



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



Summary Inspection Report

The International School of Choueifat -
Abu Dhabi City (Secondary)

Published in 2013

إقرأ

The International School of Choueifat -Abu Dhabi City (Secondary)

Inspection Date	15 th – 18 th October, 2012
School ID#	059
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	SABIS System
Number of Students	1132
Age Range	Grades 7 - 12
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Malak Khaled Malak
School Address	PO Box 7212, Abu Dhabi, UAE.
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Introduction

The school was inspected by five inspectors who observed 81 lessons. During their time in school, the inspectors met with school leaders, teachers and students from the secondary section of the school. In addition, the regional director gave a presentation of the SABIS philosophy of education. The inspectors observed break periods, after-school activities and students' arrival at and departure from the school. They analysed data and documents supplied by the school. Responses from a parental questionnaire about the school were also analysed.

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 Lebanese (20%), Egyptian (17%), Indian (10%), Pakistani (9%), Emirati (8%), American (7%), Jordanian (7%), Canadian (6%), Syrian (5%) and Palestinian (3%). The remaining 8% come from other nations across the world. Eighty per cent of the student population are Muslim. There are 46 nationalities represented in the school. Approximately 55% of the students are boys. 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 26,700 in Grade 7 to AED 35,100 in Grade 13. The acting director has been in post for fourteen months. She was a member of staff for 10 years prior to this.

The Effectiveness of the School

Band B

Grade 4

Inspectors judged The International School of Choueifat to be in Band B; that is a satisfactory school.

The School meets its overall aims in terms of securing high levels of university entrance for its students. In other aspects it has room to improve. In part this judgement reflects some breaches of Abu Dhabi Education Council's regulations and licensing expectations. A large proportion of teachers, for example, are not qualified as teachers and operate as graduate instructors delivering scripted lessons within the SABIS method. Some classrooms are overcrowded. Some staff

are housed on the school site; a practice which is also disallowed. 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. Its approach to learning is heavily weighted towards the acquisition of knowledge through teacher-and-textbook-directed routine learning methods which do not promote good progress in higher level skills or collaborative learning capabilities. In part this deficiency is addressed through a range of extra-curricular activities and challenges but this 'deficit-model' approach serves to highlight the absence of these experiences delivered through the mainstream curriculum.

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 good in core subjects with nearly all students achieving university placement. The ethos of the school is extremely positive, providing a harmonious and self-supporting educational environment. Students state they enjoy coming to school. They welcome the autonomy and experiences they are given both educationally and socially outside the classroom. The students are confident, articulate and develop many of the interpersonal qualities required to become successful adults. Teaching and student support adheres to the SABIS formula. This results in a rigid didactic approach where there is reliance on the transmission of knowledge primarily using text books. Opportunities for lab work and research are limited. The curriculum enables students to select subjects from a range of internationally accredited courses. Facilities and resources are good for specialist aspects of the curriculum and effectively support the learning process. This is not the case in other curriculum areas. Students demonstrate care and respect for each other irrespective of nationality or culture. The students receive very good care. The school offers a wide range of challenging opportunities and detailed guidance which enable students to be successful.

Students make very good progress in English, maths and science. Students in senior grades consistently achieve at a level above international standards in both US and UK exams. Students taking Advanced Placement (AP) English demonstrated great sensitivity and understanding in their analysis of a text that included complex figurative language. In physics, Grade 12 students are able to design their own experiments, evaluate the data and draw inferences from it. Grade 7 students can graph absolute values on a number line. Progress increases in mathematics and senior students are able to apply formulae to tasks and make

calculations from the evidence produced. Progress over time is very good. Progress in individual lessons is not always apparent. Where classroom learning is limited, it is supplemented by re-teaching, individual study, peer teaching and consolidation work. Standards achieved ensure that nearly all students gain placement at their first choice university.

Standards and progress in Arabic are good. Over a third of Grade 11 students achieve A* or A grades in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations. Students are able to apply age-appropriate grammatical rules and converse readily in Arabic. At times, their local dialect is more prevalent than their use of classical Arabic. Students have a satisfactory knowledge of key Islamic concepts. Knowledge of Quranic texts is developed and students understand their meaning. They are less proficient at translating these messages into their daily lives. Data indicates that there is an increase in standards over time. Performance trends in UAE social studies are improving. Many students in grades 7 to 9 achieve above 90% in exams. Students have a satisfactory knowledge of significant people and events in UAE history.

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 their peers. Leadership empowers students to assume responsibility for organising and providing social, sporting and cultural opportunities. These opportunities enable them to become leaders, develop interpersonal skills and work in teams. They understand and value the qualities of all students irrespective of nationality, culture or age. This results in a harmonious, vibrant community that develops many of the personal and social skills required by students in later life. Students are polite, confident and conduct themselves with assurance. There is an ethos of support that permeates the school whether in acting as mentors for peers or through the attitudes students display for each other.

