



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



Inspection Report

Al Yasmina School

Academic Year 2013 – 14

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Al Yasmina School

Inspection Date	16 – 19 February 2014
School ID#	96
Licensed Curriculum	English National Curriculum (ENC)
Number of Students	1,672
Age Range	3 to 18 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Darren Gale
School Address	Al Raha Gardens, Khalifa City, Abu Dhabi
Telephone Number	+971 (0)2 501 4888
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Official Email (ADEC)	alyasmina.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	www.alyasmina.sch.ae
Date of last inspection	1 – 4 October 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 A;	GRADE 2
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The main strengths of the school are:

- the passionate belief, high expectations and clarity of shared vision of leaders that results in a relentless pursuit of excellence
- students' very high quality personal skills
- the extremely positive ethos that supports a harmonious community in which students flourish, are very happy and enjoy school
- the wealth and quality of opportunities that enrich learning beyond the formal curriculum
- the high level of attainment and progress in subjects taught in English in comparison with best international standards.

The main areas for improvement are:

- to further strengthen both teaching and learning in subjects taught in Arabic to raise standards and progress to bring them more in line with other subjects.
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Introduction

The school was inspected by 5 inspectors. They observed 95 lessons, conducted several meetings with senior staff, subject leaders, teachers, support staff, parents, representatives of the proprietor and students. They analysed test and assessment results, scrutinised students' work across the school, analysed 52 responses to the parents' questionnaire and considered many of the school's policies and other documents.

Description of the School

Al Yasmina School opened in Al Raha Gardens, Khalifa City in 2008. Al Yasmina's core values are based around PART: pride, aspiration, respect and trust. A Board of Directors within ALDAR Academies Management monitors the school's work. The student population is 1,672: 890 boys and 782 girls. There are 260 children in Kindergarten (KG), 773 students in the primary section, 569 students in the secondary section and 70 in the post-16 section. The school offers an adapted English curriculum in the KG, primary and Years 7 to 9. Students in Years 10 to 11 follow the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and the Business Technology and Education Council (BTEC) courses. Post-16 students do GCE Advanced (A) level study.

There are 75 different nationalities in the school: 33% are Arabs and 21% are Emirati. A proportion of 28% are British and other significant groups are from Australia, America, Egypt, Canada, Jordan, India and South Africa. 49% are Muslim. The school has identified 10% of students as having special educational needs (SEN). The majority of these have dyslexia, moderate learning needs or speech and language difficulties. The school has identified 8% students as gifted and talented. The school does not use standardised tests for entry as it is non-selective; it conducts baseline assessments.

The Principal is supported by 2 deputy principals and 4 assistant principals. There are 142 teachers and 56 classroom assistants, 12 administrative staff, 2.5 school nurses and 6 care staff. Fees range from AED 43,560 to AED 60,165 that are in the premium category.



The Effectiveness of the School

Students' attainment & progress

Assessment procedures throughout the school are extremely thorough and provide the school with a very clear and accurate picture of students' standards and progress in English National Curriculum subjects. Most students start school with limited basic skills, especially in mathematical calculations and English. They make rapid progress in all areas and standards in personal, physical and social development, and English and mathematical skills are well above age-related expectations in KG.

Students continue to make rapid progress in the primary and secondary sections. Test data and teachers' assessments in Years 2 and 6 indicate that standards throughout the primary section have been significantly above best international expectations in reading, writing, mathematics and science over the past three years. IGCSE examination results at the end of Year 11 show that standards have been very high in English, mathematics and science compared to best international averages over the past 3 years. The first cohort of students sat GCE A level examinations in 2013 and results were above international expectations. Lesson observations and scrutiny of students' work during the inspection confirm the accuracy of the school's assessment data.

Standards in subjects taught in Arabic are at least in line with schools following the same curriculum; they are improving more quickly in Islamic education than in social studies and Arabic. The 2013 results in IGCSE Arabic were exceptionally high for Year 11 students. A group of students in the current Year 10 are on track to maintain these very high standards even though they are taking the examination a year early. Standards in other subjects, such as physical education (PE), art, drama, music, business studies and information and communication technology (ICT), are well above international best expectations and progress is outstanding.

