



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



# Summary Inspection Report

Al Muna Primary School – Abu Dhabi

Published in 2013

iqraa

Al Muna Primary School – Abu Dhabi

<b>Inspection Date</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> - 27 <sup>th</sup> September, 2012
<b>School ID#</b>	191
<b>Type of School</b>	Primary
<b>Curriculum</b>	English National Curriculum
<b>Number of Students</b>	525
<b>Age Range</b>	3 – 11 years
<b>Gender</b>	Mixed
<b>Principal</b>	Wayne Howsen
<b>School Address</b>	Between Hamdan (5th) Street and Electra (7th) Street, PO Box 128484, Abu Dhabi
<b>Telephone Number</b>	(+971) 02 5014777
<b>Fax Number</b>	(+971) 02 6319490
<b>Email (ADEC)</b>	<a href="mailto:almuna.pvt@adec.ac.ae">almuna.pvt@adec.ac.ae</a>

## Introduction

---

Al Muna Primary School was inspected by three inspectors. During their time in school, inspectors considered the school ethos, the quality of students' learning experiences, personal development and the teaching they receive. The inspectors observed fifty two lessons and other aspects of school life such as break-times and assemblies. They held meetings with staff, students, parents and the owners of the school. They also examined school documentation.

## Description of the School

---

The school opened in 2009. Aldar Academies leased the site from Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) and refurbished the existing building to accommodate 550 students.

The school follows the English National Curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Students are also taught Arabic, Islamic studies and social studies following the Ministry of Education (MOE) Curriculum.

There are 525 students on roll of which 287 are boys and 238 girls. The number of students has almost doubled since the previous inspection. Students come from a range of heritage backgrounds. Approximately 30% of students are Emirati, 22% are from other Arabic speaking countries, 16% are from Asia and 30% are from the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada and Europe. Most students, 74%, are Muslim.

Many children join the school speaking little or no English. Approximately 80% of students come from homes where English is not the first language. There are 57 students identified as having special educational needs or learning support needs. Some have moderate learning difficulties or specific needs, such as dyslexia or speech and language difficulties. The school has also identified 43 students who are gifted and talented.

Teachers come from a range of different heritages, but are predominantly of English origin. Some teachers are recruited from other parts of the Middle East to teach Arabic and Islamic studies. Support and administrative staff represent a diverse range of cultures and languages.

The school charges annual fees of AED 41,580. Accordingly, students come from relatively advantaged backgrounds. Annual salary levels for teaching staff range from AED 125,000 to AED 222,000.

The school's main aim is to 'achieve excellence' in partnership with the community. The school aims to instil within students the core values of 'cooperation, consideration, courtesy and common sense' to enable them to

make a positive contribution in the future. The school's aims also place great emphasis on the quality of relationships and students making the best possible progress as a result of enjoying learning and a relevant curriculum.

The principal has been at the school since January 2012. The school does not have a board of governors.

## **The Effectiveness of the School**

## **Band A**

## **Grade 3**

### **Inspectors judged Al Muna Primary School to be in Band A, that is a High Performing School.**

The previous inspection judged the school to be a good school and made some suggestions for improvement. The quality of teaching was an area for development. The report recommended further development of students' knowledge and understanding of the diversity of cultures and traditions represented in the UAE. Their attendance and their ability to work independently and take responsibility for their learning were other areas for development.

The school has acted on this advice and improvements were clearly evident during the inspection. The principal and deputy headteacher have introduced a rigorous system of lesson observations. They, and other leaders in the school, observe lessons frequently, often with a specific focus for improvement. Constructive advice, relevant training and mentoring have helped teachers to improve their skills. Continuation of this work is necessary to ensure that the level of excellence the school expects, is evident in the practice of all teachers.

The curriculum has been modified to focus appropriately on developing students' understanding of the diversity of cultures and traditions represented in the UAE. The school has provided more opportunities for students to work independently and carry out enquiry and research at home. However, there is potential for this to be extended, providing such opportunities within lessons. More effective assessment and target setting procedures have ensured that students take greater responsibility for their own learning. More rigorous procedures for monitoring and supporting attendance have improved the overall attendance rate from 91% to 96%.

Overall, standards in the school are good. They have improved since the last inspection and compare well with those in similar international schools.

