



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



Summary Inspection Report

The International School of Choueifat –
Abu Dhabi City (Primary)

Published in 2013

إقرأ

The International School of Choueifat – Abu Dhabi City (Primary)

Inspection Date	25 th – 28 th November, 2012
School ID#	059
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	SABIS System
Number of Students	2406
Age Range	KG - Grade 6
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Malak Khaled Malak (Acting Director)
School Address	PO Box 7212, Abu Dhabi, UAE.
Telephone Number	(+971) 02 446144
Fax Number	(+971) 02 4461048
Email (ADEC)	choueifatad.pvt@adec.ac.ae

Introduction

The school was inspected by five inspectors who observed 79 lessons. During their time in school, the inspectors met with school leaders, teachers and students from the Kindergarten (KG) and primary section of the school. In addition, the regional director gave a presentation of the SABIS philosophy of education. The inspectors observed break periods, school activities and students' arrival at and departure from the school. They analysed data and documents supplied by the school in addition to limited responses from a parental questionnaire. Grades 5 and 6 were not in classes at the time of the inspection. Opportunities were taken to talk informally to these students after their testing had finished. Many of the lessons observed focused on revision for end of semester testing, giving a distorted picture of the normal day-to-day teaching provision. It did demonstrate standards achieved.

Description of the School

The International School of Choueifat Abu Dhabi, was established in 1978. The school is part of the worldwide SABIS School Network. It is a private international English-medium day school serving both the local national and expatriate communities which owns 12 schools in the Gulf. Students in these 12 schools study courses at the same rate. All SABIS schools have the same aim, which is to give students the best preparation to join and succeed at good universities.

The school aims to 'give the best preparation to join and succeed at good universities'. The main nationalities represented are Egyptian (16%), Emirati (15%), Lebanese (14%), Jordanian (13%), Syrian (6%), Indian (6%), Pakistani (6%), American (5%), Canadian (5%) and Palestinian (3%). The remaining 12% come from other nations across the world. Eighty per cent of the student population are Muslim. There are 57 nationalities represented in the school. The school teaches the SABIS curriculum in all grades. There are no entry tests; students are admitted following interviews and analysis of academic records. There are no students with special educational needs. The fees, not including uniform or books, range from AED 21,150 in Kindergarten (KG) to AED 24,750 in Grade 6. The acting director has been in post for fifteen months. She was a member of staff for 10 years prior to this.

The Effectiveness of the School

Band C

Grade 6

Inspectors judged The International School of Choueifat (Primary) to be in Band C; that is a school in need of significant improvement.

The School overall is in need of significant improvement. In part, this judgment is a reflection of breaches of some of Abu Dhabi Education Council's regulations and licensing expectations. For example, Kindergarten students are taught in upstairs rooms contrary to health and safety requirements. Some staff are housed on the school site; a practice which is also disallowed. In addition to these 'compliance' inadequacies, there are also serious and far-reaching educational justifications for judging the school to be deficient in the diet of learning it offers to its students. A twenty-first century curriculum as defined by Abu Dhabi Education Council should aspire to prepare young people for the complex challenges of modern life in its social, cultural and economic diversity. To achieve this, the international consensus of best educational practice agrees that learning needs to develop independent, self-motivated creative learners with high-level critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The SABIS method as it operates in the school does not achieve this effectively. In part, this deficiency is addressed through a range of extra-curricular activities and challenges.

In terms of Choueifat's clearly defined aims, educational objectives and methodologies the school is well led and performs highly. Within these terms, standards and progress are satisfactory or better in core subjects. The ethos of the school is positive, providing a harmonious and self-supporting educational environment. Students state that they enjoy coming to school. They particularly welcome the social and educational experiences they are given outside the classroom. The students are confident, articulate and develop interpersonal qualities that enable them to be supportive of each other. Teaching adheres to the SABIS formula. This maintains a rigid didactic approach where there is reliance on the transmission of knowledge primarily using text books. Opportunities for independent learning and the development of collaborative learning skills that are an expected part of education internationally are limited by this approach. The curriculum is broad, balanced and provides for sequential progression. Students engage in a range of subjects and activities in addition to the core curriculum. Facilities and resources are very good for specialist aspects of the curriculum and support the learning process effectively. Students demonstrate care and respect for each other irrespective of nationality or culture. The students receive very good care.

Students make good progress in acquiring basic skills in English, maths and science. Acquisition of skills in Arabic, Islamic and Social Studies is satisfactory.

Students achieve early competence in ICT. Opportunities for students to develop their thinking skills through independent study are limited by adherence to the prescriptive nature of the SABIS system. There is a strong emphasis placed on language development. Students are able to write with accuracy, communicate confidently orally and analyse written narrative effectively. Students quickly acquire the basic literacy skills necessary to understand and make progress in the primary curriculum.

