



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



Inspection Report

The Gulf International Academy

Academic Year 2014 – 2015

إقرأ

The Gulf International Academy

Inspection Date	23 – 26 February 2015
School ID#	159
Licensed Curriculum	American
Number of Students	996
Age Range	4 to 18 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Dalia Kamel
School Address	28 Street and Khaled Bin Sultan Street, Falaj Hazzaa, Al Ain
Telephone Number	+971 (0)3 767 6905
Fax Number	+971 (0)3 767 6908
Official Email (ADEC)	gulfintacad.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	www.gipaalain.com
Date of last inspection	14 – 17 April 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 4
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The main strengths of the school are:

- the principal's passion, drive and strong commitment to improve the quality of students' learning
- teachers are enthusiastic, committed and positively embrace the wide range of professional development opportunities
- students behave well, have positive attitudes to learning and demonstrate respect for each other and for their teachers
- there are effective communications with parents, who are positive about the support and care their children receive
- the school positively promotes the heritage, culture and values of the UAE which are proudly embraced by students
- kindergarten is developing and improving and is creating a positive foundation for future learning.

The main areas for improvement are:

- consistency in the quality of teaching and learning so that most lessons secure good academic progress
 - greater effectiveness of the leadership and management by adopting an even more rigorous and analytical approach to assessing the quality of teaching and the academic standards
 - provision of a library with a good range of English and Arabic books.
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Introduction

The school was evaluated by 5 inspectors. They observed 98 lessons, conducted meetings with senior staff, heads of department, support staff, students and parents. They analysed test and assessment results, scrutinised students' work, analysed the 241 responses to the parents' questionnaire and considered many of the school's policies and other documents. Senior leaders were involved throughout the process and undertook 9 joint observations with inspectors.

Description of the School

The Gulf International Private Academy (GIPA) opened in September 2001. Its vision is: 'We are an academy that offers quality education and graduates future leaders equipped with enlightened human values'. The mission is: 'We strive to create a safe, respectful and centred learning environment encouraging what's best in our students and staff. Our goal is to nurture a passion for knowledge, a sense of responsibility towards society and faith in the ability to transform lives and communities to the better'.

The student population is 996, from Kindergarten (KG) to Grade 12, and 55% are boys. There are 163 students in KG, 470 in Grades 1 to 5, 240 in Grades 6 to 9 and 123 in Grades 10 to 12. The school follows an American curriculum; the Ministry of Education (MOE) curriculum is used in Arabic, Islamic education and social studies. Students take a range of standardised tests, including Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), Common Educational Proficiency Assessment (CEPA) and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

The school caters for students from many different nationalities: 36% are Emirati, 12% Egyptian, 12% Jordanian 11% American, 7% Syrian, 4% Palestinian and 18% from other nationalities. Almost all students are Muslim and 88% are of Arab heritage. The school has identified 4% of the students as gifted and talented (G&T) and 7% of students as having special educational needs (SEN); 1% with severe learning difficulties and 6% with moderate learning difficulties. A further 10% of students who require English language support are identified. Admission to the school from Grade 1 to Grade 12 is determined by interview and tests.

The principal has been in post for 6 years. The leadership team comprises the principal, vice-principal and 4 heads of section. A board of trustees has responsibility for overseeing the quality of education. The school has 76 teachers and turnover was 20% last year. School fees range from AED 10,200 to AED 22,000 which places the school in the low to medium categories.

The Effectiveness of the School

Evaluation of the school's overall effectiveness

The Gulf International Academy has improved significantly in many areas since the last inspection. All aspects of the school are now satisfactory and improving with the exception of resources, which are satisfactory. This is due to a combination of highly supportive ownership, the strong drive of the principal and the shared commitment of all staff to improvement. Resourcing is satisfactory due to inadequate provision for information and communications technology in KG, limited reading material and restricted resources for science.

The improving picture is demonstrated by the variety of strategies in classrooms that now provide more exciting and stimulating opportunities for learning. The school has effective systems to track academic progress. The new leadership structure provides clarity in responsibilities and accountabilities of senior staff.

Students' attainment & progress

Students' attainment and progress are satisfactory and improving. Grade 6 and 9 MAP data indicates attainment broadly in line with international standards in English, mathematics and science. Attainment and progress in most lessons is satisfactory or better. Attainment and progress are satisfactory and improving in English, mathematics, Arabic and information and communications technology (ICT). They are satisfactory in Islamic education, social studies and science.

Students enter school with little or no English. The use of English in teaching helps students to rapidly acquire speaking and listening skills. Children make better than satisfactory progress, particularly in the acquisition of English and Arabic oral skills. Children in KG make better than satisfactory progress in all subjects except in ICT, which is unsatisfactory. Arabic speaking and listening skills are above age related expectations.

The basic skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing, numeracy and the use of ICT are satisfactory and improving. Thinking and independent learning skills are satisfactory, with students having limited opportunities in some lessons to develop their own ideas. SEN students make satisfactory progress due to the structured support they receive. Higher achieving students make satisfactory progress; in some lessons, they find the level of work too easy and do not have sufficient challenge and extension.

