



مجلس أبوظبي للتعليم  
Abu Dhabi Education Council  
التعليم أولاً Education First



# Private School Inspection Report

Canadian International School

Academic Year 2015 – 2016

iqraa



## Canadian International School

<b>Inspection Date</b>	February 15, 2016	to	February 18, 2016
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	April 27, 2014	to	April 30, 2014

General Information		Students	
School ID	102	Total number of students	871
Opening year of school	2007	Number of children in KG	212
Principal	Monica Francis	Number of students in other phases	Primary: 351
School telephone	+971 (0)2 556 4206		Middle: 237
School Address	Khalifa City A, Abu Dhabi, PO Box 3976		High: 71
Official email (ADEC)	<a href="mailto:canadianint.pvt@adec.ac.ae">canadianint.pvt@adec.ac.ae</a>	Age range	3 years, 8 months to 18 years
School website	<a href="http://www.cisabudhabi.com">www.cisabudhabi.com</a>	Grades or Year Groups	KG – Grade 12
Fee ranges (per annum)	High: AED 35,075 – AED 46,494	Gender	Mixed
		% of Emirati Students	13.5%
		Largest nationality groups (%)	1. Canada 23%
			2. UAE 13.5%
			3. USA 13.5%
Licensed Curriculum		Staff	
Main Curriculum	Canadian (Alberta Curriculum)	Number of teachers	72
Other Curriculum	-----	Number of teaching assistants (TAs)	20
External Exams/ Standardised tests	Alberta Diploma	Teacher-student ratio	KG/ FS 25:1
Accreditation	Alberta Ministry of Education		Other phases 25:1
		Teacher turnover	20%



## Introduction

Inspection activities	
Number of inspectors deployed	4
Number of inspection days	4
Number of lessons observed	81
Number of joint lesson observations	8
Number of parents' questionnaires	79; (return rate: 11.6%)
Details of other inspection activities	The inspection team held meetings with the principal, the proprietors, senior staff, subject coordinators, teachers, students and parents. They observed lessons, analysed school documents, performance data, records and students' work. Inspectors also attended assemblies. An Alberta Curriculum representative also inspected the school on these dates.

School	
School Aims	Embrace challenge, respect diversity and achieve personal and academic excellence.
School vision and mission	To ensure that all students receive a high quality education and a fulfilling school experience that prepares them for the future.
Admission Policy	Based on interviews and diagnostic tests. It is inclusive of students with special educational needs.
Leadership structure (ownership, governance and management)	The school's owners employ a superintendent. The superintendent acts as a liaison between senior leaders and the owners. The school has a principal, two vice principals and no governing body.



## SEN Details (Refer to ADEC SEN Policy and Procedures)

SEN Category	Number of students identified through external assessments	Number of other students identified by the school
Intellectual disability	12	0
Specific Learning Disability	1	0
Emotional and Behaviour Disorders (ED/ BD)	1	30
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	7	7
Speech and Language Disorders	7	1
Physical and health related disabilities	11	3
Visually impaired	2	0
Hearing impaired	1	0
Multiple disabilities	2	0

## G&T Details (Refer to ADEC SEN Policy and Procedures)

G&T Category	Number of students identified
Intellectual ability	16
Subject-specific aptitude (e.g. in science, mathematics, languages)	16
Social maturity and leadership	30
Mechanical/ technical/ technological ingenuity	5
Visual and performing arts (e.g. art, theatre, recitation)	20
Psychomotor ability (e.g. dance or sport)	40



## The overall performance of the school

Inspectors considered the school in relation to 3 performance categories

<b>Band A</b>	High performing (Outstanding, Very Good or Good)
<b>Band B</b>	Satisfactory (Acceptable)
<b>Band C</b>	In need of significant improvement (Weak or Very Weak)

School was judged to be:	<b>BAND (A)</b>	<b>Good</b>
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	Band A High Performing			Band B Satisfactory	Band C In need of significant improvement	
	Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Acceptable	Weak	Very Weak
Performance Standards						
Performance Standard 1: Students' achievement						
Performance Standard 2: Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills						
Performance Standard 3: Teaching and assessment						
Performance Standard 4: Curriculum						
Performance Standard 5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students						
Performance Standard 6: Leadership and management						
Summary Evaluation: <b>The school's overall performance</b>						



