



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



Summary Inspection Report

Belvedere British School

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Iqraa

Belvedere British School

Inspection Date	17 th – 20 th March, 2013
School ID#	222
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	British
Number of Students	449
Age Range	FS1- Year 6
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Kellie Jepsen
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Introduction

The school was inspected by a team of 4 inspectors who: observed 57 lessons and other student activities, scrutinised students' written work, analysed student and school performance data, parent questionnaires, studied school documents, and talked with staff, students and parents.

Description of the School

The school opened in 2012 and offers a United Kingdom (UK) curriculum. The school opened with few resources, many inexperienced teachers and an inexperienced leadership team. The principal joined the school in November 2012. There are 449 students on roll, 269 boys and 180 girls. In Kindergarten (KG) there are 138 students and 311 students in Grades 1-6

55% of students are UAE nationals, 8% are from Jordan, 6% from Egypt and smaller numbers from Pakistan, Britain, USA and other countries. Almost all students speak English as an additional language, and none have been identified as having special educational needs.

The fees range from 23000 to 25950 per year which are in the high category. Salaries range from 1,500 to 19,027 per month which are in the very affordable band.

Many students, but not all, had entry tests before joining the school. These tests were not validated against international standards. Attendance for this academic year is 98%.

The Effectiveness of the School

Band C

Grade 7

Inspectors judged Belvedere British School to be in Band C, that is a school in need of significant improvement.

Standards throughout the school are well below best international expectations in all subjects. Students from all backgrounds are making very unsatisfactory progress because they do not have the required level of English to effectively access the UK curriculum. Most students show limited competence in independent thought, using skills to analyse data, or to think creatively as they have few opportunities to develop these 21st century skills.

In Arabic, standards are well below Ministry of Education expectations. In KG2 many students are able to recognise letters in familiar words, such as those they use in class, but are unable to use letters in different contexts. In Grades 1-6 many students have weak reading, writing and speaking skills. Non – Arab students

have poor Arabic language skills because insufficient time is allocated to the subject. In Islamic and social studies the main focus is on gaining knowledge and students rarely apply what they learn to real life; this limits the progress they can make.

Standards in KG are below expectations and students make unsatisfactory progress. The school has introduced the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum but language development is slow because teachers lack sufficient knowledge of how to teach students whose first language is not English.

In English students' speaking skills are stronger overall than their writing and reading skills. Writing standards are very unsatisfactory because too little support is given to students when they write. They do not use dictionaries or know how to organise their writing. Oral skills are stronger in higher grades, but in the lower grades many students lack confidence in speaking English. In mathematics students' progress is restricted because of their poor English skills; they find it hard to read written problems and often do not understand what they have to do. Progress is also very unsatisfactory because students do not learn to use their knowledge but simply complete worksheets; work in lessons is also often too easy. Throughout the school, students have few opportunities to develop mental mathematical strategies, problem solving skills or complete tasks that enable them to apply their skills. This limits their progress significantly. Similarly, in science, students do not acquire practical or investigative skills and progress is limited because work does not match the needs of different groups. Progress in ICT is similarly weakened because students have too few opportunities to practise and use their skills to real purpose. Standards in physical education are poor and progress is unsatisfactory because lessons do not include the chance for them to develop important physical skills or knowledge.

The school keeps a record of attendance; it is 98% for the current year, which is good. Many students are keen to learn and respond well when they are given learning tasks that are challenging, especially in KG1 and KG2. Too often in Grades 1-6 the work is not challenging. This leads to boredom and very unsatisfactory behaviour, especially by Emirati boys. This prevents other students from making progress. Teachers do not apply behaviour management strategies consistently. Students show respect to teachers and are welcoming to visitors. Students reported that instances of bullying are not always effectively handled by the school. Most students like their teachers, but some say a small number of teachers use corporal punishment. Many older students do not have positive attitudes towards the school, often because of what they perceive as overly harsh discipline. Students have limited opportunities to take responsibility and as a result do not develop leadership skills. Respect for the National Anthem and UAE

flag is not promoted effectively in assemblies. Respect for the culture of the UAE is not promoted by teachers, who received no induction programme on arrival in Abu Dhabi. Teachers are not aware of the offence they may give to parents by the way they are dressed when in school.

