



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



# New School Inspection Report

Shining Star International School

Academic Year 2014 – 2015

iqraa

Shining Star International School

|                       |                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Inspection Date       | 9 – 12 February 2015                                                                               |
| School ID#            | 241                                                                                                |
| Licensed Curriculum   | Indian (Central Board of Secondary Education)                                                      |
| Number of Students    | 1316                                                                                               |
| Age Range             | 4 to 18 years                                                                                      |
| Gender                | Mixed                                                                                              |
| Principal             | Muhsin Kattayat                                                                                    |
| School Address        | Musaffah, Shabia-12, Abu Dhabi                                                                     |
| Telephone Number      | +971 (0)2 559 6444                                                                                 |
| Fax Number            | -----                                                                                              |
| Official Email (ADEC) | <a href="mailto:shiningstarint.pvt@adec.ac.ae">shiningstarint.pvt@adec.ac.ae</a>                   |
| School Website        | <a href="http://www.shiningstarinternationalschool.com">www.shiningstarinternationalschool.com</a> |
| Date of opening       | April 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)

|                                     |                |                |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>The School was judged to be:</b> | <b>BAND C;</b> | <b>GRADE 6</b> |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|

---

### The main strengths of the school are:

- the efficient administration and the smooth running of the school
- the positive ethos, supportive relationships and care for students' wellbeing
- the behaviour and attitudes to learning of students

### The main areas for improvement are:

- students' attainment and progress in most subjects in Kindergarten, primary, middle, secondary and higher secondary
  - teaching and learning in most subjects and grades
  - curricular plans and resources to ensure the systematic development of knowledge, skills and understanding of all learners
  - provision for developing students' enquiry, investigation, problem solving and research skills
  - the impact of leadership on the quality of education, at all levels.
-

## Introduction

---

The school was inspected by 5 inspectors. They observed 112 lessons, conducted meetings with coordinators, teachers, support staff, students and parents. They analysed test and assessment results, scrutinised students' work and analysed 497 responses to the parents' questionnaire. They considered the school's documentation relating to policies and procedures, including its process for self-evaluation and improvement planning. The principal and senior leadership were involved throughout the process. There were 6 joint observations with senior leaders.

## Description of the School

---

Shining Star opened in April 2014, following the closure of 2 Villa schools. It operates in an ex-government building. Additional school buildings are being constructed; work is due for completion in March 2015 when the school roll will increase to approximately 2700 students, following the closure of Villa schools in the area. The school serves families in the Musaffah area. The school's aims focus on recognition of the uniqueness and individuality of each student and provision of a diverse education that equips students with lifelong skills to become global citizens of tomorrow. The school strives to be inclusive and to work collaboratively with parents and the community.

There are 1316 students; 53% are male. The majority of the students are of Indian heritage at 93%, 5% are Pakistani and the remainder are from Bangladesh, Thailand, Sri Lanka and the Philippines. All students speak English as their second language and most students speak Hindi, Urdu or Malayalam as their first language. There are 335 children in Kindergarten (KG), 422 in grades 1-5 (primary), 252 in grades 6-8 (middle), 163 in grades 9-10 (secondary) and 144 in grades 11-12 (higher secondary). The school has identified 7 students as having special educational needs (SEN); mainly for learning and behavioural difficulties. There are no students who are identified as gifted and talented (G&T). There are tests in English and mathematics for students entering the higher grades, to ensure that students are able to access the curriculum.

The school follows the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) Indian curriculum in all grades. It follows the Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum for Arabic, Islamic education and social studies. The curriculum is taught in English. The school uses external examinations (CBSE) in Grades 10 and 12 and MoE examinations for Arabic, Islamic education and social studies in all grades. The school operates in two shifts, 1<sup>st</sup> shift: 7:15 am – 12:15 pm, for KG, grades 1 – 4 boys

and girls, grades 5, 9 – 12 girls and second shift: 12:30pm - 5:30 pm, for grades 5 – 12 boys and grades 6 – 8 girls.

The leadership team comprises the principal and 2 vice-principals. There are heads of department for all subjects and coordinators for KG and primary sections. The principal and vice-principals have been at the school since it opened. The owner and a management group are responsible for overseeing the school's financial administration. They have recruited a consultant to provide strategic direction, improve the performance of the school and support leaders in managing the transition as the school roll increases. There are 90 teachers, approximately half of whom are new to the Gulf region. Recruiting experienced teachers is an ongoing challenge for the school. The school development partner has been working with the school for 3 months.

The annual tuition fees are in the range of AED 3,688 - 5,458 for students from the previous Villa schools. This is in the affordable category. Fees for other students are AED 7,900 – 15,500, which range from the affordable to medium range category.

