



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



Inspection Report

British International School, Abu Dhabi

Academic Year 2013 – 14

Iqraa

British International School, Abu Dhabi

Inspection Date	29 September – 2 October 2013
School ID#	190
Licensed Curriculum	British and International Baccalaureate
Number of Students	1175
Age Range	3 to 16 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Lesley-Ann Wallace
School Address	P O Box 60968, Abu Dhabi, UAE
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School Website	www.bisabudhabi.com
Date of last inspection	29 April – 2 May 2012

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
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The main strengths of the school are:

- attainment and progress in English, maths and science are good
- students demonstrate high levels of good behaviour, respect for others and a commitment to learning
- in most lessons, varied learning strategies enable students to develop high-level thinking and problem solving skills
- the curriculum provides opportunities for students to develop independent learning skills through initiatives such as 'the Global Classroom'.

The main areas for improvement are:

- attainment and progress in Arabic, social studies and Islamic Studies
- student attendance levels
- leadership and management; in particular the monitoring of teaching and learning and the use of data to rigorously analyse the performance of all students in all subjects.

Introduction

The school was inspected by 5 inspectors who observed 93 lessons and met with school leaders, teachers, support staff and students. Inspectors observed students' arrivals at and departures from the school, assemblies and break times. The inspectors reviewed and analysed data and documentation provided by the school. In addition, 66 responses from parents to a questionnaire about the school were analysed.

Description of the School

The British International School, Abu Dhabi (BISAD) is situated in Muhammad Bin Zayed area and run by Nord Anglia as part of a group of international schools. The school's mission is to create an environment of respect, intercultural understanding and integrity; to be a place where everyone feels involved, valued and successful and to create a community where individuals know they can make a difference.

The school opened in 2009 and has grown substantially. There are now 1175 students on roll. Of these, approximately 56% are boys. Almost 300 new students have joined the school in the current academic year. The students come from a wide range of backgrounds: 26% are Emirati, 22% are British, 6% are Egyptian, 5% are Indian and the rest come from other Arab nations, Canada, Australia and the Far East. Approximately 56% of students are Muslim and 38% have Arabic as their home language.

The school offers a British curriculum in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stages 1 to 4. The International Baccalaureate Diploma program has been introduced this year in Year 12. The curriculum is adapted to meet the ADEC requirements for the teaching of Arabic, Islamic Studies and Social Studies across all phases. French and Spanish are offered as Modern Foreign Languages.

The Principal has been at the school since 2010. The Senior Leadership Team consists of the Principal, a High School Head, who has been in post for just over one month, an Assistant Head of the Primary School and the Head of Curriculum Access team. There are a number of middle managers in the school taking responsibility for aspects of the curriculum and providing pastoral and academic support for the students. Due to the increase in student numbers, the school also has 30 teachers who joined at the start of the current academic year. The school's annual fees are at a premium and range between AED 46,497 to AED 61,349.

The Effectiveness of the School

Students' attainment & progress

The attainment and progress of students varies significantly between subjects. In English, mathematics and science, students make good progress despite many having arrived in school with weaker language skills. By the end of Key Stage 2, internally moderated assessments show most students meet international expectations. Progress accelerates in Key Stages 3 and 4 and GCSE results show that most students' attainment in these subjects is above international age-related expectations. Most students are well challenged in these subjects and have a good knowledge of their individual targets, which enables them to track their own progress. Students' 21st Century skills are well developed in these subjects. In most lessons students are encouraged to think critically, work collaboratively and generate and solve problems. In science, for example, many students participate in termly research projects, which enable them to design and carry out experiments and further develop their scientific abilities.

In Arabic, most students make steady progress between Years 1 and 4 and by the end of Key Stage 2, most first language Arabic speakers achieve the expected standards. However, all second language Arabic speakers are working well below expected standards. Progress and attainment in Arabic for first and second language speakers remains well below international standards across Key Stages 3 and 4. Attainment and progress in Islamic Studies is unsatisfactory and below international standards. Most students are unable to recite age appropriate verses from the Holy Qur'an with accuracy or understanding. Some of the variations in attainment in Arabic and Islamic Studies are due to the number of students who arrive in school without prior knowledge of the language. However, there is insufficient rigor in the assessment of these students' needs and inadequate tracking of their progress to help them attain expected levels. Progress and attainment in social studies is satisfactory overall, although it is less secure in lessons taught in Arabic.