The school uses the outcomes of standardised MAP tests increasingly well to monitor students' progress and to validate their own internal assessments. Data is used effectively to identify students in need of intervention and devise improvement plans to enhance their progress. SAT test data demonstrates that

Grade 12 students are performing broadly in line with international averages. In KG, assessment is insufficiently developed to monitor all age appropriate aspects of learning. Academic tracking is satisfactory.

Students' personal development

Students' personal development is satisfactory and improving. Relationships are caring and supportive throughout the school. Students behave well, have positive attitudes to learning and are respectful to adults and one another. In most lessons, students are engaged and show enthusiasm for their learning. In a small number of lessons, a few boys lose focus when not actively involved.

The school positively promotes the heritage, culture and values of the UAE. This is demonstrated in daily assemblies, lessons and other celebrations. Students proudly embrace their national culture and values. They also respect the values of the diverse community the school serves.

Students have some opportunities to develop leadership skills through the student council. Some teachers give younger students further opportunities to be group leaders and class helpers. Children's social skills development is not monitored effectively. There are only limited occasions when students are able to develop their leadership skills in middle and high school.

Students have a good understanding of how to live a safe and healthy life. This is promoted well through assemblies, in lessons and through talks from outside organisations. Attendance is well above average at 97%.

The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving in all subjects and phases. The very large majority of lessons were judged to be at least satisfactory. Around 10 % were deemed good; a large majority of these lessons were in English and mathematics. There were examples of effective teaching across all years and grades.

Classroom relationships are positive and supportive. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and plan effectively to engage students. Teaching assistants are used well to provide effective support. This is particularly strong in KG, where teaching assistants are rapidly developing their role. Students are generally enthusiastic and show interest in their learning. They work well both on their own and collaboratively with others.

In the most effective lessons, learning objectives are shared with students and there is less teacher talk. Most students can explain what they have to do and share their understanding. Tasks are matched to students' learning needs and aptitude and questioning skills are used well to extend learning. Students are

active learners and work in a variety of ways, including collaboratively and independently. They are able to solve problems, draw conclusions and present their own ideas. In the least effective lessons, objectives are not always shared with students and often the learning outcomes are not clear. Too much teacher talk limits opportunities for students to take ownership of their learning. Questioning is often limited to a few students and many are inactive for long periods of time. Assessment for learning is not always effectively used to plan activities that match individual students' needs.

Teachers throughout the school are increasingly using a variety of strategies to stimulate students' learning. In some lessons, the activities are differentiated effectively to provide appropriate challenge and support for different groups of students. In other lessons, there is insufficient challenge for high achievers. The development of 21st Century skills is inconsistent. Teachers in some lessons provide step-by-step guidance for students, with limited opportunities for them to explore their own ideas. There are examples of highly effective practice in some lessons where students are given the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills in challenging every day situations.

Teachers regularly assess students' progress and use it well to plan interventions for underperforming students. Assessments are not always used effectively to plan differentiated activities or identify improvement targets. A strong continuous professional development programme supports the school in delivering a whole school approach. Teachers are positive about the effectiveness of their professional development opportunities.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The implementation of a broad and balanced curriculum more than adequately meets the learning needs of most students. The Common Core Standards are used well to drive lesson planning. This enables students to learn at and, in some lessons, above age-appropriate levels. The use of English in lessons in science and mathematics helps develop and improve the level of fluency among students. The MoE curriculum provides continuity for subjects taught in Arabic. The core curriculum is further enriched with courses in art, French, ICT and physical education. The curriculum is modified in most lessons to satisfactorily meet the learning needs of SEN students. The curriculum is not consistently well adapted to match the needs of the more able.

The school offers a range of extra-curricular activities to increase students' learning opportunities and experiences. They include clubs such as Holy Qur'an memorization, student council, drama, robotics, soccer, rugby and girls' and boys'

scouts. The school has good links with external partners such as civil defence, community police, Red Crescent and a number of universities.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

There are better than satisfactory systems in place for the protection, care, guidance and support of students. There is a caring and supportive climate in the school and students feel safe and happy. The 4 heads of section and the 7 supervisors provide good support for the academic and social welfare of the students. There are satisfactory procedures for monitoring students' progress and effective intervention strategies, particularly for supporting underachieving students.

Most teachers have well-established routines and behaviour management strategies. Behaviour in most classrooms and around the school is generally good. Bullying is rare and there are clear procedures if it should happen. There are rigorous checks on all adults working in the school and they have ADEC approval. A child protection policy is in place and understood by all staff. There are 2 prayer rooms for boys and girls. The 2 clinics have secure facilities for the safe storage of medicines and are run by trained nurses. The rooms are small and do not provide sufficient privacy.

Older students have effective opportunities to receive guidance on careers and university courses through visits and guest speakers invited to the school. Some students indicated that they would welcome more help in completing their university applications.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The buildings and facilities provide a more than adequate environment for learning. The school is safe, clean and fit for purpose. Most classrooms are of sufficient size for the student numbers in each class. A few classrooms are small and cramped when student numbers are larger or when older students use them. The science facilities are adequate. The biology laboratory in the girls' section limits educational opportunities due to its small size. The 2 ICT rooms in each building provide good opportunities to promote students' ICT and 21st Century skills.

