



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



# New School Inspection Report

Al Shohub Private School

Academic Year 2013 – 14

Iqraa

Al Shohub Private School

<b>Inspection Date</b>	12 – 15 May 2014
<b>School ID#</b>	514
<b>Licensed Curriculum</b>	English National Curriculum
<b>Number of Students</b>	675
<b>Age Range</b>	3 to 19 years
<b>Gender</b>	Mixed
<b>Principal</b>	Samantha Newbon
<b>School Address</b>	P O Box 31515, Abu Dhabi
<b>Telephone Number</b>	+971 (0)2 555 9995
<b>Fax Number</b>	-----
<b>Official Email (ADEC)</b>	<a href="mailto:alshohub.pvt@adec.ac.ae">alshohub.pvt@adec.ac.ae</a>
<b>School Website</b>	<a href="http://www.alshohub.org">www.alshohub.org</a>
<b>Date of opening</b>	November 2013

## 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)

<b>The School was judged to be:</b>	<b>BAND B;</b>	<b>GRADE 4</b>
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### The main strengths of the school are:

- provision and progress in the Foundation Stage (FS)
- students behave well, have positive attitudes and value their relationships with their teachers
- robust systems for students' wellbeing
- effective use of assessment
- accurate understanding of what the school needs to do to improve
- a purposeful and effective start to the new school
- the school is well placed to improve further.

### The main areas for improvement are:

- establishment of an effective governing body
- standards and provision in Arabic, Islamic education and social studies for older students so that standards are more in line with other subjects
- provision of resources in some subjects and the effective use of available facilities
- the understanding of and emphasis given to UAE culture and heritage
- the provision for the most able and for those who need additional help with their learning.

## Introduction

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The school was evaluated by 4 inspectors. They observed 67 lessons and conducted several discussions with senior staff, teachers, support staff, external partners, students and parents. They analysed test and assessment results and scrutinised students' work across the school. They considered 63 responses to the parents' questionnaire about the school and many school documents. The school principal was involved throughout. She and other members of the senior leadership team engaged in joint lesson observations with the inspection team.

## Description of the School

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The school was opened in November 2013, having previously been a villa school in another area of Abu Dhabi. The school aims to provide a high quality education for all students to achieve their potential and reach the best international standards.

It is a mixed school for boys and girls from Foundation Stage (FS) until year 4. It is for girls only from year 5 until year 12. The building work was completed in March 2014. It has capacity for 1,200 students. Currently there are 670 students on roll. Of these about 88% are Emirati. The remainder come from a wide range of nationalities. Nearly all are of Arabic heritage. The largest groups are Jordanian (2.0%), Yemeni (1.8%), Egyptian (1.2%) and Omani (0.9%). Almost all students are Muslim.

The school follows the English National Curriculum (ENC) for all subjects except Arabic, Islamic education and social studies where it follows the Ministry of Education curriculum. The principal and deputy principal took up their posts at the formation of the school. There are 38 qualified and 7 unqualified teachers. The school identifies 99 students with some degree of learning difficulties. These are largely related to delays in language and mathematical acquisition.

The school has an open admissions policy and students are admitted following an entrance examination. The annual school fees for children who moved from the villa school range from AED 14,760 in KG to AED 39,600 in Grade 12. The fees range for students admitted new to the school are AED 25,500 in KG to AED 49,980 in Grade 12.

## The Effectiveness of the School

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Al Shohub is a satisfactory and improving school. This judgement reflects the school's position against international standards and ADEC's expectations. The school has a number of strengths including the quality of leadership, the relationships between students and their teachers and the standards achieved in English, mathematics and science as well as many of the other subjects in the English National Curriculum. The newly appointed principal and deputy principal work closely with the wider senior leadership team to identify and address the school's needs. To make the progress towards world class provision which the Emirate of Abu Dhabi requires of all of its schools, Al Shohub must continue and extend its drive to develop the skills and standards that students need to be successful in the modern world. For this reason, this report recognises the development that the school principal and teachers have achieved. The report also gives clear recommendations on what more needs to be done to take the school forward.

### Students' attainment & progress

The school has established systems to assess individual students' attainment and progress. Many children begin school with basic skills and experiences in line with those found in similar schools in Abu Dhabi. From these starting points, almost all are making good progress in the Foundation Stage (FS) both in the development of their academic skills and in their personal and social development. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys compared to girls in this section of the school.

Standards in Arabic, Islamic education and social studies vary across the school. From years 1 to 4, many students work well and attain levels of competence which are appropriate for their ages and starting points. Their skills in literacy in Arabic are sound and they write with increasing accuracy. They are at an early stage of learning the Qur'an and in demonstrating their responsibilities as Muslims and as citizens of the UAE. Older students do not make the same progress in these subjects because teaching is less effective and based largely on reading from the prescribed textbooks. Their knowledge of the culture, heritage and traditions of the UAE is not as strong as it could be.

