



مجلس أبوظبي للتعليم
Abu Dhabi Education Council
Education First التعليم أولاً



Inspection Report

German International School

Academic Grade 2013 – 14

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German International School

Inspection Date	1 – 4 June 2014
School ID#	48
Lead Inspector	Gillian Smith
Licensed Curriculum	German Thuringen
Number of Students	400
Age Range	3 to 19 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Gerald Miebs
Proprietor	Ministry of Culture and Education, Federal Office of Administration in Germany
Chair of Governors	Roland Beckmann-Kunz
School Address	26 Street, PO Box 4150, Za'ab area, Abu Dhabi
Telephone Number	+971 (0)2 666 8668
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Official Email (ADEC)	German.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	www.gisad.ae
Date of last inspection	19 – 22 November 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 3
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The main strengths of the school are:

- the effective, focused and ambitious leadership which successfully motivates staff and students and has the support of parents
- students make rapid progress in English, mathematics and science
- students' strong personal qualities and learning skills equip them very effectively for their life after school
- relationships are very good; adults and students share a clear sense of purpose and work together well to realise their high aspirations for the future
- the high quality of care provided and the very effective procedures for ensuring students' day-to-day personal and educational support.

The main areas for improvement are:

- the extent to which teachers explain the purpose of each lesson and the skills to be developed
- the consistency in practice to ensure adequate time at the end of lessons to review students' learning
- the systematic monitoring of the progress made by individual students or by groups of students.

Introduction

The school was inspected by 3 inspectors. They observed 60 lessons, conducted several meetings with senior staff, subject leaders, teachers, support staff, students and parents. They analysed test and assessment results, scrutinized students' work across the school, analysed the 175 responses to the parents' questionnaire and considered many of the school's policies and other documents. The principal and senior leadership team were involved throughout the inspection process.

Description of the School

The German International School opened in 1976 and re-located in 2008 to its current premises in Abu Dhabi. The grounds and buildings were previously occupied by a Ministry of Education (MoE) girls' school. The school's aims are 'to prepare our German speaking students for the challenges of life in the modern world with confidence, compassion and the ability to reach their ultimate ambitions.' The school is under the jurisdiction of the German Authority for Schools outside Germany. The German government supports the school financially and appoints key personnel. An independent Board consists of 5 members of the local community, 3 of whom are parents of students at the school and the other 2 have high status positions in industry and academia. The school expanded in 2010 and 2011 to include Grade 11 and 12 students.

The school delivers the German Thuringen curriculum, with additions to meet the UAE context in terms of subjects taught in Arabic?. Students undertake German competence examinations in Grades 4, 6, 8 and 10 in English, mathematics and German. Grade 12 students undertake the German International Abitur examinations. Children's admission to KG is subject to interview and a German language assessment. Students entering other grades provide a report from their previous school; students of all abilities are admitted.

There are 100 children in the Kindergarten (KG), 127 in the primary section, 146 in the middle section and 27 in upper school. Of the 400 students on roll, 49% are boys. The largest proportion of students are from Germany 67% and the other major nationalities represented are UAE 10%, Austria 7%, Egypt 5% and Switzerland 3%. No students have been identified as having special educational needs (SEN) or specific gifts and talents. 35% of students are Muslim.

Annual school fees are AED 17,745 for a half-day in KG and AED 26,565 for a full day; AED 31,600 in Grades 1 to 4; AED 35,800 in Grades 5 to 10 and AED 40,000 in Grades 11 and 12.

The principal has been in post since 2006; his tenure ends in July 2014. The school development partner has been working with the school for four years.

The Effectiveness of the School

Students' attainment & progress

Students' attainment and progress are good. Analysis of Abitur results over the last three years shows that Grade 12 standards are consistently above both international expectations and other schools that deliver the same curriculum. Standards and progress in science are above average and well above average in English and mathematics.

From the start of KG, children make good progress. This is because they rapidly develop the basic skills needed to learn, as well as the ability to think critically and solve problems for themselves. Many lessons also require them to express their views in several languages and this rapidly becomes second nature. Most of the KG1 children can name the days of the week and count from 1 to 20 in German and English. Equally, Grade 7 students read humorous play scripts in fluent English, with good expression and comic timing. The standard of students' work and progress made in Arabic, Islamic education and Social Studies securely meet ADEC's expectations. Students who speak Arabic as a first language make more progress than those who speak it as an additional language. The latter group has weaker reading and speaking skills.

Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are securely satisfactory. Students regularly use computers for work and research. For example, Grade 7 students make films about recreational activities in Abu Dhabi and Grade 8 use spreadsheets to estimate the amount of electricity generated by the school's solar panels. Students make good progress in other subjects, including physical education, art and music.

The school makes satisfactory use of performance data. It compares examination results with previous years and with other German schools in the Middle East. The school is establishing systems to monitor students' progress; comparative data to assess the progress of individuals and groups will be available from the start of the next academic year.

Students' personal development

Students' personal development is very good. They have a strong work ethic and develop into confident, self-assured young people. Relationships between students and adults are very good. They share the same high aspirations for the future and the majority of students move on to European universities. Attendance is high at almost 99%. During lessons, the overwhelming majority of students

behave very well. Their very positive attitudes make a significant contribution to the school's orderly and purposeful atmosphere. Students feel very safe and say that bullying is not a problem. Trained students in Grades 8, 9 and 10 provide peer counseling during breaks and lunchtime. Occasionally, some students do not cooperate during lessons if they find the work to be of little interest. The majority develop very effective learning skills. They are self-assured and present rational and coherent arguments when expressing their views.

Students relish taking part in the wide range of additional activities. Grade 10 students enjoy one week's work experience and speak highly of insights gained into the world of work. Students in Grades 8, 9, and 10 are trained to provide peer counselling and representatives from Grades 3 to 12 participate in the student council. They raise funds for charity and help classmates settle in if they are new to the school. Students are aware of the importance of living healthily and say they would like more opportunities to play sport during the school week.

The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. In the most effective lessons, teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge and provide interesting activities that actively involve students in their learning. Teachers also develop students' independent learning skills very effectively by, for example, providing opportunities for them to choose their activities from an early age. Students' verbal contributions are constantly encouraged and highly valued. Teachers manage behaviour very well and students know exactly what is expected of them; they rise to the challenge. For example, during a Grade 10 English lesson, students moderated, chaired and took minutes of a full and frank debate about the qualities that made a good school.

Effective learning takes place within a collegiate and positive atmosphere. Small classes enable teachers to provide individual guidance and support. Students willingly undertake the work provided, even though some teachers do not explain the purpose of the activities. In addition, many do not provide success criteria or review learning at the end of each lesson. Teachers usually provide a single task for the whole class, with more challenging class or homework being provided as an option. It is a testament to their commitment that many students accept and like this system and this is reflected in their good progress.

Professional development is effective. Teachers increasingly use interactive white boards to show animations or record results during, for example, science lessons. For some teachers, the training provided is too general and does not address specific aspects of their individual subjects.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The implementation of the curriculum is effective and meets students' needs well. The programmes of study provide clearly defined learning outcomes and prepare students well for their final exams. In KG, there is significant emphasis on children's personal and social development as well as effective communication skills. This stands them in good stead for their well-planned transition to Grade 1.

From Grade 5, English is taught in two ability groups and the language is introduced progressively into other subjects. For example, from Grade 9 onwards, students have bilingual lessons in biology and, from Grade 10 onwards, geography is taught entirely in English. Additional lessons in German and mathematics provide effective support for students who are falling behind. Younger students attend either the English beginners or advanced classes. The number of students in these classes is low and this helps teachers to meet their needs well.

The school has developed its own curriculum for teaching Arabic as a foreign language. Since the last inspection, it has also increased the curriculum time available for Arabic; the overall time remains below Ministry of Education (MoE) recommendations. The school has recently received permission from the German government to alter the subject options available to Arab students from September 2014. French will no longer be compulsory and they will be able to spend the time on Arabic instead; these changes will more than meet MoE time recommendations.

A wide range of additional activities enrich the curriculum. Students participate in the school council and organize fund raising events such as talent competitions. Grade 10 students undertake work experience and younger students from Grade 4 undertake residential trips to activity and adventure centres. Grades 11 students visit Europe and Grade 12 recently participated in an exchange visit to Germany.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The school's very positive ethos ensures that students of all abilities receive good personal and academic support. Sensitive induction procedures ensure that incoming students settle in quickly. Recruitment procedures are thorough. Child protection and first aid procedures are very effective.

Teachers want the very best for their students and they receive individual guidance when choosing between the various courses available. They speak highly of the support provided. For example, professionals including representatives from the police and airlines visit to inform students about career options after they leave school.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The school has a capacity for 650 students and the buildings therefore provide spacious accommodation. The premises are very well maintained and safe. They are exceptionally clean and support the curriculum very well. Generous specialist facilities include 3 purpose built science laboratories, with an additional lecture room and 2 ICT suites. There are also dedicated rooms for Arabic, French and geography and practical subjects such as art, drama and music. A lift to the first floor and ramps at the front of the school ensure that any visiting students or adults with physical difficulties enjoy ready access to all areas.