## The Performance of the School

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### Evaluation of the school's overall performance

Students receive a good standard of education at this school. This is because they are willing learners who are taught by committed and skilled teachers. Students make good progress throughout the school. Close to half of the school's students are in Grades 1-5 (the primary phase) and make very good progress in mathematics and in UAE social studies. The school has successfully established a strong ethos of social responsibility from Kindergarten (KG) to the older students in Grades 6 to 12 (the middle and high phases). There is a clear focus on the importance of students' personal development. The Alberta curriculum provides a robust framework that promotes good progress in lessons. This is not always the case for students with special educational needs (SEN). The Alberta curriculum is well integrated with the Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum. The curriculum develops students' understanding of the connections between subjects effectively. The school has maintained strong performance in the key outcomes for students because of their positive attitudes, the good quality of teaching in the classroom and a well-structured curriculum. This has been maintained in spite of two years of instability and change in senior leadership. Governance is weak because of the absence of an effective governing body. This has meant that the school has lacked consistent strategic planning. Systems of assessment, data management and accountability are only acceptable.

### Progress made since last inspection and capacity to improve

The school has made progress in meeting most of the recommendations from the previous inspection. It has improved standards in Arabic, Islamic education and social studies. Sufficient time is now given to the teaching of subjects taught in Arabic. Students now learn these subjects through a wide range of different activities. Teachers now ensure the needs of most students are met in lessons but not always for those with SEN. Further improvements are still required in the identification and support of these students. Plans are now in place for greater continuity in leadership and the school's owners are committed to establishing a governing body.

The school now has a new principal who is developing a strong leadership team. This has already had a positive impact on staff morale, on improving students' safety and security, and on sharpening the focus on school priorities for improvement. As a result, the school now has the capacity to improve further.



## Development and promotion of innovation skills

The school's curriculum and ethos lend themselves to the promotion of innovation skills. This is evident both in students' willingness to experiment and innovate in their work and in teachers' innovative teaching strategies. For example, Grade 6 students showed good innovation skills in making parachutes from different materials to research the effect of gravity. Their science teacher then took them outside to test and modify their creations. The high quality of art and music in the school is evident in the displays of work by students around the school and in classroom activities. These promote imaginative play for children in KG and creative experimentation by older students. Activities outside of lessons support and motivate gifted and talented (G&T) students well. For example, the computer science teacher has recently started a robotics club in which students learn basic coding. There is less focus on innovation in the planning of whole-school activities. Leaders have yet to make innovation a coordinated feature of all lesson planning.

### **The inspection identified the following as key areas of strength:**

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- students' personal development as responsible, global citizens
- development of students' learning skills
- the progress students make in lessons
- teachers' use of effective learning strategies
- curriculum planning and implementation that connects all the different subjects that students study.

### **The inspection identified the following as key areas for improvement:**

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- establishment of effective governance
- the school's use of data and systems of assessment
- identification of and support for students with special educational needs.



## Performance Standard 1: Students' Achievement

Students' achievement Indicators		KG	Primary	Middle	High
Islamic Education	Attainment	N/A	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	N/A	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic (as a First Language)	Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good
Arabic (as a Second Language)	Attainment	N/A	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
	Progress	N/A	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Social Studies	Attainment	Good	Very good	Good	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Very good	Good	Good
English	Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics	Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Good	Very good	Good	Good
Science	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good
Language of instruction (if other than English and Arabic as First Language)	Attainment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Progress	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other subjects (Art, Music, PE)	Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good
Learning Skills (including innovation, creativity, critical thinking, communication, problem-solving and collaboration)		Good	Good	Good	Good



The overall quality of students' achievement is good. The school's own information about students' achievement shows that the majority of students make good progress. Lesson observations show a similar picture of almost all students making good progress in well-planned and well-taught lessons. The school's own data shows that attainment in core subjects rises steadily as students move through the grades. This was also confirmed in lesson observations. Standards in core subjects are acceptable, although there is some variation. Both external and internal assessment data show that attainment and progress is strongest in mathematics. Students achieve acceptable standards overall in English. This represents at least adequate achievement considering that almost half of the school's students speak English as a second language.