In English, mathematics and science standards are approaching average international standards. In the FS, children develop knowledge of the sounds letters make and can form letters. By year 1, many write legibly and compose meaningful sentences. Across the school the quality of writing and the understanding of English grammar improves year on year. Many speak confidently

in English. Older students read aloud with a variation of tone and expression, for example when reading poetry in English. In mathematics, many children in the FS make good progress in understanding basic number concepts. School data suggests that by the end of year 11 and year 12, many are on course to achieve well in international examinations. Children in the FS can carry out simple investigations in science and can draw conclusions from them. Older students are making good progress towards international standards. In year 10 students' attainment in chemistry and physics is currently significantly higher at the end of the second term compared to their start points.

Standards and progress in other subjects are strong. Despite a current shortage of facilities and resources in some subjects, such as in physical education (PE) and music, overall progress in the year groups, particularly amongst the younger students, is a strength of the school. Amongst the older students, progress in business studies is strong.

### **Students' personal development**

Students enjoy coming to school and nearly all are enthusiastic learners. They behave well and are eager to take part in their lessons. They readily discuss their opinions and share their ideas, for example in assessing their own work and that of others in English. The youngest children adjust to school quickly. Nearly all attend eagerly and develop positive attitudes. Many children show independence, and can make choices for themselves. Across the school students have positive relationships with their teachers and other adults. Students are well prepared for the next phase of their education. Many show mature attitudes and willingness to co-operate together. They are confident learners and are developing sound, academic and social skills.

The student council is beginning to have a role in school decision making. Currently, it lacks formal procedures for example, to meet regularly, to record its decisions and to have discussions with senior leaders. Consequently, the council has little impact on shaping the future of the school. There are a few opportunities for students to assume responsibilities, for example in organising events and assemblies. Across the school, there are insufficient opportunities for students to develop a deep understanding of UAE culture and heritage. There are a limited number of celebrations, often related to the National Day.

### **The quality of teaching and learning**

The teaching in FS encourages children to be inquisitive, to learn through first hand experiences, and to be independent learners. For example, teachers plan for children to explore and develop concepts of volume and capacity through play

and by finding things out for themselves using a wide range of resources. Classroom assistants support teaching and learning effectively.

Many teachers have secure subject knowledge and pass on their enthusiasm for their subject. As a result, students are eager to participate and engage in constructive discussions with each other, for example when planning how to write a story. Where teaching is most effective, teachers set clear time targets and have high expectations of what students should achieve. They share these regularly with their students and encourage them to evaluate how much they have learnt and what they need to do to improve. Relationships between students and teachers are very conducive to learning. Often there is a clear sense of students and teachers working in partnership.

Where teaching is less effective teachers do not provide sufficient extra challenge for the most able. Much of the teaching of Arabic, Islamic education and social studies, particularly for the older students is over-reliant on reading from a prescribed textbook. It does not engage and enthuse students to work hard and to succeed. Students with learning difficulties are not always supported sufficiently.

### **Meeting students' needs through the curriculum**

The English Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum for KG, provides children with a wide range of opportunities to learn from first-hand experiences. Children are encouraged to make choices for themselves and to become independent learners. As a result they find learning fun and enjoy coming to school. Across the school the curriculum implementation of the ENC is broad and balanced. The curriculum delivery is enriched by a growing number of extra-curricular activities.

The curriculum implementation promotes some understanding of Islamic culture and values, and the heritage and traditions of the UAE. These are not given sufficient emphasis in the daily life of the school. The curriculum implementation for older students in these areas is not effectively planned to engage students or to stimulate their interest. The school has identified the need to develop teachers' expertise in this area, and has provided training. At the time of the inspection limited impact was observed.

There are good opportunities for students to think critically and to evaluate their own success and that of others. Students are developing the skills necessary for their future lives. The curriculum is well designed, planned and implemented and enables students to reach high standards.

### **The protection, care, guidance and support of students**

There are effective procedures in place to monitor attendance and to take appropriate action to ensure that attendance levels are above average at 96%. The school promptly and effectively follows up unexplained absences with parents. The school has a caring ethos where there are high standards of behaviour and positive attitudes to school. The clinic facilities available to support students when they need medical help are all of a high quality. The school has identified the role of the school nurse as an area for further development. There are robust and very well-organised procedures to ensure students' safety and wellbeing. All staff are aware of their responsibilities.

The school is strengthening its expertise in advising older students of future career paths. It is helping students to increase their expectations of future career steps, including attendance at Western universities. The school does not have sufficient procedures to identify and support the most able younger students to ensure they reach their academic potential, or to support those students with learning difficulties. Whilst the school has appropriate prayer facilities, students say they have limited time to use these.