## The Effectiveness of the School

---

### Evaluation of the school's overall effectiveness

Shining Star is unsatisfactory and in need of improvement. This judgment reflects the school's performance against international benchmarks and ADEC's expectations.

Satisfactory aspects of the school's performance are personal development, the protection, care, guidance and support of students and the quality of the school's premises. The leadership has been instrumental in creating a supportive and caring ethos; students say that they feel safe and well cared for. Leaders have ensured that the attitudes and behaviour of most students support their learning in lessons. The school buildings are fit for purpose and provide adequate space and facilities.

The impact of leadership on academic achievement, the quality of teaching and delivery of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The attainment and progress of students in most subjects and all grades are unsatisfactory. Students are not acquiring the skills required for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Many teachers lack the skills to plan tasks and activities that ensure the systematic development of students' knowledge, understanding and skills. A lack of resources restricts opportunities to make the curriculum interesting and to enhance learning.

### Students' attainment & progress

The attainment and progress of students are unsatisfactory. Lesson observations and scrutiny of students' work show that in primary, middle and secondary grade levels, standards of attainment in English, science, Arabic, Islamic education and UAE social studies are below that of schools following the same curriculum and international benchmarks. Students in Grade 12 are on course to achieve the expected benchmarks (CBSE) in English, mathematics and science; many have received private tuition in preparation for examinations. Few students are on course to achieve the higher levels in English, mathematics and science.

Students' progress in English is unsatisfactory in most grades. In KG, children do not learn letter sounds systematically. Early reading and writing skills develop too slowly as tasks and activities are not tailored to the development needs of young learners. Students in higher secondary make satisfactory progress. By Grade 12, most speak fluently and read appropriately challenging texts with understanding. Most write coherently, using correct grammar and accurate spelling.

Students' progress in mathematics from primary to higher secondary grades is satisfactory as teachers' subject knowledge is secure and there are practical resources to support learning. Students' make more rapid progress in grades 9

and 10; they are confident in using mathematical terminology and demonstrate good problem solving skills. In KG and lower primary grades, there is too much variation in the rate of progress as the quality of teaching is inconsistent. Progress in science is unsatisfactory in most grades. Students do not develop their understanding and skills systematically. Students make satisfactory progress in information and communications technology (ICT) from primary to higher secondary grade levels.

Students' progress in Arabic, Islamic education and UAE social studies is unsatisfactory. Students make too little progress in Arabic as the teaching does not help students to systematically develop their skills. By Grade 11, students have underdeveloped speaking, reading and writing skills. They do not make sufficient progress in Islamic education and social studies as teachers' expectations are too low. Students in upper secondary grades make satisfactory progress in accountancy, demonstrating good use of terminology and understanding of share values, for example.

The progress of students with special educational needs (SEN) is too slow as support, tasks and activities are not tailored to their needs. More able students do not make the progress of which they are capable as there are insufficient challenge and enrichment activities. Most students make satisfactory progress in numeracy skills; they do not make the progress they are capable of in basic literacy skills, particularly in the lower grades. They do not develop critical thinking, problem solving, enquiry and research skills as there are too few opportunities in lessons to practise or apply these skills.

As the school is new, there was no external student performance data available at the time of the inspection. The school does not have reliable student assessment data as tests are not aligned to age-related curriculum standards. There is no baseline assessment data available for KG. There are no predictive grades for the cohorts of students taking external exams (CBSE) in Grades 10 and 12 or for students taking MoE examinations in Arabic, Islamic education and UAE social studies.

### **Students' personal development**

The attitudes and behaviour of most students are satisfactory in lessons and throughout the school. They respond well to their teachers and are courteous and polite to their peers. A significant minority of students in KG and lower primary are restless in lessons and do not listen attentively to the teacher; this is often as a result of uninspiring teaching and unsuitable activities.

Most students work to the best of their ability. Students in secondary and higher secondary are motivated and eager to do well in examinations. Most have high

aspirations. Students enjoy participating in competitions such as writing poetry and essays and contributing to exhibitions of mathematics, science and art. Through various units in the curriculum, special events and assemblies students have developed a satisfactory understanding of the UAE, its culture and heritage. They raise the flag and sing the national anthem with pride.

The attendance rate for the year is average at 93%. Most students follow the school's advice on healthy eating. They respond well to opportunities for taking responsibility, such as presenting in assembly and carrying out prefect duties. The school has not fully harnessed the energy and good will of all students by encouraging greater responsibility.

### **The quality of teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate as the majority of teaching observed was unsatisfactory or very unsatisfactory. There were some examples of satisfactory teaching in mathematics, English and ICT; the most consistently effective teaching was observed in mathematics. This is because some mathematics teachers provide tasks and activities that are purposeful and interesting and students participate willingly, are active and engaged. The majority of teachers lack relevant experience and this affects their confidence and skills. Most teachers have expectations of students that are too low.

