



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



Inspection Report

Summit International School

Academic Year 2014 – 2015

iqraa

Summit International School

Inspection Date	1 – 4 March 2015
School ID#	226
Licensed Curriculum	American
Number of Students	668
Age Range	4 to 14 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Amina Timol
School Address	Street 19, Abu Dhabi
Telephone Number	+971 (0)2 622 2504
Fax Number	+971 (0) 622 0272
Official Email (ADEC)	summit.int@adec.ac.ae
School Website	www.summitschool.ae
Date of last inspection	5 – 8 May 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 4

The main strengths of the school are:

- the progress made by students in acquiring English language skills at all grades in the school
- the quality of teaching in the subjects taught in Arabic
- the improvement made by the school since the last inspection and good capacity to continue the improvement journey
- effective coaching and mentoring provided by the principal and grade coordinators to promote the use of student centred teaching strategies
- the calm and inspirational leadership of the principal.

The main areas for improvement are:

- the identification of higher performing students and the creation of curriculum pathways that promote their academic progress
 - the provision of cultural and physical activities to support the curriculum and students' personal development
 - strengthening the voice of parents and students in the decision-making processes of the school
 - provision of a more cohesive and collaborative approach to supporting students with special educational needs.
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Introduction

The school was evaluated by 4 inspectors over a 4-day period. They observed 55 lessons, conducted several meetings with senior staff, subject leaders, teachers, support staff, students and parents. The lead inspector met with the owner. Inspectors examined test and assessment results, scrutinized students' work across the school, analysed 205 responses to the parents' questionnaire and considered many of the school's policies and other documents. The principal and senior leadership team were fully involved throughout the inspection process; they undertook 1 joint lesson observations together with inspectors.

Description of the School

The school opened in September 2013 and for the last 2 years has been managed as part of the American International Development Council (AIDC). The school has a temporary ADEC license, which runs for the period of the initial 3-year lease on the building. It occupies the premises of a former government school.

The school's aim is to provide 'outstanding international education in an excellent school dedicated to providing leaders of the future'. It offers the Virginia Common Core Curriculum. The initial intake of students came from 40 different schools, with the majority coming from 3 recently closed villa schools. Others entered from a range of private and government schools. To meet local needs following school closures, the school plans to increase its enrolment by another 300 students in the next academic year. The school does not use entrance exams as per ADEC policy.

There are 668 students enrolled; 53% are boys. There are 157 children in Kindergarten (KG), 379 students in grades 1-5 and 132 in grades 6-8. Classes are mixed gender up to Grade 5, with separate classes for boys and girls in grades 6-8. KG contains 7 classes, with 3 KG1 and 4 in KG2, there are 3 classes in grades 1-5 and a boys' and a girls' class for each of grades 6-8. Students come from a wide range of nationalities including Jordanian (19%), Egyptian (11%), Emirati (11%), Philippines (8%), Palestinian (8%), Syrian (6%) and Lebanese (4%) and smaller proportions from other countries. Of the total student body, 79% are of Arabic heritage and 91% are Muslim. The school has identified 18 students who have special educational needs (SEN) including those with sensory, learning and behavioural difficulties.

The fees for students coming from the closed villa schools in 2013, were capped at AED 9,000 per year for 3 years. Fees for the other students range from AED 17,000 in KG 1 to AED 21,000 in Grade 8. There are additional fees for books and uniforms.

The first principal left the school shortly after it opened. The current principal joined in October 2013 and the vice-principal in January 2015. The senior leadership

team (SLT) comprises the principal, vice-principal and 3 coordinators, 1 for KG to Grade 1, 1 for grades 2-5, and 1 for grades 6-8.

The Effectiveness of the School

Evaluation of the school's overall effectiveness

In the 10 months since the previous inspection, the school has made good progress and is now satisfactory and improving in nearly all performance standards. This is the result of good leadership from the very experienced principal. In addition, the principal has provided very effective coaching and mentoring to teachers and this has raised the quality of teaching and learning. Students from KG to Grade 8 make satisfactory or better progress in nearly all aspects of their studies, and attainment mirrors that achieved by their international peers. Students' good progress in spoken and written English provides them with a firm base from which to access the American curriculum.

