



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



Summary Inspection Report

Scientific Distinction Private School

Published in 2013

Iqraa

Scientific Distinction Private School

Inspection Date	26 th – 29 th February, 2012
School ID#	171
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	Ministry of Education
Number of Students	787
Age Range	KG – Grade 12
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Ali Mahmoud Alnatour
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Introduction

The school was inspected by four inspectors, who observed 63 lessons. They considered the school ethos and the quality of students' learning experiences, personal development and progress, and the teaching they receive.

Description of the School

The school opened in 2006 as an elementary school in a mainly residential area. In 2009 Grade 10 was added. The school has now developed to Grade 12. The building has two floors, with a door on each floor to separate boys from girls. The outside playgrounds are also separated into different areas for boys and girls, and include shaded areas for morning assemblies.

There are currently 50 children in the kindergarten (KG) and 737 students in grades 1 to 12. All are Muslim. There are 440 boys and 347 girls. Most students are from Egypt, but there are also students from Syria, Yemen, Jordan, Sudan and Palestine. About 10% are stateless. In the older grades girls and boys are taught in separate classes, but in grades 1 to 4 and in one grade 5 class, they are taught together. No students are identified by the school as having special educational needs.

Students come from a medium to low range of socio-economic backgrounds, and the school welcomes students who transfer from other local schools and from abroad. The school has been purchased by Mr Saeed Ali Humaid Al Sheryani since the last inspection. The teachers come from a range of countries, but mainly Syria and Egypt. Their monthly salaries range from AED 1,800 to 3,000. Annual fees range from AED 7,350 in KG to AED 11,100 in grade 12. The school offer discounts to some parents, but some do not pay the fees that have been agreed, and this has affected the school's income.

The Effectiveness of the School

Band C

Grade 8

The inspectors judged Scientific Distinction Private School to be in Band C; that is a school in need of significant improvement.

Recommendations were made in the previous inspection to improve the quality of teaching and learning, the curriculum, the protection, care, guidance and support of students, students' personal development, and how to sharpen the effectiveness of leadership and management. The school has not improved in any respect, and there are now grave concerns for the welfare of its students. Their personal development and the protection, care, guidance and support they receive have very seriously deteriorated. The principal has taken no action to

improve the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, and can produce no evidence of self-evaluation. There are no middle managers. The vice-principal visits classes twice a term but his focus is not on improving teaching or learning. The school development plan is wholly inadequate as a tool for improvement because it does not detail individuals with specific duties, reporting structures or key target dates. There are significant deficiencies in all areas of provision, but the school has not developed any effective systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, evaluate the curriculum, or manage and monitor any aspect of performance. Given the students' inadequate learning outcomes and the poor level of investment in infrastructure, resources and teachers' salaries, the school offers poor value for money.

The school operates from day to day with no clear overall aims. Even though many individuals are committed to the future of the students, parents, teachers and students are not following the same path together. During Tabor, for example, the activities are generally aimed at younger students so the older ones, and some of the teachers, become increasingly disengaged. During the inspection, the national anthem was sung during Tabor, but the national flag was not raised. Parents are dissatisfied with the amount of information they receive on the progress made by their children. There are no links with businesses or the local community to enhance students' learning or benefit the school.

Students' physical, spiritual, and emotional welfare is further undermined by serious regulatory breaches in terms of inadequate tuition time, no external play space for KG children, no mosque and no child protection policy. The personal development of the girls is better than that of the boys. All age groups take their break together in the girls' playground, posing a risk to the younger students in particular. Litter strewn on the ground is particularly noticeable following Tabor and break times. The unhealthy food served in the canteen gives students negative messages about healthy lifestyles. The tolerance of bad behaviour among the male students in particular poses serious risks to the health and safety of all students. Aggressive behaviour between boys is common. Running, shouting and jostling were observed on stairs and in corridors, which were rarely supervised. Lateness and absenteeism are widespread, but not checked or followed up. The inspection team decided not to call for an unannounced fire drill because they feared that the general lack of awareness of how to behave safely could put some students at risk during the exercise.

Most students make unsatisfactory progress throughout their school life, even compared to other similar schools that follow the undemanding MoE curriculum. Some good work was observed in English in the senior classes and in Islamic studies among the girls, but there is too much variability across the grades.

Overall standards are unsatisfactory in English, and even lower in Arabic and Islamic studies, numeracy and science. Thinking skills are not explicitly developed. Because they do not carry out any practical work, students cannot answer the questions on scientific experiments in the MoE tests.

Despite the high workload on individual teachers, which demands that many teach for 28 periods in the week, they are very committed to their students. They occasionally stand in for absent colleagues without any additional pay. The teachers have very poor facilities for preparing their work. There has been no investment in resources to help them make teaching interesting, such as classroom computers. Many make their own resources at home and bring them to school. Teachers get no opportunities for professional development, and very little opportunity to share ideas on good practice. Not surprisingly, there is a high rate of teacher turnover.

