



مجلس أبوظبي للتعليم
Abu Dhabi Education Council
التعليم أولاً Education First



Private School Inspection Report

Merryland International School

Academic Year 2015 – 2016

lqraa



Merryland International School

Inspection Date	January 18, 2016	to	January 21, 2016
Date of previous inspection	April 28, 2014	to	May 1, 2014

General Information		Students							
School ID	201	Total number of students	2702						
Opening year of school	1978	Number of children in KG	418						
Principal	Subha Clifford	Number of students in other phases	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Primary:</td> <td>1087</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Middle:</td> <td>791</td> </tr> <tr> <td>High:</td> <td>406</td> </tr> </table>	Primary:	1087	Middle:	791	High:	406
Primary:	1087								
Middle:	791								
High:	406								
School telephone	025519626	Age range	3 years 8 months - 19 years						
School Address	P. O. Box 73340, Plot 13, ME-9, Musaffah, Abu Dhabi	Grades or Year Groups	KG – 16 classes Primary – 44 classes Secondary – 35 classes						
Official email (ADEC)	merryland.pvt@adec.ae	Gender	Mixed						
School website	www.merrylandinternational.ae	% of Emirati Students	6%						
Fee ranges (per annum)	AED 12,600 – AED 27,800	Largest nationality groups (%)	1. Pakistan – 34% 2. Indian – 23% 3. Bangladesh – 10%						
Licensed Curriculum		Staff							
Main Curriculum	British	Number of teachers	170						
Other Curriculum	-----	Number of teaching assistants (TAs)	20						
External Exams/ Standardised tests	iGCSE and A/AS Level	Teacher-student ratio	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>KG/ FS</td> <td>1:12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other phases</td> <td>1:15</td> </tr> </table>	KG/ FS	1:12	Other phases	1:15		
KG/ FS	1:12								
Other phases	1:15								
Accreditation	Cambridge International Brand School (CIE)	Teacher turnover	4%						



Introduction

Inspection activities	
Number of inspectors deployed	6
Number of inspection days	4
Number of lessons observed	120
Number of joint lesson observations	14
Number of parents' questionnaires	378; (response rate: 14.4%)
Details of other inspection activities	The inspection team held meetings with the school owner, the principal, senior staff, subject coordinators, teachers, students and parents. They observed lessons, assemblies and other activities and analysed school documents, data, records and students' work.

School	
School Aims	'To develop students who 'will become highly responsible, morally and ethically sound, and academically, professionally and financially successful and contribute to the development of the human race in the 21st century'.
School vision and mission	'To create world class peace loving citizens, who shall enrich this world with unique aspects of ethos highly empowered with knowledge and respect for all - sans borders.'
Admission Policy	Students undertake baseline tests on entry to the school. Priority is given to siblings of current students, otherwise students are enrolled on a 'first come, first served' basis, as per the school admission policy.
Leadership structure (ownership, governance and management)	The school is part of the Sherwood Group of schools. A Governing Body oversees the development of the school and comprises the Principal, chairman and owner and notable members of the local community.



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	There are no students with an external assessment of SEN.	The school identified and supports one low achieving student.
Specific Learning Disability		
Emotional and Behaviour Disorders (ED/ BD)		
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)		
Speech and Language Disorders		
Physical and health related disabilities		
Visually impaired		
Hearing impaired		
Multiple disabilities		

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

G&T Category	Number of students identified
Intellectual ability	1
Subject-specific aptitude (e.g. in science, mathematics, languages)	0
Social maturity and leadership	0
Mechanical/ technical/ technological ingenuity	0
Visual and performing arts (e.g. art, theatre, recitation)	9
Psychomotor ability (e.g. dance or sport)	0



The overall performance of the school

Inspectors considered the school in relation to 3 performance categories

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

School was judged to be: **BAND (A) Very Good**

Performance Standards	Band A High Performing			Band B Satisfactory	Band C In need of significant improvement	
	Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Acceptable	Weak	Very Weak
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: The school's overall performance						



The Performance of the School

Evaluation of the school's overall performance

The overall quality of education at Merryland International School is very good. The school has many outstanding features. The behaviour of students in lessons and around the school and their attitude to their studies are exemplary. They are a credit to the school and fulfil its aims admirably. External examination results are outstanding and individual students are regularly recognised as best in the country, region and, on occasion, in the world. Teaching is highly effective and it motivates and challenges students. The learning environment at the school is safe, caring and harmonious and contributes significantly to the academic, social and personal development of students. Dedicated staff work diligently to identify where students need additional support with their studies. Teachers have access to state of the art resources. The principal and senior leaders provide a clear vision and direction for the school to ensure its aims are met. The school's owner and founder provides the moral, educational and financial support and direction for the school.