After a difficult start, the leadership and management of the school were given a significant boost 18 months ago by the appointment of the current principal. The owners and principal appointed a new and experienced vice-principal at the beginning of 2015. The effective coaching provided by the principal has built the capacity of the 3 school coordinators and the school now has a firm foundation for continued improvement.

Students' attainment & progress

The attainment and progress made by students in Arabic, Islamic education, social studies taught in Arabic, English, science and mathematics is satisfactory and continues to improve. Achievement in information and communications technology (ICT) is satisfactory. Students' progress in other subjects outside of these core subjects is generally satisfactory and good in visual art. Students make strong progress in English and by the time they reach Grade 8 they can speak and write with confidence. Students enjoy their French classes and make satisfactory progress in their spoken skills.

Children in KG are keen and motivated. Most have had limited exposure to English and they respond enthusiastically to the learning activities. They make good progress and children quickly build a vocabulary that enables them to access their learning with confidence. They form their letters with growing accuracy and by the time they reach Grade 5, many students can write in a neat cursive style.

In the elementary and middle school grades, students demonstrate confident use of the Arabic and English languages and this includes their ability to write accurately in both languages. When learning in the Arabic language, students are able to write and speak to a standard that enables them to extend their

knowledge of the values and culture of the UAE. Students in Grade 2 can recite ‘surahs’ (verses) from the Holy Qur’an with confidence in front of their peers. When discussing their work, they naturally use English to explain their thinking or challenge the conclusions of their peers. They relate easily to each other so that group work is effective in enabling them to work as a team to develop their knowledge and skills.

The school has not accurately identified those students who learn at a quicker pace than their peers. As a result, these students, in particular the more able, do not make as much progress as their peers.

Students’ personal development

Students’ personal development is satisfactory and improving. Behaviour inside and outside the classroom has continued to improve since the last inspection and now presents no barriers to learning. On the very few occasions that boys become noisy or distracted, teachers have usually failed to sufficiently engage or interest their classes. Students from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds relate to each other with sensitivity. Many students have arrived in the UAE from troubled situations and they receive kindness from their peers. Students, in their shared educational experiences, are able to demonstrate the tolerance and values of the UAE.

Nearly all students acquire confidence in their dealings with adults. Boys, in particular, are able to explain their viewpoints as well as listen to those of others. The school provides some leadership roles; these are not well developed and do not challenge students to make more accelerated progress in their personal and social skills. The school does not consistently offer students the cultural or social opportunities that would require them to face up to new challenges. Summit International is notably free from litter and this is due to the care taken by students, including the youngest, to use the recycling bins at break-times.

The quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving. Almost all lessons were deemed at least satisfactory by inspectors, around a third were judged to be good and only a few were considered inadequate. The most effective teaching was seen in the subjects taught in Arabic; some less effective lessons were seen in other subjects and grades.

The mentoring and carefully targeted professional development provided by the principal have resulted in nearly all teachers providing more interesting and engaging lessons. Classroom relationships are relaxed and friendly and do much to contribute to productive learning environments. Teachers take an interest in

the lives of their students and talk to each naturally. Students in grades 5-8 have regular and productive access to a large resource of ‘Chromebooks’. They are beginning to use these as a natural adjunct alongside more traditional learning activities.

Teaching and learning in KG has improved since the last inspection and is at least satisfactory. Most teachers are aware of how young children learn best. They provide a range of academic, social and sensory experiences that make learning fun. Teachers present children with a range of well-paced activities that provide many opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in practical activities. Children are gaining skills as learners as they begin to exercise choice in their activities

Teachers plan for learning based directly on short-term units of work. Lessons have clear learning objectives and in many assignments are aligned to common core rubrics. Along with the rubrics, teachers provide their students with success criteria, which form the basis for assessment. Teachers have organized their students into groups and these provide them with opportunities to discuss their work as well as correct each other’s mistakes and work collaboratively. Parents reported that group work has made students more conscientious with their homework as they do not wish to let down their classmates. Teachers plan most lessons to meet the needs of students at 3 different ability levels. Teachers design worksheets and learning activities to enable all students to achieve the same class learning objectives; these do not sufficiently challenge the most able students.

