



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



Inspection Report

Al Muna Primary School

Academic Year 2013 – 14

Iqraa

Al Muna Primary School

Inspection Date	2 – 5 February 2014
School ID#	1919
Licensed Curriculum	English National Curriculum
Number of Students	584
Age Range	3 to 11 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Wayne Howsen
School Address	Between Hamdan (5th) Street and Electra (7th) Street, P.O. Box 128484, Abu Dhabi
Telephone Number	+971 (0)2 501 4777
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Official Email (ADEC)	almuna.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	www.almunapprimary.sch.ae
Date of last inspection	24 – 27 September, 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:

- outstanding academic progress in English and mathematics; very good progress in science, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education (PE) and music
- students develop high quality personal skills that prepare them extremely well for their future
- the school provides exceptional levels of care, guidance and support for all students
- inspirational senior leadership has led to the school making rapid improvement since the last inspection.

The main areas for improvement are:

- to further strengthen both teaching and learning and the curriculum in subjects taught in Arabic to raise standards to the level of other subjects.
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Introduction

The school was inspected by 4 inspectors. They observed 68 lessons, conducted several meetings with senior staff, subject leaders, teachers, support staff, and students. They analysed test and assessment results, scrutinised students' work across the school, analysed 111 responses to the parents' questionnaire and considered many of the school's policies and other documents.

Description of the School

The school was opened in 2009 by Aldar Academies. They refurbished all areas, extended the facilities and adapted the buildings on the site of an ex- Government school in the centre of Abu Dhabi city in a mixed residential and commercial area. The school follows the English National Curriculum (ENC) and the Ministry of Education (MoE curriculum) for Arabic, Islamic studies and UAE social studies. The principal joined the school in January 2012 and is supported by a senior leadership team comprising phase leaders, the special education needs coordinator (SENCO) and leader of Arabic subjects.

The school's mission statement is to 'Learn, live and laugh'. Its aims are to: give students an opportunity to make as much progress as possible; provide a safe, caring and inclusive community; celebrate diversity and respect; work closely with families to support learning; develop students into courteous, cooperative, independent, confident citizens who can make decisions and achieve excellence.

There are 583 students on roll: 305 boys and 278 girls. There are 157 students in the Foundation Stage (67 boys and 90 girls), 153 in Years 1 and 2 (79 boys and 74 girls) and 273 in Years 3 - 6 (159 boys and 124 girls). Turnover is very high, for example, 50 of the current Year 6 were not on roll at the start of Year 3. These figures are typical of other years. Most students come from families where English is not the first language and many start school with limited formal spoken English.

There are 54 nationalities: 27% are Emirati, 9% are Indian, 7% Egyptian, 5% from the USA and Australia and smaller numbers from other countries; 72% are Muslim and the rest are primarily Hindu or Christian. 12% of students in the Foundation stage and 7% in the rest of the school have language difficulties. 152 students are identified as having special educational needs (SEN) and 44 are identified as gifted and talented.

The school is very over-subscribed and does not use entrance examinations to select students. Fees are AED 41,580, which is in the premium category. Most students come from relatively advantaged backgrounds.

The Effectiveness of the School

Students' attainment & progress

The vast majority of students acquire English as an additional language. Consequently, they enter the school with very limited communication and language skills in English. They settle quickly and make very rapid progress in all areas in the Foundation Stage, especially in speaking and listening in English. As a result, standards at the end of Foundation Stage are well above the age – related expectations in all areas.

In the primary section, standards are high in English and mathematics compared to the ENC and best international standards. Standards in writing are higher than in reading as a result of the school's recent focus on improving writing. Students have a very good grasp of numeracy skills, problem solving and mental mathematics strategies. Standards are well above the expectation in science and Year 6 students have a very clear understanding of scientific enquiry processes. Standards are well above the expectation in information and communication technology (ICT) and music. Students' skills in ICT are well developed so that even younger primary students can use search engines to research their individually chosen topics. Progress throughout the school is outstanding in English and mathematics. It is very good in science, ICT, physical education and music.