On entry to KG, children's skills in English are very varied. They make steady progress in KG1, and faster progress in KG2. Children's learning skills are good overall in KG and they learn to research and investigate from an early age. Children in KG are not always sufficiently encouraged to become more independent of adult support.

In the primary phase, progress in all core subjects is good across all grades, including for G&T students. Students make good progress in English. Overall progress is strongest in Grades 4 to 6 and in mathematics. For example, in a Grade 5 mathematics lesson, students made very good progress in multiplication through cooperative learning. Students develop higher-level skills in innovation, especially in Grades 1 to 6.

In the middle and high phases, progress continues to be good in Arabic, English, mathematics and science. For example, in a Grade 10 Arabic lesson, students analysed the use of metaphor in the language. They were able to construct their own grammatically correct paragraphs by the end of the lesson. Progress in science is strongest in grades 10 to 12. In one Grade 10 chemistry lesson, students learned to define substances by their properties, showing a good grasp of scientific method. Innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurial skills are less strong in grades 7 to 12 because students are given fewer opportunities to practise or develop them. Attainment in Arabic for non-native speakers is less strong in grades 9 to 11. The school lacks clear assessment information on students with SEN. As a result, it is not possible to judge accurately their individual progress against their starting points. It is clear that, as a group, they are not sufficiently supported in the progress they make.

In the high school phase, teachers assess students against the Alberta curriculum standards and external assessments are only undertaken in Grade 12. There has been a strong improvement in attainment in the high school during the last four years. This is especially the case with the proportion of students achieving the highest grades in the external tests. When they leave the school after Grade 12, students achieve



standards that are broadly in line with those achieved by students in other schools following the Alberta curriculum. Attainment in Grade 12 science is acceptable but is markedly lower than in mathematics. Attainment in Arabic, Islamic education and UAE social studies is acceptable when judged against national standards. Non-native speakers of Arabic achieve acceptable standards in both reading and writing. Attainment in music, art, physical education (PE) and information and communication technology (ICT) is good when judged against age-appropriate expectations. In one Grade 8 art lesson, students learned how to manipulate clay skilfully using different tools. At the same time their teacher promoted higher-level thinking skills as they debated the chemical processes in firing clay at very high temperatures. This was a good example of the effective use of links between different subject areas.

Students demonstrate good, positive attitudes to learning. They work collaboratively in the large majority of lessons and communicate well with each other. They are eager to take responsibility for their own learning and enjoy being given opportunities to think critically and solve problems. They make good links with real world situations and between areas of learning.

## Performance Standard 2: Students’ personal and social development, and their innovation skills

Students’ personal and social development, and their innovation skills Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
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Personal development	Good	Good	Good	Good
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good	Good	Good
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good	Good	Good

Students’ personal and social development is good. Students demonstrate positive attitudes and good self discipline. Their behaviour is good and they interact well with adults and peers. This is seen clearly throughout the school. Relationships amongst students and with staff are respectful and cordial. Students respect the school



environment, making good use of the many artistic and creative outlets for their self expression.

Students see themselves as global citizens. They show this through their strong sense of social responsibility. Students are involved in many social and charitable activities and they volunteer in raising funds to help the poor and refugees worldwide. They do this, for example, through the 'Free the Children Club' and the 'Me to We Club'. This sense of civic responsibility is also evident in their contributions to assemblies and their independent charity work. For example, students have initiated their own collection of funds for refugees from Syria. They have done this through an innovative and enterprising sale of Canadian and Arabic themed artifacts.

Students' understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati culture is good in almost all grades. Verses from the Holy Qur'an are recited in the morning assembly in addition to the Prophet's (PBUH) 'Hadeeth'. Students follow advice about staying active and the school sends brochures about healthy lifestyles to families. This has resulted in more students bringing healthy food in their lunch boxes.

Attendance at 94% and punctuality are good. This is partly because students enjoy coming to school. Teachers promote good attendance through classroom competitions and awards. Students demonstrate respect and appreciation of the heritage and culture of the UAE. The national anthem is played during assembly and students stand respectfully for the raising of the UAE flag.

Students have yet to take full ownership of their own learning. They do not always respond positively to constructive critical feedback. Opportunities for students to make independent decisions in KG are not always grasped. There is also less evidence of the promotion of Islamic values appropriate to the children's age in KG.



