



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



Inspection Report

International School of Choueifat
Khalifa A

Academic Year 2013 – 14

Iqraa

International School of Choueifat – Khalifa A

Inspection Date	1 – 4 June 2014
School ID#	121
Licensed Curriculum	SABIS
Number of Students	3,371
Age Range	3 to 18+ years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Kenneth Riggs
School Address	Khalifa City A
Telephone Number	+971 (0)2 556 2555
Fax Number	-----
Official Email (ADEC)	choueifatkhalifa.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	-----
Date of last inspection	25 – 28 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 B;	GRADE 5
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The main strengths of the school are:

- students' fluent spoken English
- standards in mathematics and computer science
- the range of subjects available to students in the secondary school to support their choice of higher education
- comprehensive procedures for recording and monitoring student progress
- innovative teacher training programmes.

The main areas for improvement are:

- the standards achieved by students in Arabic and social studies taught in Arabic
- the level of challenge for more able students and the progress they make
- the visible and effective promotion of the culture, heritage and values of the UAE
- the need for a rigorous school self-evaluation process that assesses the school's strengths and weaknesses in a realistic manner
- the school development plan to take into account the recommendations contained in inspection reports commissioned by ADEC.

Introduction

The school was inspected by 6 inspectors. They observed 97 lessons and met with the school's director, deputy director and other school leaders. They also met with subject coordinators, teachers, students, parents and members of the SABIS local and regional organization. In addition, 522 parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire were analyzed and students' work was examined. Inspectors observed students arriving and leaving school, during break-times, attended lessons and 'home-room' assemblies. The inspectors scrutinized school policies and procedures. They looked at school documentation on finance and administration, information on assessments, curriculum and lesson planning.

Description of the School

The International School of Choueifat in Khalifa City A is part of the worldwide SABIS School Network, which owns 13 schools in the Gulf region. SABIS international own the school and determines its vision and way of working. The principal works closely with the regional director who has an office in the school.

All SABIS schools aim academically to: 'qualify every student for entrance to university, provide a well-rounded education based on mastery of English and mathematics, enable acquisition of a second language, train students for logical reasoning and critical thinking, prepare students for sustained intellectual effort, and generate excitement for life-long learning'. Non-academic aims for graduates are to prepare them to: 'uphold high standards of ethical, moral and civic conduct; make informed decisions on social issues; defend convictions and reverse negative peer pressure; participate in extra-curricular activities, school management and community work; foster tolerance, cooperation and teamwork; and understand people of the world through appreciation of differences and similarities'.

The school opened 8 years ago, and is now at full capacity. There is no formal selection, though applicants undergo a 'screening test.' As one of the growing international family of Choueifat schools, it uses the distinctive SABIS curriculum and students in all SABIS schools study courses at the same rate. The school enters students for a wide range of international examinations, Ministry of Education (MoE) tests and its own internal diploma.

There are 3,371 students, including 677 Kindergarten (KG) children. The primary section has 1,890 students, the middle school (grades 6-9) has 629 students and the secondary (grades 10-12) has 175. Overall, these are similar numbers to those recorded at the last inspection. Boys number 1,899 in total, and girls 1,472. Almost all students are Muslim and 75% are of Arab heritage. The largest group of

students are Emirati (38%), and the remainder come from Egypt (15%), Pakistan (12%), Jordan (6%), India (4%), the USA (4%), Lebanon (3%), Canada (2%), Syria (2%) and Palestine (1%). Identification of students with special learning needs is contrary to the SABIS philosophy: students who do not achieve sufficiently well in tests are provided with special lessons. The number attending these lessons varies throughout the year according to test results.

Annual fees range from AED 19,635 in KG (excluding bussing, books and uniform) to AED 33,105 in the secondary school.

The Effectiveness of the School

Students' attainment & progress

Nearly all students make satisfactory progress. In particular, students make rapid progress in the early years as their ability to speak, read and write in English flourishes. Most children enter the KG with little knowledge of the English language. They quickly become competent in recognizing the names, shape and sounds of letters. Some children do not maintain this progress due to the manner in which letter sounds and names are presented to them. This often results in children facing difficulties blending vowels and consonants.

Students make satisfactory or better progress as they move through the primary school. This is true of all subjects except social studies taught in Arabic. By the time they reach Grade 8, many are not able to discuss basic geographic concepts. In Arabic, students make satisfactory progress; their ability to write creatively in standard Arabic remains limited by the time they reach Grade 10. By the end of Grade 1, students can memorize a few short Surah's from the Holy Qur'an but older students find it difficult to discuss different Islamic concepts. By the time they reach the upper grades students ability to write in English has overtaken their ability to write in standard Arabic.

Girls and boys make good progress in mathematics and computer science. They develop their 'mental maths' skills from the early years. They display very good knowledge of mathematical concepts by the time they move into the secondary school. Progress in science is at least satisfactory for most students; they have insufficient time working collaboratively in laboratories to enable them to explore the scientific process fully.

