



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



New School Inspection Report

Summit International School

Academic Year 2013 – 14

Iqraa

Summit International School

Inspection Date	5 – 8 May 2014
School ID#	226
Licensed Curriculum	American
Number of Students	475
Age Range	4 to 14 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Amina Timol
School Address	Sector 4, Street 19, Madinat Zayed, Abu Dhabi.
Telephone Number	+971 (0)2 622 2504
Fax Number	+971 (0)2 622 0272
Official Email (ADEC)	Summit.int@adec.ac.ae
School Website	www.summitinternationalschool.ae
Date of opening	September 2013

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 strong commitment of the, owners, director, principal and vice-principal to further improve the school
- the positive impact made by the principal and vice-principal in a very short time
- the school is a harmonious community and a good team spirit has been created
- students' behaviour in class and around the school is much improved from the beginning of the school year
- the introduction of new strategies and methods is beginning to improve teaching and learning in a few classes
- students are happy, and are proud of their school.

The main areas for improvement are:

- students' progress in many classes
- developing students' skills, such as how to work with partners and in groups
- adapting the curriculum implementation to ensure that it is to meet the needs of all students, particularly those whose first language is not English
- curriculum implementation to effectively develop students' 21st century skills
- teachers' use of assessment and marking to help students to know how they can improve their work and set targets.

Introduction

The school was inspected by 4 inspectors. They observed 41 lessons, attended assemblies and conducted several meetings with the owners, senior staff, teachers, students and parents. They spoke to students throughout their time in school. They looked at assessment results and scrutinised students' work across the school. They considered the 81 responses to the parents' questionnaire about the school and many of the school's policy and other documents. The principal and vice-principal were involved throughout the inspection process. They completed lesson observations jointly with the lead inspector.

Description of the School

The school opened in September 2013, 54 days after being granted final permission to open. The school has 3 owners and is part of the American International Development Council (AIDC). The school's aim is to provide 'outstanding international education in an excellent school dedicated to providing leaders of the future'. The school offers the Virginia Common Core Curriculum.

The school is housed in a former government school building. Students entered from 40 different schools, with the majority coming from 3 closed villa schools. Others entered from a range of private and government schools. All children who applied were accepted for this first year. The school plans to increase its enrolment to 700 students next year, and is screening applicants to ensure the school can cater for students' needs. Over 1200 applications have been received for the additional 213 places available.

There are 267 boys and 208 girls enrolled. KG has 123 children. There are 249 in grades 1-5 and 103 in grades 6-8. There are mixed classes up to grade 4, with separate classes for boys and girls in grades 5-8. KG contains 6 classes (3 x KG1 and 3 x KG2), there are 2 classes in grades 1-4 and a boys and a girls class in each of grades 5-8. Students come from a wide range of nationalities including Jordanian (15%), Egyptian (14%), Emirati (13%), Palestinian (9%), Syrian (5%) and Lebanese (4.4%) and smaller proportion from other countries. Of the total student body, 79% are Arabic and 91% are Muslim. The school is still identifying the exact number of students who have special educational needs (SEN).

The fees for students coming from the closed villa schools are capped at AED 9,000 per year for three years. The fees of other students range from AED 17,000 in KG 1 to AED 21,000 in grade 8. Books, uniforms and a registration fee are additional.

The first principal left the school shortly after it opened. The current principal joined the school in October 2013 and the vice-principal joined in January 2014. The senior leadership team comprises the principal, vice-principal and 3 coordinators (1 for KG, 1 for grades 1-4, and 1 for grades 5-8). The largest groups of teachers are from Canada and Egypt with others from Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, Tunisia and other countries such as the UK and Serbia.

The Effectiveness of the School

The new leadership team has made an effective start on its journey towards meeting its aspirational aims. They recognise that the school is not yet meeting international standards against the Irtiqa'a framework and are realistic about what needs to be done. This report recognises the developments that the principal and teachers have achieved. It also gives clear recommendations of what more needs to be done to take the school forward.

Students' attainment & progress

The school has recently screened all grade 3-8 students using the US MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) test. This assessed students' performance in English reading, mathematics and science to secure a baseline from which to track future progress. The test confirms that students are performing below international standards. Tracking of the progress students make further as they move through the school is an emerging practice.

Observations and scrutiny of students' work during the inspection also confirm that student achievement is not yet meeting international standards in Arabic, English, science, mathematics and social studies. Students' low literacy skills mean that they cannot always read and access their curriculum books. Insufficient opportunities are given in lessons for students to develop their oral and writing skills. In all subjects there is an overemphasis on the acquisition of knowledge with insufficient opportunities for students to develop their investigative and problem solving skills. This is particularly evident in mathematics and science. Students' skills in art, music and physical education (PE) are underdeveloped.

Standards and progress in students' Islamic education are age-appropriate. This is because most teachers have strong subject knowledge and give students opportunities to work in groups to research and give presentations to the class. Students can make links between the Qur'an and events in their own lives. Children in the KG classes are making effective progress in phonics (linking letters and sounds) in both English and Arabic, with more able children able to make three-letter words. This is because there is an effective and consistent approach across all the KG classes.