Nearly all teachers have relevant subject knowledge. They are also gaining knowledge about what constitutes effective teaching and learning. Teachers do not always direct the work of teaching assistants efficiently. Some teaching assistants appear underemployed in classes so that opportunities to support those with greater needs are missed.

Meeting students’ needs through the curriculum

The implementation of the curriculum is satisfactory. In Arabic, Islamic education, and social studies, taught in Arabic, teachers extend the prescribed courses of study by ensuring that lessons contain additional material that gives relevance to the everyday lives of the students. The small number of non-native Arabic speakers receive support within lessons for Arabic speakers, although trained staff are not consistently available. Teachers of English, mathematics and science provide breadth through carefully selected additional material. For example, girls in a Grade 8 English lesson, asked carefully considered questions of a visiting speaker from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees about what it meant to be a refugee. Lessons in mathematics and science introduce students to

interesting and challenging ideas or involve them in experimental and practical activities. French and visual arts provide greater breadth to the otherwise standard curriculum.

The early learning curriculum provided in the KG takes appropriate account of the development of children's creative, physical and social skills. The provision of good resources for learning centres inside and outside of the classroom ensures that the KG curriculum is varied and interesting. Teachers give KG children some freedom within the school day to make choices and explore the facilities for sensory and imaginative play.

The school identifies the needs of students with SEN. Students on the autistic spectrum and others are welcomed, and this adds to the school's inclusive ethos. Programmes of support are not always helpful as teachers struggle to adapt the curriculum to meet individual needs. The school uses the space outside classrooms to provide additional support to students whose Arabic and English literacy skills do not match that of their peers. The school does not identify students who are gifted and talented so that those who learn at a faster pace are not sufficiently challenged by the curriculum planning and delivery.

Extra-curricular activities are few in number. Students make good use of their short break-times to play games on the field or in the gym but little is organised. In meetings, parents and students expressed a desire for more cultural, leisure and sporting activities that would enhance the formal curriculum.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The protection, care, guidance and support for students are satisfactory and improving. The school provides a sense of community for all its students and staff. The principal makes a point of greeting staff and students personally at the beginning of each day. The morning assembly in which the principal plays a leading role is a time in which the school's corporate identity is shaped. Students are clear about the conduct that is expected of them in lessons and at break-times. The whole school approach to improving student behaviour has continued successfully. The school also provides coordinated support for students with health and social needs. Child protection is a priority. Students are aware of 'stranger danger' and how to be alert to cyber bullying.

Attendance is above average and rarely falls below 93%. Nearly all students are on time for the start of the school day and this reflects the successful efforts of the staff. The needs of students with SEN are not sufficiently integrated. The management of some students with complex behavioural needs is not effective. Staff are aware of students' needs but do not always work in a collaborative manner to implement behaviour improvement plans.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The school's buildings and premises are satisfactory and improving. The school inherited premises that had previously housed a Cycle 2 government school and the owners have done much to improve and update the accommodation. The school is clean and hygienic, a state that owes much to the good habits of the students.

The school occupies a spacious site and grassed areas are kept to a good standard and provide opportunities for play and recreation in the cooler weather. There is a good size gym, which is well used in the physical education programme. The school has created 2 new science laboratories that are in regular use. The library is in the process of development. It now provides an attractive resource, although supplies of books and other digital materials remain slight.

Ramps are in place alongside the main access points to the ground floor; there is no access to the upper floor of the building for those students or adults with mobility problems. Arrangements for the entrance and exit of students in the public road outside the school's front gate, need reviewing to ensure students enter the school safely.

The school's resources to support its aims

Resourcing of the curriculum is satisfactory and improving. The recruitment of teachers with experience of an American curriculum has been difficult. The principal is now building a more experienced and competent staff group. There are teaching assistants in all KG and some Grade 1 classes, although these are not always deployed effectively to support teaching and learning.

Nearly all classrooms present colourful displays of students' work. The number of students in each class allows teachers to provide activities that allow students to move between groups, work on the carpeted areas or visit the learning centres. There are sufficient practical resources placed in classrooms to effectively support the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills.