### **The quality of the school's buildings and premises**

The well-designed buildings provide an attractive environment for learning. Although the building was officially completed in October 2013, the builders remained on site into March 2014 to ensure that all the necessary works were properly carried out. This has prevented the school from developing some of their daily systems and routines. The buildings reflect the commitment of the proprietor to provide high quality facilities for all students. Provision for FS children is exemplary. Across the school the buildings generally provide good facilities for specialist teaching, for example in science. The site is very well maintained and is safe and secure.

There are insufficient shaded areas in the central courtyard and a lack of similar protection at the entry points to the main buildings. The school has yet to organise effective use of available space to provide specialist support for SEN and for the most able students.

### **The school's resources to support its aims**

In general, the resources are adequate. They support learning well in the FS where children benefit from a wide range of appropriate play equipment, resources and materials, to enable learning through play and first hand experiences. Resources in science are appropriate though access to some basic equipment, like the Bunsen burner, is limited as the school awaits approval from Civil Defence for a



gas supply connection. Resources to support learning in music are inadequate. In PE resources and facilities are available and are of good quality and quantity. The school has 2 swimming pools which are not used because of a lack of qualified staff. The school has made significant progress in strengthening the expertise of classroom assistants in FS and Key Stage 1, particularly in subjects taught in English. The school has carried out detailed risk assessments. The canteen facilities are of a high quality and provide very hygienic conditions for serving food.

Nearly all staff are appropriately qualified. At the time of the inspection the school was in the process of stocking and refurbishing a senior school library with appropriate materials and books. The school has also identified the need to provide more resources for students with additional learning needs and the most able. There is a lack of artefacts and materials to promote students' understanding of UAE culture and heritage. For example in assemblies, there is no accompaniment to the national anthem either through live or recorded music. The purpose-built auditorium has only recently been handed over to the school for use, and it has been utilised for few celebratory events prior to the inspection.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

The principal and deputy principal have successfully established routines and systems so that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. In a short time the principal has established a clear focus on achieving high academic standards and excellence in all aspects of school life. The senior leadership team is well qualified and experienced. They are working closely with the principal to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is high. Leaders have a detailed understanding of where they need to focus professional development for individual staff and where there are particular strengths. There are rigorous systems to assess students' progress across year groups. The school leadership team (SLT) has high expectations to raise standards for the oldest students, which will enable them to have access to higher education across the world.

In the parents' questionnaires, nearly all parents had positive views of the school. They like the way in which the staff are working with the youngest children. They have confidence in the principal and her staff. They say that the school is providing well for their children.

Currently the role of the governing body is under developed. The school leadership has a strong and constructive relationship with the proprietor's representative who is well informed about the school's needs and priorities. He is a regular visitor to the school and works closely with the principal. Other

governors are less involved and do not hold leaders sufficiently to account. The school council has yet to contribute to school decision making.

The SLT has undertaken a detailed, realistic and mostly accurate self-evaluation (SEF). The SEF is a strong foundation to support accurate priorities on the school development plan (SDP) which is now under way and gaining momentum.

### **Capacity for further development**

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The principal and all of the senior leadership team have a thorough understanding of the longer term needs of the school. The SLT are particularly well qualified and already having an impact on improving standards and teaching. The established and rigorous systems in place to review standards in relation to best international benchmarks is a strength. This data is used robustly to review the effectiveness of teaching and the quality of provision. The school has admirable vision and drive and is well placed to improve further and to build on the smooth start it has made.

## What the school should do to improve further:

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1. Establish a governing body which:
  - i. meets regularly and is well informed about the school's performance
  - ii. acts fully as a critical and supportive friend of the professional leadership
  - iii. plays its part in establishing the long-term strategic needs and priorities for the future.
2. Raise standards and progress and the overall quality of teaching in Arabic, Islamic education and social studies for older students so that they are more in line with other subjects by:
  - i. reviewing the teaching methods used
  - ii. setting higher expectations of what students should achieve, regularly checking students progress to these
  - iii. ensuring that the curriculum implementation in these areas is rich, stimulating and well resourced.
3. Continue to identify address and shortcomings in resources and ensure full use of the available facilities.
4. Give greater emphasis to UAE culture and heritage in the taught curriculum and in the daily life of the school by:
  - i. giving greater prominence to the UAE and its achievements in students' work and around the school
  - ii. provide high quality assemblies which celebrate and reflect the school's UAE identity and its cultural and religious heritage.
5. Provide greater challenge and support for the most able so that they achieve the overall high standards of which they are capable of by:
  - i. establishing systems to accurately identify them and track their progress
  - ii. set up arrangements to ensure suitable extension activities
  - iii. ensure that the day-to-day curriculum is modified to meet their needs.

## 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								