Students' personal development

Parents, students and teachers spoke about significant challenges with student behaviour earlier in the year, with students refusing to respond to teachers' instructions. Teachers and leaders have worked hard on integrating students into the school community and improving their behaviour. Now the school is a harmonious community with students lining-up promptly and showing respect to one another. Most students behave appropriately in classes and when moving around the school. Students have an age-appropriate understanding of UAE values and its culture. Older students talk about how they enjoy living in the UAE because it is safe, secure and gives opportunities to people from different countries.

Students attend school regularly. Attendance during April was above average at 92%. Students say they are happy and proud to be pupils at this school. They enthusiastically shout at the end of daily Assembly that they will have 'A rocky, rocking Summit day!' Some leadership roles have been put in place, such as some grade 5 students acting as reading buddies for grade 1 students, and there are some prefect roles. There are not yet enough opportunities for students to take on responsibilities or to lead their own learning. Students become disengaged or very passive when teaching is didactic. Students are not developing the necessary skills of working together in partner or group work. Skills in thinking critically, making predictions and reasoning are insufficiently developed.

The quality of teaching and learning

Teachers have worked diligently to set up their classrooms, establish clear routines and settle students into their new school. In most classes there are positive relationships between teachers and students. In a few classes new strategies and methods are effectively used to engage students. For example, teachers use named lollipop sticks to randomly select students to answer questions, and they use word walls to reinforce new vocabulary. In a few classes, collaborative learning is encouraged. This was seen in a grade 8 social studies lesson where girls worked in groups to give a presentation about aspects of social justice, and in a grade 3 lesson where open questions were used to prompt a discussion about recycling. Some teachers talk to students about what it is they will be learning, and provide success criteria so they know how to succeed in a lesson. This effective practice is not consistent across the school.

Leaders are very clear that teaching and learning needs to improve and that future professional development will be linked to the development of this area. They fully understand that current teaching is not enabling students to learn effectively. In discussions, teachers state that their teaching needs to develop.

Too much teaching uses a narrow range of strategies, and is closely linked to the text books. Data projectors are mostly used to display questions from the text book. Students often sit and listen to the teacher talking for too long. At times, teachers over-control lessons and do not encourage active involvement from the students. Very few teachers plan for the different needs of the students, with most students doing the same activity. Teachers' ongoing assessment of how well students are learning in lessons is underdeveloped. Work by students is not always marked and often does not contain comments to help students understand how to improve their work. Most teachers teaching the same year groups do not plan together so students in the same grades receive different experiences.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The curriculum is effective in developing students' understanding of the culture and values of the UAE. Events, such as the recent culture day, where traditional dress was worn, help students to understand UAE traditions and those of other nationalities living in Abu Dhabi. A wide range of extra-curricular clubs and theme days help broaden students' experience. Older girls talk about how much they enjoy the cooking, volleyball and art clubs. KG children talk excitedly about visiting the fire station and the day that the police came to visit. The recent healthy eating day, and talks by the nurse, contribute to students' sound understanding of a healthy lifestyle. The KG curriculum is effective in developing children's knowledge of phonics in both English and Arabic.

The Virginia Common Core Curriculum is delivered mostly through textbooks and work books for each grade. As many students have low literacy skills it is often difficult for them to read or understand the vocabulary in their books. Leaders are aware of the need for teachers to adapt the curriculum to better meet students' needs, particularly for more-able students and those with special needs, and to make the curriculum less narrow. The delivery of the current curriculum does not prepare students sufficiently well for their future lives. It provides insufficient opportunities for students to develop their oral skills and their skills in investigating, exploring and finding things out for themselves. Currently, all students, whether they are native or non-native Arabic speakers, attend the same Arabic lessons. There is no planned curriculum for the non-native Arabic speakers at present. Changes planned to the curriculum for next year mean that art, music and drama will appear on the timetable, with specialist teachers, for all students.

The ICT curriculum is not planned progressively to build students' ICT skills and effectively integrate it across the range of subjects. It is left to individual teachers to link ICT into project work. Again, plans are in place to address this for the next

academic year. Leaders are aware that the curriculum does not yet have sufficient links between subjects, particularly for the lower grades.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

School leaders have created a caring, positive ethos. Parents say that their children are cared for and feel safe at school. Students talk about how much things have improved since the arrival of the principal and vice-principal. Both are very accessible to the students. Rules and procedures are established which have impacted positively on the behaviour of students, especially of older boys. For example, the break-time routines ensure that students can use the courtyard, gym and field to engage in active play. The new behaviour system is fully understood by students. They promptly and eagerly line up to earn reward stickers towards a class party. Students' behaviour towards others has greatly improved and leaders are now keen to make similar changes to students' attitudes to learning.