Most teachers do not have a teaching qualification but degrees in the subject they teach. Specialist teachers, specifically in the older grades, demonstrated good subject knowledge. Strict adherence to the formulaic nature of the SABIS method of teaching severely limits the range of teaching styles students experience. Classes frequently contain over 30 students. This significantly limits the support and attention they receive. Delivery is primarily didactic coupled with questioning to assess knowledge acquisition. The additional support received by students promotes the effectiveness of this delivery style in terms of outcomes. Training in SABIS methodology results in students sitting attentively assimilating factual information. There is little evidence of enthusiasm for learning in the lower section of secondary education. Progress and enthusiasm increase as students get older and the purpose of their learning becomes more relevant to them. In a

minority of lessons, where older students work in groups in practical science, or are asked to solve problems in physics or maths, they focus deeply, display enjoyment and discuss ideas to arrive at solutions. Challenging questions characterise these lessons ensuring students have to explore their own thinking to articulate their understanding. Attitudes to learning, development of wider skills and progress made increase rapidly at these times. The quality learning in these lessons raises questions about the more limited level of challenge and student engagement found in many others.

The pace of lessons is swift. Gaps in student knowledge are constantly assessed. Deficits are eradicated through re-teaching and mentoring support. Students make their own course choices which results in more-able students accessing more demanding work. In some cases, such as AP biology, this is self-taught. This demonstrates a commitment to personal advancement. Teaching quality is variable. The professional development teachers receive has insufficient impact, in a minority of cases, to improve practice. Lesson observations are too focused on compliance and lack detailed analysis of teaching competence. There is insufficient emphasis on development activities.

The school delivers the SABIS curriculum. This curriculum provides breadth and balance through a wide range of core subjects. It is flexible, allowing students to enter both British and American examinations. It is successful in enabling students to pass exams at a high level in order to access universities across the world. 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. This is recognised by students who state that they would like additional opportunities to engage in debate, discussion or to do practical activities. The emphasis on students assuming responsibility for the organisation of extra-curricular events, day to day practices in terms of behaviour, publishing magazines, running sports competitions etc. provide a wealth of opportunities for all students. This significantly increases student experiences and personal development within the SABIS organisation. Again, the impact of these experiences on student motivation raises questions about the lack of similar opportunities for self-motivation and independent learning within the taught curriculum. Students express the wish to engage more with the local community and have the chance of internships or other work experience.

The effective procedures in place ensure 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. Compliance with ADEC regulations for staff authorisation and moral checks is in place and strictly adhered to. Student behaviour is closely monitored and transgressions

recorded. This forms part of a student profile which provides clear 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 pastoral system. Clear lines of communication are in place and understood by students. Care between students and the support they demonstrate for each other is exemplary. This supportive ethos is promoted through the student-run school learning organisation which also successfully campaigns against bullying. Students have an acutely developed sense of right and wrong and conduct themselves accordingly. They receive detailed guidance and support when they are required to make choices. They make well-informed decisions about courses to follow or universities to attend. The school ensures students have many of the skills and abilities required to support them in later life. The importance of leading healthy lifestyles is part of the SABIS philosophy and reinforced by the food prepared in the very good cafeteria. There are prayer rooms for both female and male Muslim students.

The buildings and premises provide a good environment to support effective learning. Some staff live on the premises which contravenes ADEC regulations. Classrooms are adequate in size. The number of students in each class frequently exceed 30 which is contrary to ADEC regulations. They are cramped at these times. This reduces the quality of personal attention students receive. Science laboratories and other specialist facilities greatly enhance student learning experiences. 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 satisfactory in number. Most lack formal qualifications, this is a breach of ADEC regulations. They are sufficiently competent to implement the scripted SABIS curriculum. 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 but short of computers to meet student demand. Very good resources in specialist areas are plentiful and adequately support learning. Science equipment is very good and well prepared for experiments by the technician. There are three well-equipped

computer rooms with sufficient technology to meet the needs of large groups of students. Equipment for physical education (PE) mirrors the high quality facilities.

The school is well led and managed at all levels. The acting director has only been in post for 14 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 capacity to listen and the empowerment that has followed. There are systems for parents to be kept informed about student progress and how to approach the school if they have concerns. All such procedures are documented. The school adheres to the SABIS leadership practices and processes which leads it to breach ADEC licensing requirements. The well-constructed data systems provide a constant record of student and school performance at all levels. The constant detailed information provided by the school's assessment systems ensures it is aware of its strengths. The school is less clear about its areas for improvement. 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 aims to 'give students the best preparation to join and succeed at good universities'. The school is eminently successful in meeting this aim. On this basis, the school provides satisfactory value for money and its capacity to sustain improvement is secure.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Comply with ADEC regulations relating to maximum student numbers per class.
2. Ensure all teachers have the required teaching qualifications.
3. Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - i. increasing the rigour and impact of lesson observations through targeted professional development; and
 - ii. using effective teachers as models of good practice.
4. Increase opportunities for students to use and develop their knowledge, creativity and higher-order skills through discussion, debate and enquiry-based learning to enable them to develop a wider range of techniques and competencies to support lifelong learning.
5. Provide additional opportunities for students to engage with the wider community.