KG classrooms provide a bright and colourful environment. Good quality displays include children's work and support learning well. KG classrooms do not have direct access to toilets or the spacious outdoor activity area. Students of all ages benefit from several shaded 'break out' areas that are used for recreation during the intervals between lessons. In addition, there are facilities for students to play sports such as table tennis while waiting for their parents at the end of the school day. The large, high quality indoor gymnasium lends itself to a wide range of sports, including basketball and football. Electrical equipment does not undergo regular safety checks.

The school's resources to support its aims

The school is very well resourced. It is fully staffed with highly qualified and experienced teachers. Teachers are deployed effectively and turnover has fallen since the last report. Many of those who are recruited locally extend their contract beyond the initial two years. In addition, the German government appoints and issues contracts to several key members of staff. Federal law dictates the length of their tenure and the school is unable to grant extensions.

The spacious and well-resourced KG outdoor activity area includes a large sand pit, a long track for wheeled toys and climbing and balancing equipment. Since the last inspection, additional interactive white boards and projectors have been installed in classrooms and specialist areas. Internet access throughout the school ensures teachers use these facilities effectively. Practical subjects, such as science, physical education, art and music are well resourced and this enables the curriculum to be delivered in full. This good level of resources enables students to learn through first hand, direct experience and makes a significant contribution to their learning and good progress.

The spacious library provides a very good environment for learning. There is a wide range of reading and reference books that meets students' needs in almost all areas; the range of Arabic language books is more limited.

Professional development is relevant and includes areas such as the use of the new resources. There are also sufficient support staff for practical subjects, such as science. Each KG class also has an additional adult who helps to prepare resources, as well as support learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The principal and senior leaders work closely to direct the school's on-going growth and development. All adults share a strong team spirit and wholehearted commitment to the aims and values of the school. Since the last inspection report, appropriate actions have been taken to improve teaching by, for example, improving the quality and effective use of ICT resources.

Communication within the school and with parents and the wider community is very good. Twice weekly meetings provide opportunities for the principal, middle and senior leaders to review the school's performance and keep up to date. The principal also meets with the Board each month; members provide a good level of support and challenge. Parents have a formal opportunity to meet their children's teachers and receive a grade sheet each term. In addition, all teachers make themselves available for one hour each week to talk to parents to address and discuss any emerging concerns.

Working with a steering committee, which includes representatives of teachers, students and parents, leaders have a realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have identified areas for development in the future; a detailed development plan is not in place as the school awaits the appointment of a new principal. The budget is carefully managed and funding is closely aligned with the school's strategic priorities.

Almost all parents expressed their satisfaction with the quality of education provided; they agree the school is well led and managed.

Progress since the last inspection

There has been satisfactory improvement to all performance standards since the last inspection. The most significant concerns the implementation of a system that enables teachers to monitor students' progress. Teachers have entered attainment data during the current school year. From September 2014, they will be able to track and compare the progress of individuals and groups.

The school has taken effective action to address the recommendations of the last inspection report. Arrangements are in place to provide a single time for students' arrival and dispersal at the start and end of the school day.

The deputy head and the various subject leaders have good capacity to manage the school during the transition to a new principal.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Raise standards and accelerate progress in the key subjects, especially in Arabic lessons for those who speak it as an additional language, by:
 - i. ensuring all teachers explain the purpose of each lesson and provide clear learning objectives and success criteria
 - ii. take time at the end of each lesson to review learning and assess students' knowledge and understanding
 - iii. refine assessment systems to enable the monitoring of progress made by individual students and by groups.
2. Implement the planned changes to the curriculum to ensure that the school meets ADEC's regulations for teaching time in Arabic.

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								

Possible breaches of regulations and health & safety concerns

German International School in Abu Dhabi

Regulations	
1. The teaching time for Arabic for Arab students is currently below MoE and ADEC recommended times.	
2.	
3.	
The UAE Flag is raised/ flown every day?	Yes
Is playing of the UAE National Anthem a daily feature at the morning assembly?	Yes

Fees:
1.
2.
3.

Health and Safety Concerns:
1. Portable electrical equipment does not undergo regular safety checks
2.
3.

Lead Inspector	Gillian Smith	Date	4 June 2014
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