Standards in KG are broadly average. The nurturing environment enhances social development. Students develop competence in skills such as handwriting. They enter grade 1 able to read and understand simple texts. Competence in mathematics is similarly developed. Students have a sound grasp of number and shape. They are able to carry out simple tasks using a computer. The well-equipped play area supports the development of skills such as running and jumping.

Standards in Arabic, Islamic and Social Studies are in line with Ministry of Education expectations for Arabic speakers. Standards and progress for students learning Arabic as an additional language are less secure. Most students are able to read, write and speak Arabic using required conventions. At best, students use classical Arabic with confidence. Student's knowledge of Islamic history is good. Students are able to recite from the Holy Quran and give explanation to Hadith. Students acquire a sound understanding of, and show respect for, UAE tradition, culture and heritage.

Standards in English are in line with international expectations. By the end of grade 6 students demonstrate mastery of key skills. They are able to read fluently and begin to make inferences and deductions that show understanding of plot and character. Most use Standard English confidently in both oral and written contexts. Mathematics follows a similar pattern. Standards reflect best International levels with a significant minority in each class working at a higher level. Students display well developed skills of reasoning and mental calculation when problem solving. Command of basic arithmetic conventions is at least satisfactory. Standards in science are in line with and at times above international expectations. Students acquire a good understanding and knowledge of scientific concepts. They are able to carry out simple experiments, answering questions in scientific language.

Within the confines of the Choueifat curriculum, progress over time is satisfactory or better. Progress in Arabic, Islamic and Social Studies is satisfactory. Students gain a good understanding of history and the significance of the Hadith in their daily lives. They know the key events and dates in UAE history and the names of

people who were instrumental in its formation. Progress in science is good. Students understand and are able to explain scientific concepts. The majority of students arrive in school with little or no command over English. Students learn to speak, read and write with fluency. Students' handwriting is less well developed. The strong emphasis in developing literacy skills ensures good progress and proficiency. Progress is satisfactory or better in both English and mathematics. When progress is satisfactory rather than good this is because the didactic teaching method adopted and adherence to the pacing chart fails to sufficiently challenge able students. In other subjects such as art, music, physical education and ICT, students enjoy lessons and make good progress.

Students are extremely positive about the school and the many opportunities it affords them to develop their personal skills. They demonstrate respect for their teachers and peers. There is a strong emphasis on serving the school community and helping others. This is reflected in students' enthusiasm to take on roles of responsibility such as the 'Sunshine Team', mentorship or as 'shadow teachers.' There is an ethos of harmony and an understanding of other's needs promoted by leadership. They understand and value the qualities of all students irrespective of nationality, culture or age. There is no bullying. Students are keen to ensure that fellow students appearing isolated or unhappy are befriended. Students experience a range of social, sporting and cultural opportunities. These enable them to become leaders, develop interpersonal skills and work in teams. Students are polite, confident and conduct themselves with assurance.

Most teachers do not have a teaching qualification, which contravenes ADEC regulations. The quality of teaching is variable ranging from unsatisfactory to good. Specialist teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge and a high degree of enthusiasm. In core subjects the strict adherence to the formulaic nature of the SABIS method of teaching severely limits the range of teaching styles students experience. This contravenes ADEC recommendations. Teaching is primarily didactic, punctuated by questioning to assess knowledge. In weaker lessons, teachers were abrupt in dealing with students and the pace of learning was slow. At times, able students became disengaged when they finished early and were not sufficiently challenged. This adversely affects the progress of a small minority. Some classes contain over 30 students. Opportunities for students to interact in groups or work independently are insufficient. Students ask questions when they need support but are not encouraged to ask questions to deepen their knowledge. Lessons are text book based, teacher directed and focused on knowledge acquisition. Finely detailed assessment procedures are a constant feature of the SABIS process. The school has detailed data of what each student knows understands and can do. This information is used to provide additional

support to ensure that all students gain the required knowledge but not additional challenge. Where classes demonstrate low performance, support is given to the teacher. This is swift and timely.

Students' attitudes to learning are predominantly positive. Students report that they enjoy their lessons, and feel supported. Relationships are good but at times functional. A minority of teachers show insufficient enthusiasm, responsiveness or attention to students' development needs. At these times students are passive recipients of knowledge and do not display overt enjoyment. Students assume the responsibilities of shadow teacher and peer mentor. This develops their confidence and has a positive influence on personal development. Relationships in KG are very good and reflect a nurturing approach to children's development. Assistants play a positive role in looking after children's welfare in KG. Teachers new to the school receive training in SABIS methodology. They feel well supported and are positive about the on-going support. Classroom observations take place and advice follows. In a minority of cases this has insufficient impact to improve practice. Lesson observations are too focused on compliance and lack detailed analysis of teaching competence.