Students in the Foundation Stage make good progress in their communication and language skills. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most are able to play cooperatively together, show sensitivity to others' feelings and take turns. Most also demonstrate good control and coordination skills. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) skills is good and almost all students make satisfactory progress. This is well supported by curriculum initiatives such as the Global Classroom. Students with English as an additional language are well supported with targeted individual action plans enabling them to effectively access the curriculum and most make good progress.

Students' personal development

Personal development has some good elements, but attendance is unsatisfactory as it is below 90%. Students demonstrate high levels of respect for others in their community and show a strong commitment to learning. Most are sensitive to the views and opinions of others. For example, in a Year 6 lesson students were able to thoughtfully discuss slavery from a historic perspective. Students demonstrate good self-discipline and instances of inappropriate behaviour are rare. Most staff have established systems and routines which are well adhered to by most students.

Students show a good awareness of the UAE's culture, heritage and the diversity of its people. They show appropriate respect for the daily raising of the flag. Although the national anthem is played daily, most students do not know the words, as they are not expected to sing it.

Students are given opportunities to develop leadership skills through a range of activities from student council to class monitors. Most are encouraged to think about personal safety and security including Internet safety. Almost all students participate in the wide range of social, cultural and sporting extra-curricular activities that enable them to extend their learning and interests.

The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is variable, but satisfactory overall. There are high quality schemes of work in most curriculum areas that are translated into detailed plans with clear learning objectives. In many lessons, learning objectives and success criteria are shared with students so that they are clear about what they need to achieve. These lessons are often well structured, include a range of interactive, student focused activities and conclude with a discussion about the learning objective to assess whether the outcomes were achieved. These elements are not present in all lessons.

Many lessons require students to work collaboratively to find solutions to the challenges they are set. This enables many to develop higher order thinking skills. Some teachers employ high order questioning techniques to challenge students' understanding of key concepts. For example, in a Year 7 English class, students engaged in scrutinizing texts to explore the author's real purpose for writing.

A few lessons are teacher dominated, over reliant on text books and do not provide students with the opportunity to clarify their learning. In these lessons, students' prior learning is not taken into account and tasks are not appropriately matched to their needs. Students are not always supported in taking

responsibility for their learning in these lessons and as a result, their progress is limited.

Teachers undertake and record regular summative assessments of students' progress. The use of in-class assessments to check students' understanding of the intended learning remains inconsistent. Some teachers analyse assessment data effectively to enable them to identify gaps in students' learning and plan appropriate interventions.

Learning activities often take account of less able students' differing needs. Most students with special educational needs receive targeted support from additional teachers in a planned and rigorously monitored way. The same provision is made for most students with English as an additional language. However, the needs of students who are more able are not always planned for and often remain unmet in mixed ability classes.

The use of assistant teachers is variable. In the Foundation Stage, most are deployed effectively to support children's learning in the continuous provision tasks. In other year groups, their role is not well defined and some are not aware of their role in supporting students' learning needs.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The curriculum is well planned to meet the expectations of the English National Curriculum and adapted to deliver ADEC's aims in Arabic, Islamic Studies and Social Sciences. It is broad and balanced and provides a considerable range of subjects at Key Stages 3 and 4. Additional programs help to motivate students' wider interests and abilities. For example, the Global Classroom initiative enables the majority of students to develop a cultural and political understanding of their world. It also provides secure, planned opportunities for students to interact with other young people across the globe. There are numerous opportunities, including the Badger Tasks in science, which support the development of students' independent skills. The majority of students attend the wide range of extra-curricular activities, which include sport, music, drama, languages and film studies. Additional learning support is also provided after school, such as the Arabic Spelling Bee.

Special events such as National Day celebrations are effective in promoting a good understanding and appreciation of the UAE. Arrangements to support transition between the different phases in school are well planned and effective and the school is developing similar systems for those planning to enter Higher Education establishments.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The positive culture and climate of the school leads to effective protection, care and guidance of students. The school has a clear safeguarding policy, which includes guidance on child protection issues, and is understood and applied by all staff. The recently implemented behaviour and pastoral care systems are having a significant effect on students who report feeling cared for and held accountable. This results in a calm and positive learning environment. Staff are aware that corporal punishment is forbidden.

All adults working in school are subject to suitable safe recruitment checks. Security arrangements are thorough and ensure that the students are safe at all times in the school day. The First Aid clinic is well resourced and has secure and effective record keeping systems in place. Two nurses provide advice for leading healthy lifestyles and a counselor is available to support self-referrals or students that teachers may have concerns about. The school does not have effective systems in place for improving attendance and punctuality.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The school building provides good facilities for most curriculum areas, including a swimming pool, a library, 2 outdoor areas for Foundation Stage classes and several specialist rooms. It is in good condition and is very well maintained. The covered outdoor areas shared by the Foundation Stage students provide space for a wide range of physical and social activities, including cycle tracks and climbing equipment. Classrooms have good ventilation, lighting and space. Displays provide information about the school's rules and about the curriculum but there is not enough variety in the students' work displayed to motivate and stimulate student interest.

