



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



Inspection Report

Sunflower Private School

Academic Year 2014 – 2015

إقرأ

Sunflower Private School

Inspection Date	1 - 3 February 2015
School ID#	204
Licensed Curriculum	British (Cambridge International Examinations)
Number of Students	127
Age Range	4 to 10 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Emma McGrath
School Address	PO Box 1538, 10th Street, Falaj Hazza, Al Ain
Telephone Number	+971 (0)3 782 8300
Fax Number	+971 (0)3 782 8500
Official Email (ADEC)	sunflower.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	www.sunflowerschool-alain.webs.com
Date of last inspection	13 – 15 May 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 B;	GRADE 5
-------------------------------------	----------------	----------------

The main strengths of the school are:

- very positive and caring relationships ensure that students are enthusiastic, willing and happy learners
- students' positive attitudes to learning which helps them enjoy all the school offers and is reflected in their good attendance and punctuality
- the well-developed care and guidance procedures create a safe and supportive environment for students
- the positive impact the principal and senior team have a on improving the quality of education.

The main areas for improvement are:

- the quality of teaching and learning so that a greater proportion of lessons are good or better, particularly through the use of targeted professional development
 - using the outcomes of assessments of students' prior knowledge and skills to design learning activities matched to their identified needs, particularly for the more able
 - ensuring that assessment data and tracking are used to plan and deliver lessons to accelerate academic progress
 - planning classroom revisits by leaders and managers to check that all identified improvements are embedded in practice
 - introducing a system to manage the performance of the principal, and all teaching staff.
-

Introduction

The school was inspected by 3 inspectors over 3 days. They observed 40 lessons, conducted several meetings with senior staff, teachers, support staff, students and parents. They analysed test and assessment results, scrutinised students' work across the school, analysed the 52 responses to the parents' questionnaire and considered many of the school's policies and other documents. Senior staff were involved throughout the inspection process and 2 joint observations of lessons were undertaken.

Description of the School

Sunflower School was established and opened in 2010 and is situated in Falaj Hazza, Al Ain. The school's vision is to provide students with an integrated child centred and age appropriate education that emphasizes both high academic and social expectations for all students. The aim is to provide the opportunities, resources and environment necessary to encourage students to become lifelong learners by teaching the skills necessary to allow them to be productive, responsible citizens on the global stage.

The school follows the Cambridge Primary Curriculum from Year 1 onwards for English, mathematics and science. The UK Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is used for the Foundation Stage (FS2). The school also uses the International Primary Program (IPC) in music, art, information and communications technology (ICT), technology, international, geography and history in thematic units of study to extend the core subjects. Cambridge accredited the school in 2014. In 2014 the school started using internally marked assessment tests set by Cambridge up to Year 3. This will be the first year that the school will submit tests to Cambridge for external marking and validation.

In September 2014 a further two classrooms and a gym were added so that the school could extend the age range up one year to Year 4. The school has an open admissions policy. There are eight classes in the school which admit students from FS2 to Year 4. There are 2 classes in all year groups except Year 3 and Year 4 where there is only one class.

There are 127 students, 70 boys and 57 girls, who originate from a variety of countries, the largest groups are from the USA 38%, the UK 17%, and Finland 14%; 6% are Emirati. There are 32 Students in FS2 and 95 students in Year1 – 4. Of the total numbers, 26% of students are Muslim and 13% are of Arabic heritage. The school has identified 6 students as having special educational needs (SEN): 2 have specific learning difficulties, 1 with moderate learning difficulties and 3 with severe

learning difficulties. The school has identified 34% of children having language difficulties in FS2 and 21% of students across the rest of the school.

There are 10 teachers with 6 teaching support assistants and 3 administrative staff; 3 teachers left last year, 4 joined this academic year, including 1 extra teacher required for the Year 4 expansion. School fees are in the medium range with annual tuition fees being AED 16,000 in FS2, and rising up to AED 19,000 in Year 4.

The Effectiveness of the School

Evaluation of the school's overall effectiveness

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education and has improved since the last inspection. Most students make at least satisfactory academic progress as they move through the school, particularly those with SEN and those who speak English as an additional language. Respect, warm relationships and positivity are very evident throughout the school community. Students are provided with supportive, safe and caring learning environments and develop the personal qualities they will require in the next stages of their lives. They have positive attitudes towards learning. The curriculum implementation is broad and balanced. The buildings and premises provide a good environment for learning with sufficient resources to ensure the school aims are met. The principal and the senior team are having a positive impact on improving the quality of educational provision. The school is highly regarded by parents who are actively involved in many areas of its work. Students are happy and proud of their school.

The accurate assessment of student's attainment and progress is a key area for improvement. This would encourage teachers to raise their expectations and set more challenging learning targets for students, especially the more able.

