



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



Summary Inspection Report

Al Yasmina School

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Al Yasmina School

Inspection Date	1 st – 4 th October, 2012
School ID#	096
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	British
Number of Students	1556
Age Range	4 – 18 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Darren Gale
School Address	Al Raha Gardens, Khalifa City, Abu Dhabi
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Introduction

The school was inspected by five inspectors, who observed 96 lessons. During their time in school, the inspectors met with school leaders, teachers and students from the primary and secondary sections and parents. The inspectors observed assemblies, break periods and students' arrival at, and departure from, the school. They analysed data and documents supplied by the school. In addition, responses from parents to a questionnaire about the school were analysed.

Description of the School

The school was opened by Aldar Academies in 2008 with 691 students from FS1-Y6 and 104 students in the secondary school. Since then the school has expanded to 1520 students. The first cohort of 54 students moved into Year 12 in September 2012. There are currently 264 children in Kindergarten (KG), 742 students in the primary section, 496 students in the secondary section and 54 in post-16. There are 835 boys and 721 girls in the school. It is situated in Al Raha Gardens, Khalifa City.

Al Yasmina aspires to be an outstanding school, maximising the learning potential of all students. Its core values are based around PART (pride, aspiration, respect and trust).

The school offers an adapted UK curriculum in the primary school and Years 7-9. Students in Years 10-11 follow General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and Business Technology and Education Council (BTEC) courses (for UK students) with post-16 students doing A-levels.

There are 71 different nationalities in the school. Twenty nine per cent are Arab, 18% are from the UAE and 30% are British. Other significant groups are from Australia, America, Egypt, Canada, Jordan, India and South Africa. 46% are Muslim. 12% of students are identified as needing additional support, (called the achievement group within the school). The majority of these have dyslexia, moderate learning needs or speech and language difficulties. The school does not use standardised tests for entry as it is non-selective but it does carry out baseline assessments.

Fees range from AED 43,560 to AED 60,165. These are in the premium category. Most students are from relatively advantaged backgrounds. Teachers' salaries range from AED 10,500 to AED 16,500 per month with additional allowances for teaching and learning responsibilities. These are in the premium category.



The Effectiveness of the School

Band A

Grade 2

Inspectors judged Al Yasmina to be in Band A, that is a school that is high performing.

The school was judged to be good with some very good and outstanding features in February 2010. It has made very good progress in the key areas for improvement. Now, higher attaining students make very good progress, students know their targets, Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) requirements are met for Muslim prayer and middle leaders in the secondary school are very effective.

Children in the KG make very good progress from low starting points. By the end of reception they exceed the UK expectations in all areas. Reading, writing, listening, using numbers for counting and labelling skills are well developed, though calculating skills are weaker. Progress is slower in writing for UAE children, particularly boys. This is mainly because almost half of the children speak English as an additional language (EAL) and they do not use their skills in the school holidays. In KG, children use a wide range of information and communication technology (ICT) skills. They develop well socially and become independent and confident learners so they are very well prepared for future learning.

Students continue to make rapid progress in the primary section. By the end of year 2, standards in reading and mathematics are consistently above UK averages. Writing is less well developed, especially at higher levels, because of high mobility and increasing numbers of students who do not have secure English language skills. Younger students have a very good grasp of letters and sounds, helping them to gain confidence in reading difficult words. The school is making effective use of a wide range of intervention strategies to support students who are not progressing at the expected level. Guided reading sessions are effective in helping EAL students achieve well in reading. By the end of Year 6, standards are significantly above the UK average, especially in mathematics. In English, students use deduction skills well when discussing books and make excellent progress in creative writing. In mathematics, higher attaining students have a secure grasp of number operations, use subject vocabulary accurately and have above average skills in analysing data and interpreting graphs.

Students continue to make very good progress in the secondary section. Standards in Years 7-9 are high with many students exceeding expectations. In English, they develop understanding of empathy through mime and role play. They explored the language of villains and used it effectively in their writing. In Year 8 mathematics they have a secure understanding of angles, helping them to



solve geometry problems. By the end of Year 11 attainment is high in English, mathematics and science when compared with international best standards and students maintain very strong progress. GCSE results for 2012 improved from 2011 and most students gained higher grades in all areas with almost half attaining A* or A grades in mathematics and science. UAE students all attain above average grades in English, but not all do so in mathematics and science.

The first cohort of post-16 students started in 2011. Results at the end of Year 12 were variable but all students are on track to meet or exceed their target grades in 2013.

In the primary section, standards in Arabic are broadly in line compared to schools following the same curriculum. Standards in Arabic, Islamic studies and social studies in the secondary section are slightly above average, overall, in comparison with schools following the same curriculum. Progress is good, though it is better in Arabic in the secondary section than in the primary. Non-native students make very good progress in Arabic. Overall, writing skills are below those in reading, speaking and listening. In the primary section, students make at least good progress, often better, in other areas. Standards are above average in humanities, physical education, design technology (DT) and ICT. Primary students gain vocabulary and use it confidently in French. The school corridors and open spaces display a great deal of high quality artwork, indicating very high standards and very good progress in art.