Standards in Arabic are in line with ADEC requirements and students make satisfactory and improving, progress. Standards and progress in Islamic education and social studies are as expected; both are on an improving trend. Students have opportunities to undertake extended writing tasks in Arabic; their grammar and spelling are not consistently accurate. In Islamic education, students do not get sufficient opportunity to recite the Holy Qur'an. Students have good knowledge of the UAE's values and culture.

Students' personal development

Students really like the school and their teachers. Attendance is 95%+, with an improving termly trend since autumn 2012. Comments such as 'Teachers help us a lot and are very kind' and 'Lessons are fun and really help us to learn' are typical. They are a credit to the school and to themselves. The behaviour of almost all students in class and around school is often exemplary. They have high levels of self-discipline and are very attentive and keen to learn. Relationships throughout the school are very positive and students and adults show each other mutual respect. Students are polite, sensible and courteous. They follow instructions promptly and maintain concentration when listening to the teacher or working independently. Many students want to answer questions in lessons and they do

so confidently, thoughtfully and maturely. There are no tensions between groups from different backgrounds and students respect their teachers and peers when they are expressing their ideas. They are extremely respectful of the values, and have deep understanding, of the cultures within the UAE. High numbers of students enhance and enrich their learning by participating in activities outside of lessons. The School Council provides an effective forum for students to air their views and the school acts upon them. For example, members are organising a 'Green Day' to highlight environmental issues, have suggested new playground equipment and raise money for charities. The school enables students to develop high quality 21st century skills that prepare them particularly well for their future.

The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching in subjects following the English National Curriculum is very good, with many examples of outstanding practice. Lesson planning throughout the school is extremely strong. It makes very effective use of data to provide different groups with appropriate challenges. Teachers share learning objectives and success criteria so that students are clear about the high expectations for their work. They have very secure command of their subjects, which ensures that explanations are clear and learning is accurate. Teachers ask questions that challenge students to answer in depth extend their thinking and enhance their understanding. Most students display very strong attitudes to learning as teachers have high expectations for their behaviour. When students are working, teachers usually check on their progress and provide additional support as needed. This is not always the case as some groups are occasionally left too long without teachers checking on their progress or ensuring they remain on task. High quality teaching assistants provide very strong support for students' learning.

Teaching is not as strong in Arabic, Islamic education and social studies as in other subjects. Teachers in these subjects are committed, work hard and as a result teaching is improving. In some lessons taught in the Arabic language, especially for higher attaining students, students are not challenged sufficiently to develop their critical thinking skills. Teaching assistants in lessons taught in Arabic do not always support learning as effectively as in other subjects.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The implementation of the curriculum is highly effective in meeting the needs of all groups, including students with SEN, English as an additional language or those who have special gifts and talents. The school enlists the support of artists, speakers, authors and other specialists to deliver workshops to enrich learning.

Skills' mapping enables the school to personalise and adapt the curriculum so that it is relevant and meaningful to its international community. The quality of the curriculum motivates students to learn and helps them to make very rapid academic progress in most core subjects and develop outstanding personal skills. It has been carefully planned to develop students' wider knowledge and deep understanding of the values and cultures of Abu Dhabi and the UAE.

The school enhances and enriches learning through an extensive range of additional activities, clubs, trips and residential visits that make learning fun and enjoyable. For example, during the inspection, Year 5 had a 3-day residential visit to an outdoor centre and Year 1 went to the beach for their desert school project. Students have opportunities to develop skills in horse riding, sailing and golf, amongst other activities. Topics and themed days have been introduced, developing links between subjects, enabling enquiry based learning and developing students' use of ICT. These days are beginning to emerge as real strengths that bring learning to life. The curriculum of subjects taught in Arabic is at an earlier stage of development.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The school has a very warm and positive ethos in which students are extremely happy and feel safe. It fulfils its mission to 'Learn, live and laugh' as it enables students to develop into cheerful, thoughtful young people with high-level personal skills. It provides a very inclusive and welcoming environment that ensures students benefit from high levels of care from all adults in the school. Students say there is very little bullying and the school deals with any instances promptly. Corporal punishment is forbidden.