Students' attainment & progress

Students' attainment is broadly in line with age-related international expectations and progress is satisfactory. Most students make at least satisfactory progress as they move through the school and work at age appropriate levels in most lessons. Attainment and progress is satisfactory in mathematics, Arabic, Islamic education, social studies, FS2 and other subjects; it is satisfactory and improving in English, science and ICT. Those students with SEN make better than satisfactory progress; more able students and those with gifts and talents do not make sufficient progress.

There is insufficient validated data to precisely compare the school's performance with others following a similar curriculum. Assessment of attainment and

progress using the ongoing Cambridge scheme indicates that achievement in English is better than in mathematics; this was validated by inspectors' observation of lessons and scrutiny of work. Students' acquisition of basic skills in reading, writing, numeracy, thinking and use of ICT are better than satisfactory. Scientific enquiry skills are developing well and the acquisition of 21st century skills is improving.

The majority of children have good levels of English on entry to the school and make satisfactory progress in the acquisition of English language skills in the FS. The progress of students who speak English as an additional language is good. English reading, speaking and listening skills are developing well. More able readers and writers are not sufficiently challenged. Writing is less well developed throughout the school as there are too few opportunities offered and a narrow range of styles being developed. In Arabic, speaking skills for non -Arabic speakers are less well developed.

Assessment is not always used effectively to plan and enhance activities that are sufficiently aligned to students' learning needs. In many lessons, more able students make insufficient progress and do not achieve their potential because activities are not planned appropriately to cater for their needs.

The school is developing effective initiatives to assess student progress. Recent developments, including the introduction of Cambridge Checkpoint Assessments, which are to be undertaken for the first time this year, will provide greater rigour and validity to the school's own judgments. The Burt Reading Test is now being used to assess reading ages. In the FS the introduction of the Orbit recording tracker complements developing teacher assessment and observation skills.

Students' personal development

Personal development is satisfactory and improving. Respect, warmth and positive relationships are very evident throughout the school community. Students are provided with a supportive, safe and caring learning environment. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good, and has improved since the last inspection. Students demonstrate positive attitudes in lessons and are interested, enthusiastic, and happy learners. This is reflected in the above average attendance of 96% and their very good punctuality.

Students have a good understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lives, which are effectively promoted through the curriculum and assemblies. An active appreciation and understanding of the heritage, culture and values of the UAE are encouraged across the curriculum, assemblies and celebrations. Opportunities for students to engage in leadership roles in the school community are limited.

The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in most lessons and subjects. Teachers are well qualified and have secure subject knowledge. They have a good understanding of the curriculum content for the subjects they teach and use a variety of effective teaching styles and strategies. Teachers and support staff good use of spoken English supports and encourages the strong speaking and listening skills of the students. Students respond very well to their teachers and are happy, cooperative and highly motivated learners with good behaviour.

The most effective teaching was observed in science and English. In the best lessons, learning objectives are clearly shared, opportunities provide challenge and allow students opportunities to solve problems, make decisions and develop higher-order thinking skills. Less effective lessons take place as a result of imprecise learning objectives which are not shared with students, or activities that fail to take account of prior learning and that are not matched to all students' abilities. This is particularly evident in the provision for the more able students across the school. Marking of written work is inconsistent and students do not always know what they need to do next to improve.

In the FS, teachers and support staff provide good opportunities to learn through discovery, play and interactions with one another and adults. Too much adult talk in other lessons restricts learning time and opportunities to further develop independent learning. Teaching assistants are not actively enough involved in supporting student learning. There was little evidence that teachers had explicitly planned how assistants would contribute to improving student outcomes.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The school implements a broad and balanced curriculum which meets students' academic needs, successfully motivates them, and encourages them to develop independent learning skills and personal qualities.

The newly established Cambridge curriculum provision for core subjects has been successfully integrated and complements the existing IPC Curriculum well. Satisfactory cross-curricular links are being made, especially in science and literacy, which in turn improve speaking, listening, reading and levels of independence.

Curriculum planning and implementation is not adequately adapted to meet the learning needs of all students, particularly the more able. Curriculum planning for FS2, lacks accurate reference to EYFS learning outcomes. The needs of non-Arabic speakers within the Arabic curriculum are not always successfully planned for.

Parents have been involved in the planning of the curriculum and their views are successfully sought. Changes to the mathematics curriculum and implementation of the Cambridge curriculum have had significant input from parents. They appreciate and speak positively about being encouraged to play a role in such decisions. The curriculum implementation is enriched by a range of well-planned extra-curricular activities and educational visits. The values and heritage of the UAE are planned and incorporated well.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The school provides a satisfactory and improving quality of care, guidance and support. The good ethos and caring relationships within the school community ensures that the students are enthusiastic, willing and happy learners. School leaders, and all staff are committed to supporting personal development across all grades. Students speak highly of their school. They demonstrate good levels of self-discipline and maturity in lessons and as they move around the school. The tracking of individual academic progress is underdeveloped. Teachers do not use assessment during lessons sufficiently well in order to identify individual student needs, especially for the more able.