Some teachers make their lessons very interesting by encouraging their students to become involved in stimulating discussions on topics of everyday interest. This motivates the students; they enjoy the debate and become fully involved in it, whilst developing their thinking skills and the ability to express their views. However, in most lessons teaching is limited to going through MoE textbooks and workbooks. Few opportunities are taken to expand on the topics or extend the way they are presented. Teachers occasionally outline at the beginning of lessons what exactly is to be learned. In many instances, particularly in the junior classes, material taught previously is reinforced laboriously by frequent chanting, constant repetition and applause. This causes many students to become bored and increasingly disengaged as the lesson progresses. Some teachers in the senior classes have difficulties in managing students' behaviour during lessons. The teaching methods in use in the KG classes are particularly inappropriate for children of this age. They are not integrated or based on play and practical, active learning. Students' written work is regularly marked, but teachers tend to make positive comments on the quality of the work without telling students how to improve it. Students do not have any goals set for them, so cannot assess their own work.

There is no overall plan for the school curriculum. Tuition time in KG breaches ADEC regulations for contact time. Teaching time follows ADEC guidelines in Arabic, Islamic and social studies, English, mathematics and science. There is no music teacher, and many students have no teaching in art and music at all. The little teaching that does take place in these subjects and physical education (PE) is severely undermined by the absence of basic resources such as paint and brushes, musical instruments and balls. Music has to be taught from the blackboard, and even the singing observed consisted of just the national anthem and one Arabic

song. Girls taking a PE lesson at the same time as the boys had to share one of the two balls, which was passed from one playground to the other. Basketball nets were recently erected, but have not been used because they were put in the wrong place. The school has an information and communication technology (ICT) laboratory but many of the computers are broken. Internet access is only available in the administrative section, so students are unable to conduct independent research. There are no stools for students in the science laboratory, and very little equipment in the cupboards to give students hands-on experiences. The curriculum is an inadequate implementation of the MoE curriculum and falls well short of international expectations.

There is a very small collection of books in the library, which has no comfortable seating area. It is not used as a reference area, but is used occasionally as a classroom. The school provides few after school clubs or outings. Students in the senior year groups were once taken to a university open day. Overall, students are poorly prepared for their subsequent education.

The paucity of resources and the drabness of the school building are among numerous factors that have a negative impact on students' motivation. Absenteeism is very high but not effectively followed up. Charts and some limited examples of students' work are stuck to walls in classrooms and corridors with adhesive tape in the absence of pinboards. There is no public celebration of students' work. Some classrooms are so overcrowded that the teacher cannot get to the back of the room. Children in the KG classes sit in rows at old chipped desks, with no opportunities for practical activities or outdoor play. In breach of ADEC regulations, an area under a stairwell has been allocated for prayer. During the inspection period, some efforts were being made to improve the cleanliness of the toilets.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management:
 - i. urgently address the concerns detailed on the next page, define the roles and responsibilities of the principal, vice-principal and subject co-ordinators and train them so that they form an effective leadership team;
 - ii. provide time for school leaders to perform their responsibilities and to become involved in drawing up a precise and effective school development plan;

- iii. introduce a system that enables all school leaders to rigorously and accurately assess the quality of teaching and the progress students make; and
 - iv. use the information from this monitoring to drive improvements in teaching.
 2. Improve students' behaviour by:
 - i. actively promoting the development of positive behaviour throughout the school;
 - ii. directing each teacher to develop class procedures to reinforce/reward positive behaviour in class;
 - iii. developing a system of tangible rewards that encourages good behaviour among students;
 - iv. actively teaching social competencies and skills in structured lessons from KG onwards; and
 - v. strengthening the system for monitoring attendance and lateness, and follow up all instances.
 3. Invest in teachers' working conditions and in material resources for the teaching by:
 - i. raising teachers' salaries, which are too low and do little to motivate them to improve;
 - ii. paying teachers for additional work they undertake; and
 - iii. providing teachers with time to plan their lessons and better accommodation for them to plan and mark of students' work.
 4. Invest in ICT resources and the library so that students can develop their independent learning skills by:
 - i. increasing the number of working computers in the school, so it is at least in line with ADEC guidelines;
 - ii. enabling teachers and student to have access to the internet; and
 - iii. expanding the range of fiction and non-fiction books, and developing the library as a reference facility.
 5. Develop links within the school, and with the local environment and partner institutions by:
 - i. enabling teachers to observe each other's lesson and those in other schools, so as to build up a clear picture of what constitutes effective practice; and
 - ii. exploring links between the school and other local community institutions of every sort, to improve the curriculum and enhance students' personal skills.

6. Develop an explicit strategy to prepare students for their future by drawing together a teaching policy on how to develop students' thinking and research skills across all subject areas.