents a potential safety hazard. The partially unfinished road around the school causes severe congestion and a potential hazard to students on arrival and departure.

The school's resources to support its aims

The resources in the large library and sports facilities support learning well. All classrooms have interactive whiteboards which enhance learning in many lessons. The material resources in junior classrooms are insufficient to help teachers provide effective targeted activities which will develop specific skills. For example, there are insufficient concrete or manipulative resources for mathematics and language activities. Play-based learning resources are lacking in KG. The school has carried out a number of fire evacuations. They have not produced formal risk assessments at the time of the inspection.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The director and leadership team have enabled the school to make an appropriate start in the new building. They dealt well with the considerable extra numbers of students seeking admission at the start and in subsequent weeks. The senior leaders' drive to improve teaching and learning is evident in the very considerable investment in professional development. Middle leaders are involved in self-evaluation and worked in teams to develop the self-evaluation form (SEF). Their skills require further development as the SEF grades are over optimistic. Lesson observations are not focused sufficiently on the progress of individual and groups in determining effectiveness. The school is not yet triangulating information from assessment data with lesson observations and checks of students' work to identify weaknesses or gaps in learning. The school development plan is focused on appropriate priorities. Financial funding of key priorities for moving forward is in place. Parents are supportive of the school and say communication processes are open and effective. Students are not involved in school decision-making. The school board, which consists of the owners, director and one other member, is supportive of the school. It could provide more objective oversight. The school is developing appropriate links with a number of external organisations.

Capacity for further development

School leaders have the capacity and the drive to continue to develop the school. Very considerable investment has been made in using expert consultants to develop teachers' skills. The consultants have an office in the school and are available for informal support to teachers as well as the delivery of the formal programme. The wider leadership team consists of a number of middle and senior leaders. In developing the leadership structure for the school going forward, the director recognises that at least 1 extra senior leader would be beneficial in a school of this size. She is planning this for next year. The school is also looking to extend the Board in the way described above.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Address the following safety issues without delay:
 - i. ensure fire doors are kept unlocked and accessible at all times
 - ii. consult with the relevant authorities about providing a one way traffic system around the school to reduce congestion and improve safety at arrival and departure times.
2. Ensure the deficiencies in the new building are completed in time for the next academic year as planned by providing:
 - i. toilets blocks, prayer rooms and specialist accommodation for art and music
 - ii. a ground floor classroom for the 2 KG classes currently on the first floor for Arabic lessons
 - iii. canopies to replace those removed in 2 playgrounds.
3. Improve attainment in English and Arabic by:
 - i. increasing the range, volume and quality of extended writing opportunities for students throughout the school.
4. Improve the behaviour of boys, particularly in middle grades, by:
 - i. developing more consistency in teachers' use of rewards and sanctions
 - ii. enabling teachers and supervisors to work together to increase expectations
 - iii. developing student leadership roles and responsibilities, and emphasising the importance of respect for property.
5. Improve the school's self-evaluation systems by:
 - i. providing training for middle leaders in analysing and using Iowa Test data
 - ii. setting up a system to standardise internal tests
 - iii. focusing on the progress of individuals and groups of students when evaluating lesson quality.
6. Reduce lateness by:
 - i. raising students' expectations in regard to being punctual
 - ii. linking punctuality to the school's system of rewards, and where necessary, sanctions
 - iii. monitoring lateness more closely and following up with those who are persistently late for school.

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								