There are data show projectors in all classrooms and teachers use them effectively to engage student interest. The school has a set of 60 'Chromebooks' which are used effectively to support learning in grades 5-8. Classroom resources in KG, including those for imaginative and creative play have improved in the last year. The principal and her staff have worked together to create a learning environment that stimulates young children. Water and sand trays provide sensory play and tents in the shared areas enable children to enjoy books and engage in role-play.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leadership and management of the school are good. The principal provides a calm and authoritative presence. The principal has set a priority of improving teaching and learning and her long and successful experience as a principal provides the school with expertise that enables teachers to develop their skills.. She provides mentoring to teaching staff as well as conducting formal observations of teaching and learning. Follow-up to observation and the annual appraisal process offers staff clear direction for improvement within a framework of support and encouragement.

Middle managers, coordinators, for each phase are able to lead their sections with the skill and confidence derived from training by the principal. Within their section, middle managers provide effective oversight of curriculum planning and conduct lesson observations. The appointment of an experienced vice-principal with direct and recent experience of the common core curriculum has further strengthened the school.

The owner and the school board maintain an informed and productive relationship with the principal. They receive regular performance updates and allow the principal to exercise her professional judgement in all key areas of school life. Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strength and weaknesses. The self-evaluation (SEF) was a consultative process involving all teachers with the judgements moderated by the principal. It contains a good range of evidence, is suitably evaluative and the judgments are largely accurate. The school development plan (SDP) contains a range of measurable outcomes and builds on the recommendations of the previous inspection to set ambitious targets for development. This has contributed to the rapid improvement made by the school since the last inspection.

The school benefits from a high level of support from parents, students and staff. The school provides parents with good information about their child's progress; the voice of parents and students to enable involvement in the decision making process is underdeveloped.

Progress since the last inspection

The school has made considerable progress since the last inspection. It has taken the recommendations from the previous inspections and used these as a critical part of the SDP. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and students in most classes are engaged effectively into their learning activities. There is less reliance on textbooks and group work provides students with more insight into their own learning. The principal has been successful in coaching teachers and this

has broadened the range of available teaching strategies at their disposal. The principal has introduced an effective process for monitoring teaching and learning. Responsibility for this is shared between the principal and 3 coordinators and has led to more enjoyable learning and quicker progress by students.

The 3 coordinators have oversight of curriculum planning. This is an arduous task but one that is now being fulfilled effectively. As the school increases in numbers this load may become unsupportable. Teachers plan their lessons to meet the needs of 3 broad ability groups; the curriculum does not fully meet the needs of more able students. The introduction of 60 'Chromebooks' has done much to help integrate ICT into the curriculum for grades 5-8.

The school has demonstrated a good capacity to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Continue to improve the attainment and progress of all students by:
 - i. providing dedicated leadership for the subjects taught in Arabic, to sustain and enhance the improvement model
 - ii. providing sufficient opportunities for students to further develop higher order thinking skills in all classes
 - iii. continue to enhance the school's library and technology resources so that students are able to integrate these into their regular learning
 - iv. identifying students who find learning easy and negotiating curriculum opportunities that challenge them
 - v. more detailed analysis of available performance data so that planning can be effectively directed towards raising student attainment.
2. Provide a more cohesive and collaborative approach to supporting students with special educational needs by:
 - i. gaining a better understanding of students' starting points and their strengths as well as weaknesses
 - ii. the creation of Individual Education Plans (IEP) that have SMART targets and focus on the creation of small achievable steps
 - iii. targeted professional development for teachers and teaching assistants, based on a mentoring and coaching model, on inclusive teaching and learning strategies
 - iv. ongoing monitoring of student progress towards their targets.
3. Provide more cultural and physical activities to support the curriculum and students' personal development by:
 - i. surveying students' interests so that activities can match their needs, interests and aspirations
 - ii. review school schedules and staff workloads to create opportunities within the school day for cultural and physical activities to take place.
4. Strengthen the voice of parents and students in the decision making processes.

Inspection Grades

Performance Standard	Band A High performing			Band B Satisfactory		Band C 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: The school's overall effectiveness								