Security at the gate is rigorous, very friendly and considerate, and prevents any unwanted intrusion. The school also has numerous, strategically placed security cameras. Leaders ensure there is a central register that meets ADEC requirements to confirm that all adults are suitably checked to work with children. All adults are fully trained and receive regular updates to ensure that they are aware of child protection and safeguarding procedures. The clinic is fit for purpose, the nurse is fully qualified and medical records and medicines are stored securely.

The school has very effective systems to track academic progress. Students with SEN or other barriers to their learning benefit from outstanding provision to help them improve their academic and personal skills. Attendance is 95% and has improved significantly in the past 3 years as a result of a relentless vigilance by leaders to follow up absenteeism or lateness. There is one dedicated prayer room which boys and girls use at separate times.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The buildings and plot are of sufficient size and meet all ADEC requirements. The accommodation was completely refurbished before the school opened. It was completed to the highest standard, is very well maintained and clean. Specialist facilities for sport and ICT are outstanding and enable the school to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. There is a field with artificial grass, a sports hall and a 25-metre swimming pool that help students to develop physical education and life skills. Shared areas are used to provide additional ICT space. Classrooms are bright with stimulating displays celebrating students' work in primary classes. Classrooms are spacious enough for the number of students and shared areas provide additional space that is used very effectively to support learning. All health and safety issues are dealt with promptly so that the school is clean, safe and hygienic. Electrical and safety equipment is tested regularly and fire drills are frequent. The school stores hazardous materials safely.

The school's resources to support its aims

Teachers are well qualified and have very good command of their subjects so that learning is accurate and progressions are suitably planned. Teaching assistants are well trained and provide very good support for learning. Resources are plentiful and are of very high quality and enable students to apply their skills in enjoyable and, very often, practical activities. The range and quality of resources in the Foundation Stage promotes students' curiosity, independence and creativity. ICT resources in the whole school are outstanding. All classrooms have interactive white boards and there are banks of computers in all shared areas to complement laptops and computers in classrooms. This enables students to access new technology to develop their independent research skills. The school has invested in an Arabic reading scheme to improve students reading and writing; the range of Arabic fiction and non-fiction books is limited.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leadership and management are outstanding. The head teacher and his deputy have been pivotal in the progress made by the school since the previous inspection. Leadership is dynamic with a relentless ambition for continuous improvement. Other senior and middle leaders play a very active and effective role in the school. There is a unity of purpose, vision and ambition to improve; as a result staff morale is high.

The school is accurate in its self - evaluation and uses it to produce clear priorities for improvement captured in a high quality school improvement plan. The school is tackling the areas for improvement from the previous inspection report and

many improvements have been put in place. Systems to monitor pupils' progress and the quality of teaching are very rigorous. Data is analysed at individual, class and cohort level so that interventions can be put in place to support learning and to provide additional challenge as needed. The school provides targeted professional development, which helps teachers to sharpen their skills and raise standards.

A measure of the care provided for all students and adults involved in the school is that it is the first school in the UAE to gain the prestigious 'Investors in People' award. Parents have positive views of all areas of the school's work. They consider that senior leaders are very effective in making the school a real community and that teachers are approachable when they want to talk about their child. They believe that learning and students' attitudes in Arabic need to continue to improve. Aldar Academies holds the school to account and provide very effective support to help the school to improve. School finances are managed very well and the budget has clear links to school priorities.

The school has clearly demonstrated that it has outstanding capacity to make further improvements.

Progress since the last inspection

Senior leaders have very successfully addressed most of the recommendations from the previous inspection report. They have:

- improved assessment procedures to inform planning
- improved planning to make tasks more suitable to the needs of different groups
- enabled students to have more time to complete and produce better quality work
- set targets for students' reading, writing and mathematics so they know what they need to do to improve their work.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Improve standards and progress in subjects taught in Arabic by:
 - i. continuing to monitor the quality of teaching, set teachers actions for improvement and monitor the impact
 - ii. providing teachers with continuous professional development to improve their skills and help them to understand how students learn
 - iii. sharing outstanding practice in other subjects so that teachers have more understanding of how to provide an active learning environment
 - iv. ensuring that lessons offer suitable challenge to all groups, especially more able students
 - v. making more effective use of teaching assistants to support learning.

Inspection Grades

	Band A High performing			Band B Satisfactory		Band C In need of significant improvement		
Performance Standard	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								