Teachers develop good relationships with students that enable them to enjoy their time in school. Many teachers use a lecture-style method and do not attempt to make lessons more interactive. They follow the textbook closely and make little attempt to offer tailored learning experiences to students with different levels of ability. The majority of teachers do not consider practical, exploratory approaches to learning. Most teachers in KG use rote-learning and memorisation methods; there is little attempt to involve children in practical approaches to learning. Daily routines involve children sitting at tables for too long with too few opportunities for active learning. There is not enough time reserved for children to work on practical tasks in small groups or individually to consolidate learning.

The school does not have a robust policy for assessment. Teachers have a general understanding of students' abilities from tests and share this information with parents. They do not systematically assess students' progress in lessons. They do not use assessment information, or results from tests, to provide additional challenge for higher ability students and support for those who find learning more difficult. Teachers' questions often focus on 'correct' answers requiring a choral response rather than on discussion to help students' understanding. In most lessons, there are missed opportunities to interact with individuals to give constructive advice to help students improve their work and think for themselves.

Teaching in art, music and physical education (PE) does not provide sufficiently for the systematic development of knowledge, skills and understanding.

### **Meeting students' needs through the curriculum**

The implementation of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. It does not enable students to make the progress of which they are capable. Curricular plans and resources in mathematics and ICT support curriculum implementation adequately and as a result, students make satisfactory progress. The school does not meet MoE requirements for the time allocated to Arabic, Islamic education and UAE social studies.

Most teachers do not adapt the curriculum to make it more accessible to students of different abilities. Planning is focused on the textbook without considering ways to make the material clearer to students who learn more slowly, or more challenging for higher ability students. Worksheets often replicate passages and exercises from the textbook and do not open up or extend learning opportunities. Most teachers show a lack of understanding about how to design high quality, suitably levelled worksheets.

The curriculum in KG is too narrow. It focuses on memorisation of sounds, letters, words and numbers. Planning does not identify topics to connect children's learning and enhance their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Planned tasks and experiences do not provide opportunities for children to explore or solve problems. Learning corners and practical resources are not available to develop a broad range of skills systematically.

In most subjects, the majority of teachers' planning is unsatisfactory. Learning objectives are not at a suitable level of challenge and tasks and activities are often too easy and are not always relevant to the learning objectives. Planning is rarely focused on critical thinking, investigation and applying learning.

There is a suitable emphasis in the curriculum for promoting an appreciation of the values, culture and heritage of the UAE. Older students benefit from taking part in competitions and club activities during the school day. Extra-curricular activities are limited; there are few opportunities for educational visits and visiting speakers to broaden students' experiences. Links with community partners are underdeveloped.

### **The protection, care, guidance and support of students**

The school provides appropriate care for students' safety and well-being. Students say that they feel safe and that their teachers are approachable if they have any concerns. Procedures to ensure the health and safety of students are

satisfactory. The clinic is well resourced and the nurses ensure that students receive appropriate medical care when necessary. Child protection procedures are understood and followed by all staff. Students are well supervised on their arrival and departure. The school provides suitable guidance that enhances learning about healthy life-styles and managing relationships and behaviour.

All staff show care for the well-being of students. The counsellor provides satisfactory support for a few identified students in improving their behaviour to enable them to learn more effectively. The school is developing portfolios for each student, which are shared with parents. Procedures for assessing attainment on entry to the school and tracking academic progress are not sufficiently robust. As a result, teachers do not support the academic progress of the full range of abilities satisfactorily. There is not enough guidance given to help students in secondary and higher secondary grades to help them make informed choices for study and further education.

#### **The quality of the school's buildings and premises**

The buildings are fit for purpose and provide adequate space for the number of students on roll. There is sufficient outdoor space, with the exception of sports facilities, that are temporarily not in use due to expansion of the buildings. Canopies provide shade adequately for KG; there is a lack of shaded areas for other students. Specialist facilities in science and ICT benefit students' learning, particularly in secondary and higher secondary grades. Students benefit from a mosque on site. The library and language laboratory are not used to their full potential as resources are limited for the number of students.

The premises are adequately maintained and provide a clean and safe learning environment. The school has rectified significant health and safety issues; it routinely carries out health and safety checks to ensure that there are no potential hazards for students. The school has set up procedures to ensure all electrical equipment is regularly tested and in safe working condition, and chemicals are stored securely.

#### **The school's resources to support its aims**

The level of resourcing in the school is unsatisfactory; this has a negative effect on students' progress in most subjects. The majority of teachers do not have the relevant expertise and subject knowledge for the age-groups they teach. Teachers in KG and lower primary have limited understanding of how young children learn best and how to deliver programmes to meet the needs of young learners. Professional development has had limited effect on the quality of teaching and learning.