A significant proportion of students have joined the school from other educational systems in the last two years. While many of these children begin Foundation Stage with little or no English, they quickly show great potential for learning. This allows them to make rapid progress in communication, reading, writing and mathematics, and in developing their personal and social skills. The

number of children in the Foundation Stage (as in the rest of the school) has increased significantly since the school opened in 2009. This means that comparison from one year to the next is problematic. The current Foundation Stage data is now more accurate and statistically valid. This reflects not only the larger numbers but also the greater rigour with which assessments are now carried out, moderated and used to promote children's progress. The good teaching and support they receive helps them make very good progress, especially in speaking and listening. This means that at the end of Foundation Stage, children have developed the necessary skills for the next stage of their education.

Students in Key Stage (KS) 1 make good progress in speaking, listening and reading. Their progress in writing is not as strong because they are provided with too few opportunities to develop their skills. However, at the end of KS1 writing standards are in line with National Curriculum expectations. They make good and sometimes very good progress from their starting points in English, Arabic, mathematics and science. This positive picture continues in mathematics where students make very good progress with scores above the UK standards for Level 2 and Level 3. Students are set by ability groups and further subdivided within the sets. They make good progress in these groups as tasks and activities are very well matched to meet the needs of all. As a result they become confident in using different methods to calculate and solve problems.

As they progress through the school, students continue to perform at a level which compares well with others following the same curriculum. In reading, a high proportion of students achieved Level 4 (84%) and Level 5 (45%), exceeding UK achievement for these levels in 2012. Student attainment for this key stage is above expectations in speaking and reading. Students read challenging fiction and non-fiction books with understanding and pleasure. Standards of writing for the present cohort in KS2 are on course to achieve standards in line with the National Curriculum. Progress and attainment for science is at least good, and sometimes very good. Ninety per cent of students achieve Level 4+ and 36% achieve Level 5 in this subject.

The recently introduced student progress tracking system has begun to show clearly that the progress students are making is improving rapidly in reading, writing and mathematics. The data is showing progress is strongest in all three areas in Year 6. Across the whole school, progress is strongest in reading and is more uneven in writing and mathematics. Nevertheless, current rates of progress indicate the potential for students to make significant gains in attainment if sustained over time.

Students with special educational needs make very good progress in basic literacy and numeracy skills. In addition, students make good progress in Information Communication Technology (ICT,) music and physical education and standards are high.

Students make satisfactory progress in Islamic studies. In social studies, native Arabic speakers do not make as much progress as non-Arabic speakers. The school is working to raise the profile of Social Studies in the curriculum. As a result the introductions to lessons and the end of lesson reviews include both Arabic and non Arabic speaking students, although they are separately taught the content of the lesson for the appropriate time.

In both key stages, students make better progress in speaking and reading in Arabic than they do in writing.

The school's promotion of students' personal development is outstanding. Children in Foundation Stage make rapid progress in their personal and social development. Even the youngest children, who had been in school for only a few weeks, showed self-confidence in trying out new experiences. As they progress through school, students show consistently positive attitudes to all aspects of school life. They have high self-esteem and this has a very positive effect on their ability to learn. Students who experience difficulties in learning gain confidence through well-planned support. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and understand the importance of the school's core values. This is evident in the respect they show for their teachers and other students, and in their very good behaviour.

Teachers in Foundation Stage have a very good understanding of how young children learn best. Focused, individual and small group teaching allows teachers to assess individual needs accurately and to provide relevant support. Tasks and activities are practical and interesting and children engage readily in learning.

In Key Stage 1 and 2, most teachers use a range of good teaching methods. There is an effective mix of whole class, group and individual work. At the beginning of lessons, teachers explain clearly the purpose of the lesson and how students' progress will be assessed. This is a very effective strategy, particularly for older students. Clear explanations are provided by teachers and interactive whiteboards are used very successfully to present information visually. Occasionally, particularly in English, teachers spend too much time on explanations to the whole class. They do not leave enough time for students to complete their tasks to a high enough standard. Teachers use questioning very effectively to promote thinking. They give constructive advice to students on how to improve their work during lessons and through marking. Teachers have

become much more robust and accurate in their assessments of students attainment. Some of the early data gathered in the school gave an inflated picture of how well students were achieving. Now, comprehensive and rigorous moderation of assessments gives the school a realistic and improving picture of the levels students attain. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively, particularly during guided reading sessions.