All required staff checks have been carried out. Corporal punishment is not tolerated. Two staff found to be using such punishment to manage students' behaviour were instantly dismissed earlier in the year. The school collects regular attendance data, but has not yet begun to analyse this to look for patterns and trends. Teachers do not give students sufficient guidance on the next steps in their learning. Target setting is not yet used. Some grade 8 students say that they would like more help from the school in making the transition to grade 9 at another school. A special needs coordinator (SENCO) has recently joined the school. She is currently working on identifying students with additional needs and is in the early stages of liaising with teachers about support plans. Her time in school has been too short to show any impact in classroom practice.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The school is secure, clean and well-maintained. A health and safety committee has been established. Members have a clear understanding of the strengths and development areas linked to the building. An ADEC health and safety audit has recently taken place. Checklists and risk assessments have been developed to ensure that students are kept safe. There are appropriate facilities for students to relax and exercise purposefully at break times. Students say they would like to eat in the canteen at break times and the school has plans to re-open the canteen for the next academic year. Appropriate plans are drawn up and costed for the opening of additional classrooms to cater for the increase in student numbers next year. The Library Committee is currently working on the re-opening of the former Learning and Resource Centre (LRC). They have rearranged furniture, purchased books and some members have gained additional qualifications in library skills.

There are currently some areas of the school which are underused for students' learning. Science laboratories are not used to help older students carry out experiments and develop inquiry skills. The ICT suite is not used for the teaching of discrete ICT skills through other curriculum areas, and the art and music rooms are only used for clubs. The outdoor area designated for KG, is not used sufficiently to develop and extend children's learning. Some areas of the school, particularly corridors and some classrooms, contain few displays which celebrate students' work. Some current classrooms are small for the number of students in the class.

The school's resources to support its aims

Teachers are developing some effective classroom resources in KG to promote children's numeracy and literacy skills. The school has made a conscious decision to employ teaching assistants in KG and in some of the lower grades. This helps to improve the ratio of adults to students. Sometimes the teaching assistants are not certain of their role as this is not identified in teachers' plans. Teacher appointments had to be made quickly before the school opened. Leaders are aware that a few teachers do not have the specialist knowledge nor the competence required. Plans are in place to address this.

Students appreciate the new resources at break time. They say that they enjoy playing with the new basketballs and hoops. Resources for learning are largely based on text and work books and the school is aware that a much wider range is needed. There are insufficient resources for practical learning in mathematics and science and for students to acquire a range of skills in PE. KG children lack practical resources to engage in sand, water and role play activities.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The owners, director and senior leaders have made a positive start in establishing the school, introducing systems and procedures and creating a positive ethos. A good team spirit has been engendered, with staff fully sharing the school's vision. The school's self-evaluation (SEF) and school development plan (SDP) are being produced with full staff involvement with committees in an attempt to introduce collaborative leadership. The SEF and the SDP are largely still working documents, rightly focused on improving teaching, learning and the curriculum. A programme of professional development is in place, with some staff attending training on Saturdays, and also taking additional qualifications.

Good progress has been made in improving the behaviour of students and in ensuring that those entering from a range of schools have settled and formed a cohesive student population. The parents' council has elected officials with clear roles and responsibilities. Parents are supportive of the school, as seen in both the

parents' inspection questionnaire and in discussions. A few are concerned about the inconsistency in teachers' communications with parents and in teachers not adapting the curriculum sufficiently for students who have entered from schools offering the Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum. School leaders fully accept these concerns and plan to address them.

A programme of formal monitoring of the quality of teaching, linked appropriately to a teacher appraisal system, is planned. This has not been introduced yet. Coordinators have carried out some informal monitoring and there have been some opportunities for peer observations. The grade coordinators are still developing their understanding of effective monitoring and evaluation. Tracking of students' progress is at an early stage of development.

Finances are fully in place to implement the proposed plans to increase student numbers and use additional classrooms and specialist rooms. The owners and director meet regularly with senior leaders and all are realistic about the school's current position. The school has developed a positive working relationship with the school development partner.

Capacity for further development

The current senior leadership has the capacity to move the school forward. The principal and vice principal have established an effective working relationship. Much has been done to create an environment conducive to learning by improving students' behaviour and attitudes. The school is bringing in additional staffing resources and planning to use more specialist rooms, which they see as being important to further develop the curriculum. They plan to introduce tablet technology into school for the next academic year to increase students' access to ICT resources.

Leaders and owners are committed to improvement and are aware that the next priority is to improve the quality of teaching across the school. They are aware that too many lessons are not successful and that students are making insufficient progress.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Improve the quality of teaching and its impact on students' progress by:
 - i. ensuring that lesson introductions are short so that students do not sit listening to teachers at length
 - ii. developing teachers' understanding of effective teaching strategies and active learning both through training and the sharing of better practice
 - iii. developing teachers' marking so that it indicates to students how they can improve their work
 - iv. developing a monitoring system which has an identified focus, gives teachers clear targets and re-checks to make sure these are met.
2. Improve the quality of curriculum implementation by:
 - i. introducing a common planning format and designating time so that grade partner teachers plan lessons together
 - ii. planning lessons which address the needs of all ability groups
 - iii. integrating ICT fully into the curriculum and implementing current plans for a more creative curriculum
 - iv. devising a curriculum for non-native Arabic speakers in Arabic lessons
 - v. planning lessons that contain varied activities, rely less on text-books and work sheets, and encourage more cooperative and independent learning.

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								