## Performance Standard 3: Teaching and Assessment

Teaching and Assessment Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
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Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good	Good
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

Teaching for effective learning is good overall although aspects of assessment still need to be improved. Most students make good progress in most lessons and in most subjects. This is because relationships are very strong. All teachers share their learning objectives with students, who have positive attitudes to their learning. Students demonstrate strong learning skills in lessons and are used to learning in groups and pairs. Most teachers often use a mix of innovative and other appropriate teaching strategies. The learning environment is lively, stimulating and well resourced.

Children begin to adopt good learning skills from the start of KG1. Teachers encourage children to be curious and to explore and investigate. The teaching of Arabic is particularly strong in KG2 where teachers provide imaginative and engaging activities for the children. Teaching of reading and writing skills in KG1 is not always as effective as it could be. This is because new leadership in KG has not yet established consistent expectations.

Students are completely familiar with the routines and systems that individual teachers use, particularly in the primary school. This gives them confidence and security and aids their learning through repetition and reinforcement. This familiarity is not always shared between one grade and another or between phases of the school. This is because of a lack of guidance and consistency from school leaders.

Most teachers are adept at assessing students' learning in the classroom through skilful questioning that is targeted and probing. This offers a good level of challenge to the most able and G&T students. Lessons are well structured and take students on a learning journey using a good variety of activities. Teachers set work matched to the abilities of their students and encourage research and higher-level skills. Teachers make limited use of plenary sessions to review lessons or parts of lessons, so they do not always ensure students have understood the required learning.

Subject-based classrooms, and 'homerooms' for younger grades, support and celebrate learning by providing stimulating and relevant displays and facilities. Students' learning and innovation skills are enhanced by the use of ICT in lessons and



in the library. For example, in one Grade 7 lesson students took a course in animation, very effectively using school tablet computers.

Teachers design their own tests linked to Alberta standards. These monitor students' attainment and progress accurately within grade groups. Marking of most students' notebooks and assessment pieces is regular and constructive. Students say this assists them in making good progress. School leaders do not have an effective system to gather or support teachers' use of assessment over time. As a result, the school lacks a clear view of attainment and progress across grade groups. All assessments except Grade 12 are currently administered by the school and not validated by external organisations. This contributes to a lack of objective rigour. As a result, assessment overall in the school is presently only acceptable.

#### Performance Standard 4: Curriculum

Curriculum Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
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Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Good	Good	Good
Curriculum adaptation	Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable

The curriculum is good overall. Its design and implementation are good and follow an Alberta-based model. This is strong and sound with a focus on developing the whole child. It is supplemented by adaptations that enable all Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum expectations to be met for the teaching of Arabic, Islamic education and social studies. The curriculum has improved and now meets the recommendations from the last inspection. Individual teachers are rigorous in their use of the Alberta Standards. These provide an acceptable basis for measuring students' achievement in each class. The curriculum is balanced and builds on each topic in each grade. Concepts are repeated and class and subject teachers ensure there is progression within their class.

The school curriculum offers nearly all students relevant and interesting choices of study. In most subjects, teachers relate students' learning to the world in which they live. Cross-curricular links are very good. Topics swiftly build from one subject into the next. This focuses on making students creative thinkers in all subjects. Teachers enrich the curriculum by ample, in-class and extracurricular activities, particularly in



the primary school. The yearly science fair has a significant impact on learning in the school. This year’s theme was ‘What Man Has Done to The World’. This supported students’ global and environmental awareness.

The high school phase lacks effective review and development of the curriculum. This is because of limited support from leadership and management. Joint planning between most subject departments is limited. This leads to a lack of continuity. Effective, basic support is provided in the primary school for students with SEN. This is not the case in the middle and high phases, where additional support is required.

### Performance Standard 5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The protection, care, guidance and support of students Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
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Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection/safeguarding	Good	Good	Good	Good
Care and support	Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable

Care, welfare and safeguarding of students, including child protection are good. The school has effective procedures for the safeguarding of students. The school counsellor deals with any child protection issues that may arise. These are minimal. The Abu Dhabi police department has recently given lectures to students in the middle and high school phases regarding cyber bullying and staying safe on the internet.