The school delivers the SABIS curriculum. As a framework, this provides breadth and balance through core subjects, enhanced by music, physical education, swimming, computer technology and art. Some aspects of a good curriculum, such as knowledge and understanding of the world, are under-represented. The emphasis on knowledge accumulation reduces enrichment opportunities and skill development. Students receive insufficient opportunity to use their learning in practical or problem-solving situations. The school has recently introduced 'critical thinking' lessons in core subjects to address this. It is too early to see the impact of this innovation. The coverage and sequential progression built into the curriculum provides a good basis for secondary education in SABIS schools. The extensive range of extra-curricular activities enriches provision and makes a positive contribution to student's personal development and their enjoyment of learning.

The effective procedures in place ensure very good care and guidance provision for students. The school's child protection policy clearly indicates procedures to be implemented should teachers suspect any form of neglect or abuse. The school complies with ADEC regulations for staff authorisation and moral checks, which are strictly adhered to. Students' behaviour is closely monitored and transgressions recorded. This forms part of a student profile providing accurate evidence of their journey through school. Sanctions are based on clear principles which are understood by students. Procedures for questioning decisions are in place should a student feel there has been an injustice. There is no corporal

punishment. The pride students have for the school is reflected in the high level of attendance. Absence is stringently and effectively monitored. Parents are contacted immediately should their child not attend school. The quality of medical provision and care is outstanding. There is a supportive ethos that permeates the school. This is promoted through the student-run 'School Learning Organisation' which also successfully campaigns against bullying. Students have a developed sense of right and wrong and conduct themselves accordingly. The importance of leading healthy lifestyles is part of the SABIS philosophy and reinforced by the food prepared in the very good cafeteria. The contents of lunch boxes are also frequently checked. There are prayer rooms for both female and male Muslim students.

The buildings and premises are unsatisfactory in so far as the Kindergarten is not on the ground floor and some staff live on the premises. This contravenes ADEC's regulations. In other respects the buildings and premises provide a good environment to support effective learning. Classrooms are adequate in size. Two swimming pools, a large gymnasium and extended outdoor sporting facilities provide opportunities to meet all student interests. The school environment is safe. All play areas have safety surfaces to minimise injury. All hazardous materials are appropriately stored. Supervision and security is good. Evacuation procedures are understood and rehearsed.

Teaching staff are sufficient in number. Most lack formal qualifications. They are sufficiently competent to implement the scripted SABIS curriculum but not to activate wider learning opportunities. For most subjects, the SABIS curriculum and teaching method require only text and workbooks for its delivery and implementation. Classroom resources are consequently minimal. The library is adequate. Very good resources in specialist areas are plentiful and amply support learning. Science laboratories are not used by this age group. Class-based science resources are available to carry out an experiment at the beginning of each unit. There are three well-equipped computer rooms with sufficient technology to meet the needs of large groups of students. Equipment for out-door play, physical education (PE), swimming pools and music mirrors the high quality facilities.

The school's leadership is unsatisfactory in so far as there are significant regulatory breaches. In other respects the school is well led and managed at all levels. The acting director has only been in post for 15 months and in this short time has won the respect of staff and students. The latter speak highly of the director and remark on her approachability. Teachers consider they are well supported by the school's leadership structure. There are transparent systems for parents to be kept informed about students' progress and how to approach the school if they have concerns. All such issues are clearly documented. WEB School

enables parents to track their children's progress and view future learning activities. The school adheres to the SABIS leadership practices and processes. The school does not seek parents' opinions on matters relating to school policy and procedures. The well-constructed data systems provide a constant record of student and school performance at all levels. The premise that the reason for student underperformance is a failure on the part of the school is paramount in the school's drive for improvement. The constant detailed information provided by the school's highly effective assessment systems ensures it is aware of its strengths. It is far less aware of its weaknesses. The improvement plan is implemented by all SABIS schools following an analysis of data. Leadership structures are effective and efficient, ensuring the school runs well on a day-to-day basis. Lines of communication are clear, enabling those with responsibilities to be held to account. The school provides good value for money and its capacity to sustain improvement is very secure.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Comply with ADEC regulations relating to maximum student numbers per class
2. Comply with ADEC regulations on accommodation for the Kindergarten.
3. Ensure all teachers have the required teaching qualifications.
4. Improve the quality, consistency and impact of teaching by:
 - i. improving the rigour of lesson observations and subsequent targeted professional development;
 - ii. increasing the level of challenge for more able students;
 - iii. ensuring that enjoyment, practical experiences, creative learning and critical thinking are intrinsic to students' learning experiences from KG onwards; and
 - iv. increasing the level of enthusiasm and warmth of relationships displayed by some teachers so students further enjoy lessons.