Progress made since last inspection and capacity to improve

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection. Learning activities in the Kindergarten now have a very sharp focus on what children are to learn and achieve in lesson activities. Teachers and teaching assistants now monitor, assess and support children's learning carefully to achieve positive outcomes. All students at the school now have specific, individual targets, including those in Grades 1 to 3. These are recorded in their individual reports and communicated to parents. Teachers now monitor students in achieving these targets on a daily, weekly and termly basis. Most teachers have now developed effective questioning techniques to probe and assess students' knowledge and understanding in lessons. A minority are still not adept at using targeted questioning to check the learning of all students, particularly the least able. The school has maintained the capacity to continue to improve without external support. This is as a result of the dedicated and insightful school leadership, committed and caring staff and the continuing support of parents.

Development and promotion of innovation skills

The school has many outstanding innovative approaches and activities. Students keep a daily journal of what they have learned at school. Any issues raised in the journal are communicated to the principal and the school's owner. Each student produces their own research journal where they record the outcomes of their independent investigations outside of school. The best of these are published in beautifully produced hard cover books entitled 'Amazing Facts'. The robotics club



has designed many electronic devices including a robot that can teach numeracy. Students operate the school's weather observation platform which is linked to the UAE meteorological satellite. Their environmental awareness is exemplary. Students organise the recycling of materials at the school and oversee their own organic farm producing food without the use of fertilizers. The school's own planetarium is used imaginatively to develop students' knowledge and understanding of science. Their own patented abacus is a key resource in developing students' basic numeracy skills.

The inspection identified the following as key areas of strength:

- students' exemplary behaviour in lessons and around the school and their dedicated attitude to their studies
- the commitment by staff and parents to the overall development of every student
- the very high attainment of students in their external examinations
- the embedded school's values and ethos and their impact on the personal and social development of students
- innovative opportunities for students to research and enrich their understanding of the world and the global environment
- positive learning experiences offered to students throughout the school which impacts on their academic and personal successes
- the wide range of very high quality resources available to teachers to enrich the learning of students
- caring and thoughtful relationships at the school which ensure that the learning environment is always harmonious and positive
- the excellent progress made by students in the acquisition and use of English language skills as a result of the detailed and motivating planning and delivery of the English language curriculum.

The inspection identified the following as key areas for improvement:

- the narrower range of teaching approaches in the majority of the Arabic medium lessons
- opportunities provided to students in a minority of lessons to develop and apply their creativity, critical thinking and innovation skills.



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	Very Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Very Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic (as a Second Language)	Attainment	Very Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Very Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Social Studies	Attainment	Good	Good	Good	N/A
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	N/A
English	Attainment	Very Good	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
	Progress	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Mathematics	Attainment	Very Good	Very Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
	Progress	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
Science	Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Good	Very Good
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	Very 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	Very Good	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Very Good	Good	Good	Good
Learning Skills (including innovation, creativity, critical thinking, communication, problem-solving and collaboration)		Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding



Attainment in subjects measured against authorised, national and international standards is outstanding. Overall, external examination results are well above average across all the iGCSE and AS/A level subjects. Individual students are regularly recognised as the best in the country, region and, on occasion, in the world. The progress that students make in the knowledge required in these subjects is very good. Very good progress is made by different groups of students against age, ability and gender. There has been a good trend of improvement in attainment over time.

Overall, attainment in English language is very high. Almost all students attain levels above those expected for their stage. Notable strengths include advanced vocabulary against age expectations, skills in collaboration and discussion, and high-quality oral presentation. In mathematics, attainment improves over time and towards the upper end of the school. Progress is consistently very good. In science, attainment is outstanding by Grade 9 and Grade 12. Progress is very good where the acquisition of knowledge is a strength. It is relatively slower in the middle phase. Attainment in Arabic, Islamic education and social studies is not as high as in other subjects and progress is not as strong, especially in the upper years.

Attainment and progress in information and communication technology (ICT) is outstanding throughout the phases. By the end of the KG, all students are adept at using computers to produce correctly spelled text and complete numeracy calculations. Physical education has a lower profile than other subjects. The school has limited outside areas and does not use the swimming pool for teaching swimming. In art and music, progress is strong for a few talented students but more limited for most.

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
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

Students' personal and social development and their innovation skills are outstanding. Students are confident, socially aware young citizens who are



determined to make a difference to the world in which they live. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. They have a dedicated attitude to their studies which includes engaging in their own independent, innovative research which they record in their research journal. Students relish the opportunity to discover new facts and develop their understanding of the world and the global environment. Relationships among students and with adults are always positive and harmonious.