Staff help students to develop a strong sense of commitment to the school community and purposeful citizenship. Students act responsibly and the school ensures they learn how to keep themselves and others safe. Students’ behaviour is good and their attitude towards each other, their teachers, and their school is respectful and courteous. Students’ health is well supported by the school nurse who is well qualified and who uses effective procedures. Students’ records are well maintained and, if the need arises, parents are contacted immediately. Working together with classroom teachers, the school’s health department promotes healthy lifestyles well.

The school’s well-maintained premises and facilities are kept clean and provide a safe environment for all. The school is bright and welcoming for students and they



respond to this by treating it with care and respect. The school provides appropriate guidance and career counselling to senior students.

Basic processes and procedures are in place for students with SEN. However, there is a lack of consistency in following these through in all sections of the school. Leadership and management have not yet ensured fully effective systems for identification of these students. Staff are unclear about the number of SEN students in the school. Teachers are not supported with an effective school-wide system to identify students' special educational needs. This means they do not always include consideration of the needs of SEN students in their lessons.

## Performance Standard 6: Leadership and management

Leadership and management Indicators	
The effectiveness of leadership	Acceptable
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
Partnerships with parents and the community	Acceptable
Governance	Weak
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Good

Leadership and management have improved very significantly recently and are now broadly acceptable overall. The very recently-appointed principal and her new senior team have a clear vision for the school's strategic direction. Governance remains weak because of the lack of a governing body. A superintendent acts as a liaison between the owners and the school leaders. The superintendent's role and responsibilities are not clear. This leads to confusion over important documentation. It also results in the limited accountability of senior leaders or support for them. This in turn has led to a lack of continuity and turbulence in senior leadership which has limited the effectiveness of school improvement. Despite this, teachers have maintained good learning and teaching in classrooms and ensured that students' outcomes remain strong.

The school's self evaluation, while aspirational, is not realistic enough. This has meant that leaders do not always swiftly and clearly identify suitable development priorities. For example, leaders have yet to implement effective identification and provision for SEN students. The school does not yet analyse data thoroughly or sharply enough. As



a result, leaders do not have a clear enough view of how well different sections of the school perform although evidence in classrooms shows that achievement is clearly good. This means that future planning to raise achievement is not sufficiently rigorous. There are currently few measures in place to compare achievement with the highest standards in other local or international schools. The school's new leadership now wants to use data to gain a better understanding of the overall performance of the school and of its performance over time. A great amount of data is available but the school presently has no clear view of its position in comparison with other schools both in the UAE and in Alberta schools. Changes made by the new leadership team have yet to have a marked impact on improving student achievement over time. While achievement has remained good since the previous inspection, it has the potential to be better than this.

The school has been successful in continuing to grow. This has created the need to make changes in the structure of the school's leadership and management. The school's owners are now committed to establishing a governing body. They ensure that the day-to-day running of the school is smooth and is focused on learning. They have ensured that student safety is a top priority. The capacity of leadership to improve the school further and to innovate has been demonstrated. For example, dialogue with staff is now constructive and morale has improved significantly. This is reducing staff turnover and is helping to ensure there is greater continuity for students. Teachers' appraisal and training has already become more targeted and focused on improving students' achievement.

The school is effective in working with parents and makes a strong contribution to the local community. For example, school musicians recently played at the offices of a local parent, making links with the world of work. Reporting is regular and parents feel involved in the day-to-day life of the school. The school's premises are fit for purpose and resources and facilities promote students' learning and achievement.



## What the school should do to improve further:

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1. Improve governance by ensuring that:
  - i. the school establishes a governing body that includes representatives of the owners, senior leaders, parents, teachers and the local community
  - ii. the governors meet regularly to make informed decisions about the school's long-term strategic plans
  - iii. the governing body holds the leadership to account for the school's performance
  - iv. governors provide continuity and stability through any changes in leadership.
  
2. Improve the school's use of data and systems of assessment by ensuring that:
  - i. it provides a consistent and accurate picture of students' achievement as they move through the school
  - ii. departments, grades and phases of the school share information about students' progress
  - iii. leaders use the information to establish a realistic view of the school's performance and to inform plans for the future.
  
3. Improve the support for students with special educational needs by ensuring that:
  - i. early identification leads to detailed, individual plans that promote achievement and personal development
  - ii. teachers have appropriate information and training to meet the needs of students in all sections of the school.