Students' personal development

Students are a credit to the school and to themselves. They are unanimous in stating that Al Yasmina is a happy school. They are highly confident and thoughtful and show exceptional maturity for their age. They want to learn and succeed; they also want others to do the same. Behaviour and attitudes to learning in lessons are often exemplary. Relationships throughout the school are very positive because of the mutual respect between students and adults. Most students are keen to answer questions, willingly complete activities and tasks and collaborate with their peers extremely sensibly. Visitors are made to feel welcome. Students have very strong moral viewpoints and show great respect for



the values and cultures in the UAE. A very high proportion of students participate in a huge array of clubs, activities and visits outside the school day that enable them to enhance their skills. Individuals and teams are very successful in competitions, tournaments and leagues in many sporting and musical activities. Large numbers of students also participate in music and drama productions and art displays. Students fully understand the benefits of leading healthy lifestyles and eating healthy food. The school enables students to gain high level 21st Century skills, such as critical thinking, collaboration and communication skills that prepare them very well for their future in education and work.

The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching in subjects taught in English is very good, with many outstanding lessons. Teachers have very secure knowledge of their subjects. In the most effective lessons, they understand how students learn best through play, practical activities, group work or individual tasks and research. In most lessons, students are focused, inquisitive, secure when taking risks, and they know that making mistakes is an important part of learning. Teachers ensure that students are fully aware of the expectations for their work and attitudes to learning. They ask questions that usually challenge students to think for themselves and answer in depth, enhancing their understanding. Teachers make very effective use of assessment data so that planning, in most lessons, provides suitable challenges to different abilities within the class. In the best lessons, teachers use their thorough knowledge of their students to cater for different learning styles. They often enable students to lead their own learning and become very effective independent learners. Teachers use assessment for learning strategies effectively and regularly reiterate the learning expectations, provide further explanation and check on students' understanding. When teachers realise that students are not making enough progress or if the work is insufficiently challenging, they are not afraid to move away from the intended plan. Marking is extremely strong in some subjects, notably English, and provides constructive feedback to students to help them to understand what they need to do to improve their work.

Resources are plentiful and are used effectively in most lessons to support students' learning and help them to apply their skills and knowledge. Teachers are very good role models for students and value their work. Learning support assistants and specialist staff in the achievement centre provide very good support.

The quality of teaching and learning in subjects taught in Arabic is not as good as in other subjects. It is improving because the school is providing professional



development to help develop teachers' skills so that they understand the best ways to support and enhance students' learning.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The curriculum motivates and interests students very effectively. It meets the needs of different groups in most areas. The school continually reviews its provision to ensure the curriculum reflects the needs of all students. For example, it has increased options in the secondary section and has developed a more skills-based approach in the primary section. This means that topics in the primary section offer more fun and interest for boys, especially Emiratis, and they are more engaged. The curriculum is broad and balanced and is relevant to 21st century life. It promotes students' understanding of the values and pluralistic nature of the UAE very well. Lessons are well planned to ensure that tasks and activities are well matched to students' needs. The particular emphasis on English is particularly successful in ensuring most students make rapid progress in acquiring English as an additional language so that they can access the curriculum. This is not as well developed in Arabic. A particular strength in the curriculum is in the provision of enrichment activities to ensure that all students, irrespective of ability, have opportunity to develop their talents. The wide range of visits includes educational trips to a number of other countries and these broaden students' horizons and raise their awareness of other cultures. Students also prosper from many opportunities to develop leadership and citizenship skills.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The school has a very strong ethos in which students are at the heart of its work. It is harmonious and has a very welcoming atmosphere in which students are genuinely happy. Students and parents are extremely positive about the school and appreciate the high level of care that helps students enjoy school and feel safe. All procedures to ensure the safety and welfare of students are rigorous. School systems to monitor students' academic and personal development are extremely thorough and pastoral leaders provide very strong support. Leaders ensure that all the required checks are made on the suitability of all adults to work with children. The school is vigilant in its procedures to eliminate bullying and deals very promptly with any instances, though these are very infrequent. Procedures and strategies to maximize attendance are very sound and the school contacts parents as soon as students are absent. Persistent absence is monitored very carefully and parents are fully involved in the strategies to ensure that their child attends more regularly. Attendance is 95%. The school provides Muslim students with adequate facilities for prayer. The clinic is of high quality. Medical staff are highly trained, provide high quality care for students and ensure that all