Students are given many opportunities to develop leadership skills and exercise responsibility. The student council, elected by students themselves, runs the school's clubs and competitions. It also organises and leads the school assemblies which regularly focus on environmental issues and healthy lifestyles. Students do not drop litter. Students talk knowledgeably about how to stay safe, for example in protecting their identity on the internet, how to lead healthy lifestyles, and the importance of protecting the environment. Attendance is outstanding at approximately 98% for the last semester. Students are always punctual to school and lessons.

Students have a deep understanding of UAE culture and history and the multicultural nature of the country. They appreciate and understand Islamic values and the underlying principle of respect which underpins this and other religions. Students show great respect in assemblies for the UAE anthem and flag. They are involved in the local community, for example with its beach clean-up campaign and various charities including the 'Care and Share' Heart Foundation programme, funding heart surgery for under-privileged children. The monthly Farmer's Market, organised by the business studies students, is an excellent, innovative opportunity for students to develop their entrepreneurial skills. Profits from the market are donated to charity. Students' diligence, dedication to their studies and their eager willingness to learn contributes significantly to the positive learning environment of the school.

Performance Standard 3: Teaching and Assessment

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

The overall quality of teaching and assessment is very good. Almost all teachers have a very good knowledge of subject content and of how to get the best out of their students. In most subjects and at most stages, they use teaching approaches that are



well suited to effective learning, including through the regular reinforcement of advanced technical language. This is particularly the case in, for example, English language lessons when teachers explore the vocabulary relating to other areas of the curriculum such as the sciences. Almost all teachers plan lessons very well and, by liaising with their colleagues, make strong links across several subjects to bring relevance to students' learning. For example, in a health education discussion teachers probed students' understanding of chemicals. They make very effective use of the learning environment and a range of suitable, high-quality resources.

In most areas of the curriculum and at all phases, interactions between teachers and students and between students themselves are constructive and supportive. As a result, students are confident and self-assured and they engage regularly in high-quality discussions and debate. For example, students demonstrate mature, values-based attitudes in discussions about the refugee crisis and other world issues. Staff use effective approaches to meet the learning needs of groups and individuals. They know their students well and, when necessary, provide very effective additional support to ensure that individuals encountering difficulties can achieve their best. Teachers are very sensitive when providing this additional support in class.

Across most of the curriculum, teachers in lessons do not always maximise opportunities to promote the highest levels of students' critical-thinking, problem-solving and innovation skills. The exception to this is the practice in English language where, as they progress through the school, increasingly students apply higher-order skills to great effect.

Teachers make effective use of a suitable range of assessment approaches in class to ensure students progress well. They have a secure understanding of their students' strengths and learning needs. Staff monitor individual students' learning on a daily basis to ensure that learning outcomes are met. Commendably, staff review every students' achievement of learning outcomes at the end of every day and ensure that they address any shortcomings the following day. They use accurate assessment information to organise students into groups and pairs in classes and to provide extra, well-targeted support for students who need it. This extra support includes additional provision at the end of the school day and at weekends, when appropriate. In most lessons, written and oral feedback to students is constructive and helpful and leads directly to improvements.



Performance Standard 4: Curriculum

Curriculum Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
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Curriculum design and implementation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Curriculum adaptation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

The curriculum is outstanding and offers students a very wide range of learning experiences to promote and enhance their academic, personal and social development. The school follows the UK Cambridge Internal Examinations syllabus with students taking the iGCSE in Grade 10 and AS/A Levels in grades 11 and 12. KG children follow the UK Early Years curriculum. Students can take Urdu or Bengali as additional languages and older students can supplement their study of the core subjects of science and mathematics with economics, business studies or applied ICT. Curricular choices are also available in the KG as children can select literacy activities for language and different instruments for music. The school's timetable complies with the required number of teaching hours and curriculum requirements for the Arabic medium subjects. The curriculum enables students to develop, appreciate and respect the UAE culture, heritage and religion.

The KG curriculum has a clear, comprehensive and well-resourced focus on developing children's literacy skills. School data shows 85% of students enter the school with English as a second language but leave the phase with well above age-related levels of competency in English. Opportunities in the KG phase to develop their understanding of basic science principles are more limited. Research, independent study, environmental awareness, healthy lifestyles and innovation are firmly embedded through the subjects and out-of-school activities that are promoted at the school.

Cross-curricular links are meaningful and planned purposefully. ICT is used extensively in all subjects, particularly when students are documenting and presenting their work. The art teacher works with class teachers to plan topics together to promote students' skills and knowledge through that subject. Extra-curricular activities offered to students are engaging, effective and fun. The curriculum promotes well students' contribution to the community. They regularly visit Abu Dhabi Corniche to clean the beach, make stationery, blankets, and clothes donations to the Red Crescent organisation, and have initiated the Emirates 'free of plastic bags' project. The school has established highly effective links with universities, the community police, local



hospitals and Abu Dhabi financial institutions. These involve visits including, for example, to shadow hospital doctors and having bankers visit the school to promote financial awareness. Visitors to the school include many former students including airline pilots to talk about their careers and undergraduates to describe life at university. Students are involved in an organic farming project to promote healthy living. Staff review regularly the effectiveness of learning experiences in team and phase meetings. This is an outstanding approach across most of the curriculum and it underpins the strong progress in learning. The curriculum prepares students extremely well for the next stage of their education and future careers through careers advice, fairs and university visits.