There are sufficient practical resources to support learning in mathematics; resources in other subjects are unsatisfactory. There is an adequate supply of computers which are used satisfactorily by students. The library has a limited stock of good quality fiction and non-fiction reading material. The lack of resources for PE and sport, particularly for KG and lower primary grades, restricts opportunities for physical activities appropriate for the student's age and stage of development. Most teachers do not have access to technology to enliven teaching or practical resources to enhance student's learning. In KG, classrooms lack well-resourced activity areas and age-appropriate equipment to support practical approaches to learning and the development of a broad range of skills. Procedures to maintain transport in a safe and reliable condition and for the safe use and care of students are followed vigilantly.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Since the school opened, the senior leadership has put in place policies and procedures around the protection and care of students. It has established a supportive and caring ethos throughout the school and been instrumental in ensuring that the behaviour and attitudes to learning of most students support their learning satisfactorily. Leadership has had limited impact on improving students' attainment and progress, the quality of teaching and learning and curriculum implementation.

The leadership has recently reviewed the performance of the school and identified relevant priorities for improvement. An external consultant provided useful support in ensuring that a representation of teachers was involved in the school self-evaluation (SEF) process and that all aspects of the school's performance were considered. The allied school development plan (SDP) uses the SEF to identify relevant priorities and targets and the steps needed to achieve them. It is less clear about the measurable outcomes and how progress will be monitored. Most leaders do not have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development, and are unaware of the content of the SDP.

The role of the vice-principals, heads of departments (HoDs) and coordinators is underdeveloped. The majority lack the skills to provide strategic direction for their subjects, analyse student performance data systematically or monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning. The school does not have robust procedures in place for assessing, tracking student progress and setting targets. Professional development has had limited impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The owner and management group do not have robust systems in place to hold leaders to account for improving the school's performance.

The school's partnership with parents is developing; there are monthly newsletters for parents and regular opportunities for them to discuss their child's progress with teachers. Parents expressed the view that they would like more involvement in the life and work of the school.

### **Capacity for further development**

---

The leadership team has not demonstrated sufficient capacity to move the school forward rapidly. The role of leaders at all levels is underdeveloped and there are significant areas of the school's performance in need of improvement. The school will require sustained external support to make the necessary improvements.

### **What the school should do to improve further:**

---

1. Accelerate students' progress in English, Arabic, science, Islamic education and UAE social studies by:
  - i. having higher expectations of students' performance, especially the more able
  - ii. providing tasks and activities that are carefully matched to learning outcomes and students' needs
  - iii. improving the quality of oral feedback during lessons to help students improve their work
  - iv. providing additional support for students who learn more slowly
  - v. tracking progress over time and setting targets for attainment and progress of individual students.
2. Improve the impact of leadership by:
  - i. developing the role and accountability of all leaders and providing relevant training for them
  - ii. ensuring that leaders understand their role in implementing the school improvement plan
  - iii. monitoring and reviewing outcomes systematically
  - iv. ensuring that there is always a clear focus on students' attainment and progress by leaders at all levels.
2. Improve the quality of curricular plans by:
  - i. adapting plans to better meet the interests and abilities of all students
  - ii. supplementing the work in textbooks with high quality worksheets and suitably stimulating activities
  - iii. creating opportunities to develop critical thinking skills and carry out independent study and research.

3. Extend the range of teaching methods to support better student progress by:
  - i. providing relevant professional development to familiarise teachers with best practice
  - ii. offering opportunities for students to discuss their ideas and apply their skills in practical, problem solving contexts
  - iii. providing appropriate support and challenge during lessons for all students
  - iv. establishing opportunities for learning in pairs and small groups where appropriate
  - v. using questioning and discussion to help student understanding.
4. Improve the provision for children in KG by:
  - i. recruiting teachers with the necessary experience and expertise in teaching young children
  - ii. familiarising teachers with best practice in early years education
  - iii. planning a suitable classroom environment to stimulate learning
  - iv. planning learning experiences which develop a broad range of skills systematically
  - v. resourcing the curriculum to provide practical approaches to enhance understanding.
5. Ensure the school meets MoE curriculum requirements by timetabling prescribed teaching time for Arabic, Islamic education and social studies.

## Inspection Grades

| Performance Standard                                               | Band A<br>High performing |           |      | Band B<br>Satisfactory   |              | Band C<br>In need of significant improvement |                     |      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|------|--------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------------|------|
|                                                                    | 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: <b>The school's overall effectiveness</b>      |                           |           |      |                          |              |                                              |                     |      |