records and medicines are securely stored. Students receive very helpful advice about future courses, university options and careers.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The buildings and premises are spacious; the facilities for specialist subjects are of a very high quality and enable the school to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. They make a significant contribution to students' learning and success in, for example, physical education, ICT, science, music, art, drama and swimming. Classrooms, corridors and shared areas are bright, light-filled and feature displays to celebrate students' work that are mostly excellent. Shared areas, particularly in the primary section, are used extremely effectively for group work, practical tasks and ICT. All policies, procedures and drills to keep the site secure are excellent. The school is spotlessly clean and hygienic and all areas are maintained to a very high standard. All electrical and safety equipment is regularly tested and all chemicals and hazardous materials are securely stored.

The school's resources to support its aims

There are more than a sufficient number of teachers and other staff who are very well qualified for their role in school. Resources throughout the school are exceptional in quality and quantity and enhance students' learning and enjoyment in almost all areas. The Foundation Stage offers a rich and vibrant environment with a wide range of high quality resources that stimulate and motivate students, enrich their learning and develop curiosity and creativity. There are a very large number of computers and other electronic devices to develop students' skills in ICT and provide opportunity for individual research. Teachers make very effective use of interactive white boards in lessons to support learning. They make full use of available resources to enable students to learn through interactive and active tasks in most lessons. The two libraries are very impressive and are well stocked, especially with books in English. The number and range of books in Arabic is more limited in comparison.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders have created a school that has many outstanding features. It has made rapid improvement since the previous inspection because all adults in the school share a relentless pursuit of excellence. The principal is very ambitious to provide students with the best possible experiences. He is passionate about learning and aims to make the school a beacon of excellence. He is pivotal to the success of the school and receives tremendous support from highly skilled and very well organised leaders at all levels. Leadership has been restructured and the school has a unified and collegiate approach so that all adults in the school now share the same vision. Leaders have a very well informed and accurate view of the school



because systems to monitor students' progress and the quality of teaching are highly effective. The self-evaluation document provides considerable detail and is well supported by evidence. The school development plan clearly identifies the key objectives for development in each of the performance standards and more detail is included in departmental plans. These enable the school to prioritise areas for improvement and monitor the impact of its actions. All the areas for improvement from the previous inspection are being addressed as leaders act promptly whenever something needs improving. Teachers benefit from a very wide range of professional development opportunities. These are having a positive impact in all areas, especially in bringing the quality of teaching and learning in subjects taught in Arabic nearer to the level of other subjects. The school's finances are managed extremely efficiently and are audited externally. The Board of Directors holds the school to account and knows the school very well.

Progress since the last inspection

The school has responded well to all the recommendations made in the previous report. It has provided professional development to improve teachers' strategies to develop students' critical thinking skills. This has achieved very successful results in most areas of the curriculum and is improving outcomes in subjects taught in Arabic. Teachers are increasingly using new skills that are beginning to improve standards; they are making lessons more interactive, interesting and challenging. The department has been restructured and new staff, including the subject leader, share the ambition and determination to improve. Primary leadership has been restructured, with some new leaders, and leadership is more cohesive. All ICT resources have been upgraded and additional laptops have been provided in the primary section.

The school demonstrates that it has an outstanding capacity to sustain further improvement.



What the school should do to improve further:

1. Sustain the improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in subjects taught in Arabic to further improve standards and progress by:
 - i. continuing to provide high quality professional development for teachers to further enhance their teaching skills so they can provide consistently suitable challenges to different groups
 - ii. enabling teachers to observe outstanding practice across the school to help them understand better how to improve
 - iii. increasing the learning support for students who are finding work difficult, especially in primary classes
 - iv. increasing the range, quality and use of Arabic books to improve students' reading skills.



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								