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	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Care and support	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good

The protection, care, guidance and support for students are outstanding. The school provides a learning environment where students feel safe, secure and well looked after. Students appreciate the way teachers work tirelessly to promote their academic, personal and social development. Child protection and other policies are appropriate and known by staff. Health and safety arrangements are effective. Students know what it means to live healthy lives and the importance of regular exercise and eating nutritious food. Arrangements for the storage of medicine and the attention to students' health and well-being are appropriate. Students are confident that they can seek help from adults if they have a concern or worry. The maintenance and security of the site is comprehensive. The school's three counsellors provide caring guidance and support for students with personal or academic issues. This is much appreciated by parents and students. Attendance and punctuality is very well managed and students who are absent from school or the school bus are quickly monitored by a call to their home.



Students' academic performance is closely scrutinised and monitored on an individual basis. This is done every day by teachers. Students who are encountering difficulties with their learning are identified and encouraged to attend additional support classes after school or on Saturdays. This effective approach ensures that they can take a full part in class lessons. All students have academic and personal targets which are monitored and recorded in students' report books. The school has identified one SEN student and devised an extensive, closely monitored programme for in-class and additional support. The school does not have an explicit screening programme for its wide range of talented students but provides an extensive range of stimulating and challenging clubs and activities which are available for all students.

Performance Standard 6: Leadership and management

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

Leadership and management are outstanding. Leaders at all levels are committed to educational excellence, high academic standards and the promotion of moral values in students. This is a school where staff value every child. Nearly all staff stay late after school for meetings, analysing students' daily performance and providing additional support or extra-curricular clubs for students. The school meets its stated aims very well and provides a standard of education which is highly regarded by all parents. The positive and caring environment permeates every aspect of the daily life of the school. Relationships at the school are warm, friendly and promote a positive learning environment. Senior and middle leaders promote a strong ethos of inclusivity and deep respect for the UAE culture, heritage and aspirations. School leaders ensure compliance with regulations. The school has many innovative initiatives and activities, all of which are focused on the academic and personal development of students.

The self-evaluation form contains a wide, varied and well thought out range of evidence to support the evaluation of school performance. The school development plan is put together by a core senior team supported by teams for each of the



Inspection performance standards. The school has correctly identified that the planning, delivery and monitoring of the Arabic medium subjects is not as strong as in other subjects. Communication channels with parents are highly effective. Parents receive daily, weekly and termly updates on the academic, personal and social development of their children. Students benefit from a range of highly effective community links which promote their understanding and appreciation of the environment and their social responsibilities as young citizens. The school has an effective governing board which includes the founder and owner. She provides the moral, educational and financial support and direction for the school. This not only includes free accommodation for staff but often extends to sponsoring school graduates at overseas universities. Every facet of the school's provision is scrutinised by her to ensure that the highest standards are being met. The school has been designated as a Cambridge International Examinations 'brand' school for its academic excellence.

School leaders and staff work collaboratively to ensure that the school functions efficiently on a day-to-day basis. The large numbers of students move around the school in a controlled way to ensure they arrive on time for lessons. The school makes the most of its state-of-the-art resources. It is fully staffed with well qualified teachers and teacher turnover is very low. Students frequently use 3D software, the weather observation platform and the planetarium. These are unique resources and, alongside the school's organic farm, demonstrate the school's commitment to innovation and the environment. Science, mathematics, ICT and language laboratories are stocked with high-quality equipment. The school does not have an outdoor sports facility but makes very effective use of the expansive, sheltered atrium for physical education and KG sports lessons. The library is very well stocked and extensively used. Books include those published and written by students. The learning space and resources in the KG are excellent and include four computer pods, simulation shops, a Reading Train for individual literacy sessions and work and eating areas.



What the school should do to improve further:

1. Develop the range of teaching approaches in Arabic medium lessons by ensuring:
 - i. all lessons have planned opportunities for student discussion
 - ii. all students have opportunities to explain and present their work
 - iii. learning outcomes are made explicit at the beginning of lessons, shared with students and are assessed
2. Building on the school's best practice in English language, provide opportunities in lessons for all students to develop and apply their creativity, critical thinking and innovation skills by:
 - i. making these explicit in all programmes of study and the planning of lessons
 - ii. ensuring these are an explicit focus of lesson evaluations.