The large sport hall in the girls' section and the 2 soccer fields, basketball and volley ball courts available for the boys provide more than adequate facilities to promote students physical and sporting experiences. There is no outdoor area in the girls' section for physical or recreational activities. There is no library facility. There is a learning resource centre in the girls' campus and reading areas around the school. Based on a constructive suggestion from the student council, all

students and staff have a silent reading session in the time between assembly and the first lesson.

Security is good in both buildings. School records show that all maintenance checks are carried out and equipment is regularly tested. Evacuation procedures are practised regularly.

The school's resources to support its aims

The school's resources satisfactorily support its aims and provide appropriate stimulus for students' learning. There are sufficient teachers to meet the school's curriculum needs. They are suitably qualified and have secure subject knowledge. They show commitment and dedication to the school's continuous improvement agenda. The teaching assistants work in partnership with teachers and provide valuable support for students' learning. This is particularly strong in KG.

Since the last inspection, there has been an increase in the availability and utilisation of technology. The 4 ICT rooms are well resourced and are used effectively to develop students' computer skills and are available for use in other subjects. All students in Grades 6 to 9 have iPads they can use in lessons. During the early morning silent reading, some students use the iPads to read eBooks. The provision of ICT in KG is unsatisfactory in extending the range of learning opportunities for children. The absence of a school library facility does not meet the needs of the 21st Century learning community. There are reading centres, but the range of books available is limited. Science resources are limited in providing opportunities to apply knowledge and skills in practical ways.

School's procedures to ensure transport is well maintained, safe and reliable are suitable. Food is stored and consumed in a hygienic and healthy manner.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. The principal provides drive and a strong commitment to enhance the quality of students' learning. Other senior leaders and teachers share the same commitment to the continuous improvement agenda. The owner is highly supportive of the school. He finances new initiatives and provides effective support and challenge for the senior leadership. The principal has clear targets aligned to the successful implementation of the school development plan (SDP) goals. There is an effective and coherent management structure. The 4 heads of section are responsible and accountable for student and teacher outcomes in their grades. They operate effectively and consistently as 'mini-principals' and provide valuable support for teachers. They undertake regular lesson observations, sample students' work, analyse data, train staff and meet with parents.

The SDP is a well-structured document that has key performance indicators (KPIs) that have clearly defined measures for success. It focusses well on the school's perceived improvements in each performance standard, including all those from the previous inspection report. The principal has designed an effective monitoring process to track the successes achieved and the stages of progress in ongoing initiatives. The self-evaluation form (SEF) is not as well structured as the SDP and gives a somewhat ambitious and aspirational reflection of the achievements of the school. It provides little measurable evidence to demonstrate the progress claimed across the performance standards since the previous inspection.

The school runs well on a daily basis and there is a safe, calm and caring culture that supports learning. All senior staff undertake lesson observations. The present process is insufficiently focused on students' learning. The outcomes are not consistently analysed to identify trends and measure the effectiveness of improvement initiatives. The school is data rich and uses it effectively to identify struggling students in need of intervention. It does not rigorously monitor the data at group, class, grade and subject levels to identify trends and areas of concern.

There are effective communications with parents, who are positive about the support and care provided for their children. Parents receive termly reports and mid-term progress updates. The school regularly collects the views of parents and has an open door policy, which is appreciated by most parents. In the parent survey conducted for this inspection, a minority of parents indicated that they were not kept well informed about their child's progress.

Progress since the last inspection

The school has improved significantly since the last inspection. Staff now have ADEC approval for the jobs they do. Teachers have embraced a variety of different strategies that are having a positive impact on students' engagement, interest and challenge. Many teachers now use collaborative group tasks to challenge students to share ideas, solve problems and present their findings. Standardised MAP tests have been introduced and plans are in place to extend these to most areas of the school. More focus is still required in ensuring appropriate levels of challenge and support are provided for the more able and SEN students.

The school, and in particular the senior leadership team, have demonstrated good capacity to secure further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Further improve teaching and learning so that most lessons are good by:
 - i. having higher expectations, greater pace and more active student engagement in all learning activities
 - ii. using assessment of students' prior knowledge and skills to provide more consistency in the planning of differentiated activities matched to their identified needs
 - iii. creating more effective challenge for higher achievers
 - iv. providing more opportunities for students to develop and enhance their 21st Century skills.
2. Further improve leadership and management by:
 - i. focussing lesson monitoring on students' learning to drive instruction to a higher level
 - ii. strategically analysing the outcomes of focussed lesson observations to identify trends and measure the effectiveness of improvement initiatives
 - iii. targeting professional development on identified areas from observational data
 - iv. strategically monitoring student progress at individual, group, class, grade and subject levels to identify trends and areas of concern
 - v. expanding the use of standardised tests to monitor students' progress and target further acceleration of attainment levels.
3. Provide a library with a good range of English and Arabic books that will also effectively facilitate independent research.

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								