The site is very secure, with staff present at all gates to prevent intruders and provide a welcome to the school community. All safety equipment is regularly checked. Standards of hygiene are very high. All areas of the school are accessible to the wheelchair users in the school.

The school's resources to support its aims

The school's resources make a good contribution to the students' educational experience. There are a large number of well-qualified teachers who are well supported by additional adults in lessons and around the school. Student - teacher ratios are very good at 11:1, which enables students to receive targeted pastoral and learning support. Classrooms are well equipped with interactive whiteboards, which are well used by most teachers. Although the school does not have separate physical education (PE) facilities, the sports staff team makes good use

of the school halls to provide a range of physical activities. The school has a number of additional laptops to supplement the ICT resources provided in specialist rooms, which are well used. The library is well resourced and across the school a large number of English novels and books are available for all subjects. There are fewer novels available in Arabic to support guided reading. The areas for the storage, preparation and consumption of food are hygienic and sufficient. School buses are well maintained and provide safe transport for the students.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The systems for the leadership and management of the school are established and improving. Since the last inspection, the senior and middle leadership team have focussed on improving student attainment and progress. For the most part, this has been successful, but impact has been restricted to a few core subjects. The subjects taught in Arabic have not had the same scrutiny. This has led to students' attainment and progress in these subjects being hampered.

The Principal, supported by the Head of the secondary school, has led the school self-evaluation process and the improvements since the last inspection. She is aware of the need for greater rigour in the school's improvement planning and the need for more robust monitoring of school improvement initiatives. The current school improvement planning process does not adequately take into account the views of stakeholders or staff, nor is it supported by a sufficiently robust self-evaluation process. Senior leaders recognize that there are currently too many strategic initiatives identified and are in the process of identifying the key priorities.

The operational procedures in school are well established and there is a noticeable commitment amongst staff and students to the core purpose of learning. The school is well supported by Nord Anglia's educational advisers. Several new monitoring processes, including the analysis of attainment data and the monitoring of teaching and learning have been introduced. They are not yet securely implemented. For example, all teachers are observed in lessons by a range of other professionals, including the senior leadership team. However, targets for improvement are not always set and when they are, they are not specifically related to student learning. There are no regular monitoring procedures to measure the teacher's progress towards the targets.

The school maintains good communication with parents about their children's education as well as about matters relating to school life. There were only a few responses to the parental questionnaire. Of those that did respond many expressed their happiness with the school, recognizing some very good teaching,

approachable staff and the good academic progress of their children. Some parents expressed concerns about the high fee levels and the lack of attention paid to improving the quality of Arabic teaching.

The school's finances are well matched to its educational priorities and well managed. Staff and resources are deployed according to students' needs. The school has demonstrated satisfactory capacity to improve.

Progress since the last inspection

The main areas for improvement from the last inspection were to:

- improve the strategic effectiveness of senior leaders
- ensure that teaching met the full range of student's learning needs.

Senior leaders have been successful in analysing and using reliable data to improve attainment in some subjects. The needs of those students with special educational needs or who are learning English as an additional language are now being well met. The needs of those who are more able are not being consistently met, and there is still some variability in the effectiveness of teaching assistants.

The school has therefore made satisfactory progress towards tackling the recommendations from the last inspection.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Improve attainment and progress in Arabic and Islamic Studies by:
 - i. implementing the best practice seen in other core subjects
 - ii. developing a rigorous assessment system in these subjects that will enable teachers to accurately track students' progress
 - iii. providing a higher profile to subjects taught in Arabic so that students are encouraged to celebrate their acquisition of Arabic.
2. Put in place effective systems for monitoring and improving students attendance so that it is at least 90%.
3. Enhance leadership and management by strengthening the processes for formal monitoring of the quality of classroom practice to:
 - i. ensure that lesson observations focus firmly on the impact of teaching on effective student learning
 - ii. identify improvement areas for teachers and define specific next steps

- iii. monitor and record the effectiveness of the implementation of the identified targets on student learning.
4. Developing whole school data systems which enable senior leaders to rigorously analyse the performance of students at school, year group, classroom, subject and individual student level and to compare the performance of different sub groups in the school in order to set appropriate targets for improved learning outcomes in all subjects.

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								