The school responds quickly and positively to parental concerns and this ensures that the care and safety of students is a priority. Attendance at 96% is well above average and a good reflection of students' attitudes towards their school. First aid facilities are good with a highly competent nurse available. The procedures and training for the protection of students, are good and well understood by all staff.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The buildings and premises are clean, bright and well maintained. They provide a safe, pleasant and stimulating environment to support learning. The addition of 2 good quality classrooms and a gymnasium this year have had a significant effect on the spaciousness of the building. New classrooms allow better opportunities for teachers to use different arrangements to vary learning activities. The rooms are of reasonable size for the number of students who are enrolled.

Classroom and corridor displays, many having the learning objectives as labels, are used well by some teachers to celebrate students' achievements. This is not consistently effective across the school. The principal and school nurse successfully share responsibility for health and safety. There is a satisfactory library and a gymnasium. Outside, there are 2 good sized covered play areas with large climbing frames and a small grassed sports field. One playground is a recent addition, and was designed and funded by parents.

The school undertakes regular evacuation practices and procedures which are well understood. Security checking of adults at the entrance needs to be more robust so that identification of visitors to the school, especially at the start and end of the school day, is carried out at all times. There is very limited access to the play areas at the rear of the building for wheelchairs or those with mobility issues.

The school's resources to support its aims

Resources are satisfactory in supporting the school's aims. The school has a full complement of teachers who are well qualified. The school does not have a member of staff with SEN qualifications. The school uses teaching assistants in FS, the lower grades, ICT and for SEN support. The quality of delivery and effectiveness is variable. Some parents provide funding for learning support assistants to work alongside their own children in classrooms. The use of Orbital Tracking software to support FS2 lesson observations is in place and complements developing teacher focused assessment of children's learning and planning for future individual needs.

The school has invested in ICT by providing 52 tablets that are successfully used throughout the school to support learning. There are 2 classrooms equipped with interactive whiteboards with all others having data projectors. The school library has adequate resources, but there is an insufficient range of Arabic fiction and non-fiction books.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. The principal's dedication to the school has had a positive impact on improving the quality of education. She successfully promotes the school's vision and positively motivates staff and students to continually improve. The school runs very smoothly with a calm, caring and respectful ethos very evident. Middle leaders have now been appointed and this has had a significant and positive impact.

The principal and senior staff undertake lesson observations regularly for all teachers. Feedback to teachers is not rigorous enough. It does not identify clear measurable targets for individual teachers which can be followed up with the teacher to ascertain impact and improvement. Assessment data is collected and collated but the impact on teaching and learning is limited. It is not used consistently to monitor progress of all students, identify improvement areas, and plan for interventions and set learning targets. The needs of more able students are not being met as a result. Professional development programmes enable teachers to access support for their individual needs. This is not rigorously monitored to ensure that it has the required impact on enhancing classroom practice.

The self-evaluation form (SEF) is comprehensive but some judgments are overly optimistic. Many statements are not specific or targeted sufficiently well to allow measurable outcomes to be monitored. The school development plan (SDP) is detailed and outlines strategic steps that will address issues raised by the SEF. It does not sufficiently identify dates, timelines and goals that allow success to be clearly measured and monitored.

The school has very good links with parents, who have a very positive view of the school and praise the quality of education and care their children receive. They speak very positively about the school leadership and have full confidence in the procedures in place for dealing with complaints and suggestions. The school has a governing body comprising of volunteer parents who act in a supportive and advisory role. The owners are very supportive and take an active interest in the school. There is no performance management system in place for the principal or teachers.

Progress since the last inspection

There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The school has implemented a system of collecting and analysing assessment data, but this is still at an early stage. By the end of this academic year, the school will be able to compare itself against international standards through the data obtained via the Grade 4 Cambridge curriculum. The appointment of senior staff to create a new leadership team has had a positive impact on the school. Regular lesson observations now take place and are linked to professional development opportunities offered to teachers. Teachers plan and moderate together regularly. Improving the quality of marking and feedback to students, and increasing the challenge for the more able are still areas for improvement that the school is grappling with.

The school has clearly demonstrated that it has the satisfactory capacity to make further progress.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Continue to improve teaching and learning so that a greater proportion of lessons are good or better by:
 - i. using the outcomes of assessments of students' prior knowledge and skills to design learning activities matched to students' identified needs
 - ii. ensuring learning objectives are consistently articulated, written in student friendly language, fully understood by students and have measurable outcomes
 - iii. raising expectations, challenge and pace in differentiating learning, particularly for higher achieving students
 - iv. focusing more on targeted professional development.
2. Further improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - i. assessment data is rigorously and regularly tracked and analysed to measure the impact on lesson planning and accelerate students' progress
 - ii. focusing lesson observations on the effectiveness of student learning and linking the outcomes of observations to differentiated professional development action plans for teachers
 - iii. planning classroom revisits to check that all identified improvements are embedded in practice
 - iv. assessment and observation skills by teachers in FS further develop and support staff to better inform progress and focused group teaching.
3. Institute a system of performance management for the principal and all teaching staff.

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								