Most tasks and activities are well matched to meet the needs of all learners. As a result, students engage readily in learning and sustain high levels of concentration. In some Arabic lessons, teaching is too focused on delivering the curriculum content and less focused on meeting the needs of individual learners. Some teachers miss opportunities in some lessons for students to work independently, carry out research or use computers.

The well-planned learning experiences for children in Foundation Stage offer very good opportunities for them to develop their thinking, language and mathematical skills. There is a good balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. Sometimes outdoor activities are less well structured and opportunities to extend children's learning are missed.

Programmes for students in Key Stage 1 and 2 are thoughtfully planned to ensure that students receive balanced and broad experiences. There is a clear progression of knowledge, understanding and skills in all curricular plans. The school has modified the curriculum effectively to include a greater emphasis on students' understanding of UAE heritage and culture, which is now satisfactory. Teachers' plans are detailed and thoughtful. They identify relevant and suitably challenging tasks and activities to meet the varying needs of students. Most tasks and activities are motivating and capture students' interest very well. The curriculum is less successful in developing independent learning, enquiry and higher order learning skills. For example, ICT is not used effectively to extend student's learning and research skills.

The introduction of structured guided reading sessions has a very good effect on students' progress. However, opportunities for students to write are less extensive. The school provides an excellent range of well-planned extra-curricular activities and special events which enrich students' learning experiences and prepare them very well for the next stage of their lives.

The school provides outstanding protection, care and support for all students. Staff show a genuine interest in students' academic progress and well-being. They are very alert to individual students' needs and respond promptly when necessary. The very positive ethos in the school means that incidents of bullying are very rare. Students say that they feel safe in school and that their teachers and



principal are approachable if they have any concerns. The school has very thorough systems for monitoring students' progress, involving students themselves. The school provides a suitable place for prayer. The priority that the school attaches to high attendance and punctuality is reflected in the improvements that have been made in overall attendance.

The quality of the building and premises is outstanding making a highly significant contribution to students' academic, sporting and personal development. The school pays close attention to external security, health and safety, cleaning and hygiene.

Most aspects of the school's resources contribute very effectively to students' outcomes. In Foundation Stage, the abundant age-appropriate resources and high levels of adult support make a significant contribution to children's progress in all areas of learning.

As students progress through the school, they benefit from high quality resources, which are thoughtfully selected to support their learning in all subjects. The library is an outstanding resource and has a significant impact on students' enjoyment and progress in reading. A wide range of musical instruments and excellent equipment for gymnastics and sport further enhance students' learning. There is ample opportunity to access computers but the effective use of ICT as a resource for learning is an area for development.

The school is well-staffed with teachers, teaching assistants and administrative staff. Teachers are well-qualified. Most teachers have good subject knowledge. Teachers in Foundation Stage have a good understanding of how young children learn best. Teachers of Arabic and Islamic studies are less secure in their knowledge and understanding of teaching methods which engage and motivate students. The competence of support staff is variable but is satisfactory overall. An active parents' group supports the staff well, for instance with special events and fundraising.

The principal and deputy headteacher provide inspirational leadership and have gained the commitment of a dedicated staff and supportive parent population. They drive standards forward successfully and have ensured that all provision is at least good and some aspects are outstanding. The Aldar Academies management team have a very good understanding of their duties as proprietor. They enable the school's leadership team to function effectively. They meet regularly with the school's leaders to ensure that priorities are well-judged and good progress is made in achieving targets. The principal and deputy headteacher have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development and provide clear strategic direction. They are highly visible around the school and provide very



good role models, having high expectations of all staff. Leaders at all levels show a strong commitment to school improvement. They take a full part in self-evaluation and improvement planning and there is very effective team-working in all aspects of the school's activity. Robust and thorough systems ensure that financial and administrative aspects of the school are managed effectively. The school provides very good value for money. It has an outstanding capacity to improve standards further and achieve its pursuit of excellence.

### **What the school should do to improve further:**

---

1. Continue to improve the quality of teaching by:
  - i. ensuring that all teachers adapt their methods to suit the learning objectives and needs of all students; and
  - ii. ensuring that students are given sufficient time, support and challenge to enable them to complete work of a high standard.
2. Improve the standards of writing by:
  - i. providing more opportunities for students to write at length, draft and edit their work; and
  - ii. providing constructive advice for students on how to improve.
3. Ensuring all students make good progress in Social Studies.
4. Provide more opportunities for students to develop their independent learning, enquiry and research skills using ICT across the curriculum.