The school ethos is very strong. Parents are very supportive of the school and really appreciate the high quality care that adults provide for their children to keep them safe. Students are at the heart of the school and pastoral care responds very effectively to the needs of all students. The school has rigorous procedures to ensure that students are safe in school. A school counsellor provides good support for students with any emotional problems. Bullying is very rare and students know that any incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively. Mutual respect and very warm relationships with their teachers underpins students' very positive behaviour and attitudes to learning in the vast majority of lessons. Students take pride in their school and respect the values and culture of the UAE. There are no tensions between students from different backgrounds. Students collaborate extremely well in pairs and groups because they listen to, and respect, the views of others. They want to learn and are confident, articulate, polite and courteous. Advice from the school and universities benefits students and helps them choose which courses are most suitable for them.

Teachers are highly qualified and have secure command of their subject. They ensure that students are very aware of what they are expected to learn. In most



lessons tasks are suitable to the needs of different groups. Lesson content is interesting so that students are very motivated and keen to participate. The school has a clear focus on teachers using questions that probe students' critical thinking and help them to gain higher-order skills and understanding. Students increasingly benefit from this approach but it is not consistently applied in all lessons, especially where teachers provide too much explanation. Teachers have high expectations of students and usually use effective strategies to enable students to work independently. Teaching assistants provide effective support for students with English as an additional language and those who are finding learning difficult. Limited support for Arabic students in the primary section slows progress.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, and planning identifies the essential skills that students need to grasp. It follows the UK national curriculum closely and adapts it for the local context. It provides suitable challenge for different groups and offers tasks that are, in the main, interactive. A focus on real life situations enhances learning in many lessons. The curriculum for Arabic, Islamic studies and social studies closely follows UAE/Ministry of Education (MOE) guidelines. A high number of students participate in a wide range of visits, clubs and activities outside lessons which enhance students' learning extremely effectively. Over 60 clubs are offered, mainly in sport, the arts, Arabic activities and the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. The school also offers students opportunity to get work experience and visit other countries in the Middle East, Europe and beyond to extend their learning and enjoyment as well as developing their personal qualities and independence. The range of courses in post 16 is limited by numbers but is expanding to cater for wider needs.

The school buildings are very impressive and provide a high quality environment that is conducive to learning. They are very safe, clean, and hygienic. Specialist facilities for science, physical education, swimming, DT, art, music and the library are of very high quality. There are two prayer rooms for Muslim students and adults. The curriculum is resourced very well. An excellent range and use of resources in KG supports children's learning. All classrooms have smart boards, which are used very effectively during many lessons. Computers are plentiful but they are mainly old and unreliable with limited software. The location of computers in the shared areas of the primary section makes it difficult for teachers to teach ICT skills. The quantity of books in the two libraries is suitable to the size of school. All buses are well maintained and students wear seat belts.

The school's improvement in the recent past reflects the very clear ambition, drive and determination of leaders to continually improve learning and provide an



outstanding education for its students by 2014. There have been many changes and additions to the senior leadership team in the past two years, including a new head of school and assistant head teachers in both primary and secondary sections. In that time, the school has improved in many ways. Students make better progress in most areas. Leaders all have high expectations. The primary and secondary sections now operate as one school with consistent procedures and aims. Teaching provides students with challenges to become effective independent learners more consistently. The owners and board play a very active role in all aspects of the school and hold it to account rigorously. Leadership across the school has been restructured and leaders at all levels are very clear about their responsibilities. Leaders at all levels share the vision and aims of the school. Not all middle leaders in the primary section are experienced in leadership roles. They appreciate the support and training provided for them but it is too soon to see their impact. Self-evaluation is thorough and provides the school with an accurate view of its effectiveness. Leaders make very good use of its findings to plan professional development opportunities for staff and identify and review priorities for future improvement. The school demonstrates that it has very good capacity to sustain the recent improvement. The fees are within the premium range. The quality of education is very good and the school provides very good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Ensure that lessons enable students to develop critical thinking skills consistently across the school by:
 - i. ensuring that teachers ask questions that challenge and probe students' thinking and require them to provide answers in depth; and
 - ii. Increasing the number of interactive lessons.
2. Improve students' skills in Arabic in the primary section, especially in writing, by providing additional support for native speakers.
3. Embed leadership skills for middle leaders in the primary section by providing them with continuous professional development and monitoring the impact of this on the quality of teaching and learning.
4. Improve provision and student outcomes in ICT by:
 - i. improving resources to meet the minimum requirements of modern technology; and
 - ii. ensuring that computers are located in a suitable teaching area so that they are accessible by all classes.