Those students who remain in the school in Grades 9 to 12 do very well in external exams. Most students sit the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) exams and many opt to take the exams for 1 or 2 of their subjects a year earlier than their peers in other similar schools. In the last academic year 79% of Grade 9 students achieved an A* or A grade in computer

science. Students do particularly well in mathematics and physics with no students failing their exams and the great majority achieving high grades.

Procedures for the assessment of student progress are systematic and consistently applied at every stage. They are also exceedingly thorough which enables the school to track student attainment on a month-by-month basis. Data from formal assessments is not combined with teacher's own observations to ensure that students who learn at a quicker pace are provided with more demanding activities in the classroom.

Students' personal development

Children in KG and throughout the school are extremely well behaved in classrooms. They quickly adapt to the school's distinctive routines in and the testing regime that is a pervasive element of school life. For a few younger ones, the constant cycle of drilling and testing does not suit their style of learning. For this reason a small number of students leave at the end of each school year.

The school presents students with a myriad of leadership roles in each class group. In many classes, nearly all students will have a role of one sort or another. Teachers apply this system inconsistently. In some classes, students are given responsibility for behaviour management that causes some friction and misunderstanding with their peers. In other classes, it is a positive aid as students become adept at offering academic support to their peers. Outside the classroom students also behave well; tensions can arise at break times as students seek to pursue their activities in crowded playgrounds. Many younger students have a weak understanding of the culture and heritage of the country in which they live.

The quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. Teachers have a sound knowledge base. Not all teachers have teaching qualifications. The school is developing good initiatives such as links with Sunderland University, to address this situation. Most teachers have a good understanding of the SABIS system and apply it consistently. Where teaching becomes better than satisfactory, teachers are able to enliven the instructional content with real life applications, as in mathematics, science and English. This is less evident in the teaching of Arabic, Islamic education and social studies, whether taught in Arabic or English.

The lesson objectives, 'Points', are clearly displayed at the start of lessons. Not all teachers use these as a method of checking learning as they move through the lesson or in a plenary session towards the end of lessons. Too much checking of

learning relies on students' choral and chanted responses, missing those students who remain silent.

Not all students are appropriately challenged by the lesson content. Those students who finish their work quickly, find their learning restricted. As a result, some more able students sit waiting for new work to be presented. In classes where the student mentoring system is working as it should this is less likely to happen. In KG classes, teaching assistants, though well qualified, are rarely involved in student learning. Young children in KG have insufficient access to practical resources in classrooms; this constrains their learning.

The school is increasingly successful in retaining its teachers at the end of each school year so there is now no excessive turnover of staff. There is regular and effective professional development; not all teachers have an effective induction to SABIS procedures when they start teaching in the school.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The curriculum implementation provides clear direction for teachers and continuity of learning for students. The school provides a broad curriculum that builds in some element of choice from the early years. Some students are able to choose a ballet option from as early as their second year in KG; this option does not extend to boys. The range of subjects available to students in the secondary school is impressive. Many are able to select minority subjects such as history and take them at IGCSE level. Much of this study is undertaken at home and supported by advice and testing at school. This is successful in allowing students to follow their own interests and abilities and providing greater choice and flexibility in their university applications.

In the primary school, teachers have little opportunity to adapt or extend the curriculum for more able students, other than through the accelerated reading program. There is insufficient consideration given to how the culture, heritage and values of the UAE might be integrated in the overall curriculum plan for each subject.

There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including swimming and other sports activities, available to students during the school day and at the end of lessons. Many students take up these opportunities even though it adds to their already lengthy school day.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The school has very effective processes for tracking the academic progress of its students. Processes for tracking progress in personal, social and emotional development and support of students are less well developed. Staff are unsure or

unskilled in how to identify or meet the needs of a very few students who may have special needs or are emotionally upset. The school does have effective systems for mentoring and providing extra support for those students who have difficulty completing tests to the required level.

The school has effective procedures for ensuring it employs staff who are properly vetted. Staff know how to implement the rigorous set of policy guidelines to ensure physical wellbeing of students. The level of supervision at break times is often insufficient to ensure that all areas of the complex buildings are adequately monitored. The playgrounds are very crowded and not all students are within sight of staff on duty.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The accommodation provides a well ordered learning environment. Classrooms are sufficiently spacious to make satisfactory provision for the occasionally large teaching groups. Most hallways are wide and allow students an alternative to the playground when the weather is very hot. The indoor and outdoor facilities for physical education and play areas are very good. Swimming pools and gymnasias have been adapted for the age and gender of the students. Frequent systematic monitoring of the condition of the facilities is undertaken and ensures the premises are kept in good condition. The surface of much of the play area is covered with a rubberized compound, which is beginning to show signs of wear. The school pays close attention to all aspects of health and safety, including cleaning and hygiene.