Teachers work hard and are enthusiastic, but are often ineffective. In the lower school most have secure knowledge of their subjects so teaching is accurate. In Grades 4 to 6 specialist teaching has been introduced but it is ineffective because teachers' subject knowledge is inadequate. Teachers do not always share learning objectives with students. On the occasions when they do, these do not specify what the students are expected to learn, but simply state what they are going to do. Teachers have received little appropriate professional development in order to modify lessons to match the needs and interests of students. As a result, most are not sufficiently engaged, supported or challenged with the appropriate level of work. There is little or no effective assessment in Grades 1-6 to plan lessons that are matched to the needs of students. This includes students with special educational needs and higher attaining students. Very often teachers give too much guidance; this means students do not think for themselves or develop any deeper understanding. Most questions asked by teachers require a very basic factual answer. Teachers often allow the class to shout out answers so that they cannot effectively evaluate which students have learned anything. In KG 1 and 2, and in Years 1 and 2, teachers collaborate effectively in planning their work. There are too few experienced teachers to act as good role models in supporting those teachers at the start of their teaching careers. Not all teachers in their first year of teaching have been allocated a mentor.

The school's curriculum is not broad enough or balanced and places insufficient emphasis on the understanding of the UAE culture and history. The school offers no provision for gifted and talented students and does not recognise them as a group. There are no formalised criteria to identify students with specific learning needs and their requirements are not met because tasks are not planned to enable them to learn effectively. Arabic lessons and support for EAL are frequently cancelled as teachers are required to cover for staff absences. This is a significant contributory factor to the school's low academic standards. Students have very few opportunities to enhance their learning and apply their skills through enrichment activities. In KG classes, there are insufficient opportunities for students to make choices, which limits independence and the development of good social skills. The school has recently introduced extra-curricular sporting activities for some grades and has taken part in inter-school sporting events which are appreciated by students.

The school keeps a central record for all staff and makes the required checks when they are recruited. Not all staff have received approval from ADEC. The school clinic has two nurses but only one at present is licensed. The clinic is well equipped, maintained and medicines are stored safely. The school has a written child protection policy but does not provide training; staff are therefore not aware of the policy and related procedures. Some students, teachers, supervisors and parents reported that teachers occasionally hit students. The school is aware of this and two teachers have received written warnings. The majority of school buses do not have seat belts and incidents of bad behaviour on the buses have been recorded. The school does not take its responsibilities for safeguarding the welfare of students seriously enough and has allowed a school environment to develop in which many older students do not feel sufficiently safe and secure. Students have suitable access to prayer rooms.

The newly built school is clean and light. It provides satisfactory accommodation for the delivery of the curriculum for the present age range. There are good size play areas with shading and the outdoor provision for KG1 and 2 students is good. Classrooms are of a satisfactory size and students' work is attractively displayed. The security of the buildings is good. Specialist facilities for science teaching are inadequate. The provision for ICT is satisfactory. All classrooms have interactive whiteboards that allow teachers to use ICT to support their teaching. Facilities for physical education are satisfactory.

The quality and range of resources is very unsatisfactory and does not support learning in most of the school. The best-resourced area is KG1 and KG2 which is, in part, because teachers have supplemented resources from their own personal incomes. The school opened with insufficient resources. This has improved but there is no coherent strategy for the purchasing of resources. There are long delays between teachers requesting resources and their arrival. This means that students' learning through practical activities is limited and they are not learning to think for themselves. There are too few books in the library to foster their enjoyment of reading or to help them develop skills in researching information. There are insufficient numbers of mechanical resources for cleaning a building of this size.

There are serious weaknesses in leadership and management. The decision to open the school before the principal was appointed created many problems, as has the decision to appoint too many inexperienced teachers. The willingness of the staff to work towards the school's success under such adverse conditions when the school opened is a credit to their commitment. The principal, in post for only 12 weeks when the inspection took place, has had to concentrate her efforts on managing the many difficulties she inherited. The school lacks effective

leadership because there is no clear strategic direction or plan which identifies the key areas for improvement. Subject coordinators are enthusiastic but inexperienced. The finance officer is the brother of an owner; this represents a conflict of interest and he cannot produce any documentation approved by ADEC to support his standing in the school. The school does not run smoothly on a day-to-day basis as staff do not apply policies or procedures with any consistency. The monitoring of the school's performance is weak, and there is no effective system of professional development for staff. The school does not have the capacity to improve without external support and does not provide satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Strengthen the leadership of the school by:
 - i. appointing more experienced teachers to middle management posts; and
 - ii. ensuring there is a clear plan for raising standards in all areas based on an accurate evaluation of the school's performance.
2. Improve the behaviour of older students, mainly boys, by ensuring a consistent approach by all teachers to the management of behaviour in lessons.
3. Provide professional development for all teachers to:
 - i. ensure there are more opportunities for teachers to have a better awareness of local culture and traditions; and
 - ii. develop their effectiveness in teaching students whose first language is not English.
4. Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - i. increasing the level of resources to provide students with far more opportunities to develop their skills in solving problems and research; and
 - ii. ensuring that all students are fully challenged in lessons by making greater use of assessment.