There are spacious rooms for information and communications technology (ICT), the library and ballet. The school has a well-equipped chemistry laboratory but biology and physics share either end of the second laboratory, which prevents its efficient and effective use. There is good access to the higher floors for adults or children who may have impaired mobility. Proper attention is paid to the security and safety of students and, despite the complex layout of the building, students can be evacuated speedily and safely.

The school's resources to support its aims

The school's resources are generally satisfactory. The school is the process of developing and updating its resources. In the last year, interactive whiteboards have been introduced to Grades 5 and 8. At present, their use is limited to displaying SABIS workbooks and teaching programmes and they have no internet connection. Given the nature of the school's curriculum there is little thought given to how students might use this technology. There are almost no computers in subject classrooms, as these play no function in the curriculum as it is currently delivered. The school maintains electrical equipment in good condition.

There are good resources for sports and recreational activities. The school has given thought as to how to provide break time activities that are active and productive. There are many table tennis tables in the school grounds but it is difficult to complete a game successfully due to the large number of students occupying the same space as the players themselves.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The director, who has responsibility for this school and the Choueifat School in Al Ain, provides strategic direction and is consulted over significant issues related to student outcomes, behaviour and SABIS procedures. The deputy director, who has been in post since the beginning of the current academic year, manages the day-to-day running of the school and has direct oversight of teaching and learning. The two work closely together so that the school runs smoothly.

The school's process for reviewing its own strengths and weaknesses has not resulted in a realistic assessment of its performance. It judged itself to be 'outstanding' in almost every area. Subsequently the school development plan contained no reference to the recommendations contained in the last inspection report, focusing entirely on developments related to SABIS requirements. This has restricted the speed of improvement the school might otherwise have made.

The school has a well-defined management system that enables the school to monitor academic quality efficiently. Students' progress is enhanced where subject leaders have oversight of their subject across the primary and secondary phase.

The school maintains good relationships with its parents, who have regularly updated information about their child's progress through the on-line 'WebSchool'. Parents appreciate the easy access they have to senior staff in the school and the school itself is proactive in contacting parents if there is any concern over a student's progress.

The school successfully promotes a number of initial teacher training initiatives. It has a productive relationship with Sunderland University to enable graduates in the school to achieve qualified teacher status. The Head of English provides mentoring and observation to support staff as they complete their on-line training. The school also works with Emirates College in Abu Dhabi to enable local graduates to complete their teacher training.

Progress since the last inspection

The school has demonstrated reluctance to implement many of the key recommendations made at the last inspection. They perceive the recommendations as going against the groups' strongly held educational philosophy. As a result, none of the recommendations listed in the previous inspection report are formally addressed in the school development plan. This was, in itself, a recommendation at the last inspection.

Despite this, the school has made some improvements. Teaching and learning has improved. Teachers are more able to engage and motivate their students and build effective relationships that support their willingness to learn. Staff teaching Arabic, Islamic education and social studies in the upper grades now fully meet ADEC requirements. Some interactive whiteboards have been piloted in Grades 5 and 8 and this has been seen as a success. In the coming academic year, this technology will be introduced to other grades.

The school has demonstrated that it has satisfactory capacity to improve. If the school is to demonstrate good capacity it will need to develop a much more accurate self-evaluation and incorporate the results of ADEC's school inspection report into its own improvement planning.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Raise the standards achieved by students in Arabic and social studies by:
 - i. giving greater opportunity for students to practise Arabic skills in lessons
 - ii. providing more active learning that engages students' interest and relates their learning to everyday life
 - iii. enhancing the integration of the use of standard Arabic into Islamic education and social studies taught in Arabic.
2. Increase the level of challenge for students who find learning easy by:
 - i. recognising those who complete their work quickly and accurately and ensuring they have clear guidance on how to extend and enhance their learning
 - ii. teachers managing the mentoring system with greater consistency to ensure that learning is more effective
 - iii. ensuring those students who score 100% in their regular continuous assessment test (CAT) exams are guided more effectively in their self-supported study.

3. Promote the understanding of UAE culture and the Islamic faith by:
 - i. linking students' learning in Islamic education more closely to their daily life
 - ii. giving more opportunities to students across the curriculum to reflect on and discuss the values promoted in UAE.
4. Improve the promotion of the culture, heritage and values of the UAE by ensuring that the values of the UAE are more effectively reflected in classroom displays and activities.
5. Undertake a more realistic self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses by:
 - i. using the available data to judge outcomes
 - ii. taking a wider spectrum of views into account when completing the self-evaluation
 - iii. moderating the judgements made with the help of professionals external to the school
 - iv. using the ADEC criteria as a benchmark when making judgements.
6. Construct a school development plan that takes full account of the recommendations contained in this inspection report, together with the areas for improvement identified in the school's own self-evaluation.

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								