



دائرة التعليم والمعرفة  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
AND KNOWLEDGE

# Inspection Report of Al Dhafra Private School

**Overall Effectiveness: Good**

**Academic Year 2017 – 2018**



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## School Information

General Information	Inspection date:	from	3 Jumada Al-Akhirah, 1439h	to	6 Jumada Al-Akhirah, 1439h
		from	19-Feb-18	to	22-Feb-18
	School name	Al Dhafra Private School			
	School ID	139			
	School address	PO Box 17814, Falaj Hazzar District, 147 Street, Al Ain			
	School telephone	+971 (0)3 701 3999			
	School official email	aldhafraaa.pvt@adec.ac.ae			
	School website	<a href="http://alain.dhafraschools.com/">http://alain.dhafraschools.com/</a>			
	School curriculum	British (English National Curriculum)/American			
	School phases	KG to High			
	Fee range and category	Low to Medium range: AED 11,700 – AED 22,800			
	Number of lessons observed	150			
Number of joint lessons observed	16				
Staff Information	Total number of teachers	169			
	Turnover rate	19%			
	Number of teaching assistants	34			
	Teacher- student ratio	KG 1:18 Other phases 1:15			
Student Information	Total number of students	2,675			
	% of Emirati Students	56 %			
	% of Largest nationality groups	1. Jordan 12%			
		2. Egypt 8%			
		3. Syria 6 %			
	% of SEN students	2%			
	% of students per phase	KG: 13%	Middle: 29%		
Primary: 44%		High: 14%			
Gender	Boys and girls				



## The Performance of the School

<p><b>Performance Standard 1</b></p> <p>Students' Achievement</p> <p>Good</p>	<p><b>Performance Standard 2</b></p> <p>Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills</p> <p>Very Good</p>
<p><b>Performance Standard 3</b></p> <p>Teaching and Assessment</p> <p>Good</p>	<p><b>Performance Standard 4</b></p> <p>Curriculum</p> <p>Good</p>
<p><b>Performance Standard 5</b></p> <p>The protection, care, guidance and support of students</p> <p>Good</p>	<p><b>Performance Standard 6</b></p> <p>Leadership and management</p> <p>Good</p>



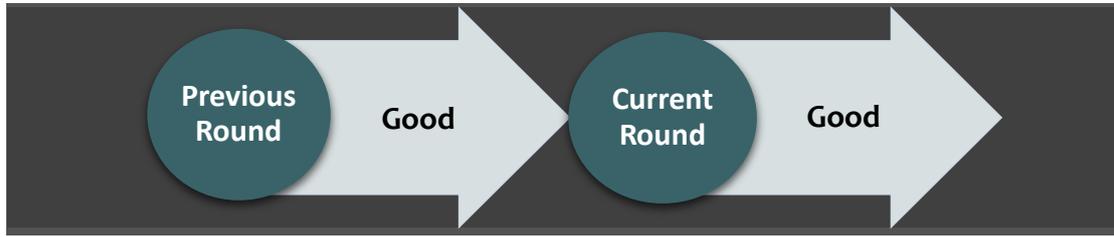
## Evaluation of the school's overall performance

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- The overall performance of the school is good. The school is a dual curriculum school. The British curriculum is available for students from KG to Grade 12 and the American Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) is available for students from Grades 9 to 12. The school is stable and has retained a 'good' judgment since the last inspection.
- The overall quality of students' achievement is good. Students' achievement in Arabic is acceptable overall. In all other subjects, students' attainment is at least good and they make at least good progress. In the High phase, student's achievement in English, mathematics and science is very good.
- Students' personal development is very good. Students behave well and demonstrate very good attitudes to learning. Their relationships with one another and with teachers are very respectful. Students develop a very good understanding of UAE culture, heritage and Islamic values.
- Teaching and assessment are good overall. Teachers deliver stimulating lessons that motivate students to learn. Internal assessment processes are effective. However, teachers do not use assessment information to consistently provide activities that fully meet the needs of all students.
- The curriculum is good. It is planned effectively to support continuity and progression in students' learning. Occasionally, it is not adapted well enough to meet the needs of all students.
- Protection, care, guidance and support are good for all students, including those who have special educational needs (SEN). Promotion of safe and healthy lifestyles is good.
- Leadership is good. The day-to-day management of the school is effective. Partnerships with parents and the community are very strong. School leaders and staff have worked together well to implement the recommendations of the last inspection report.



## Progress made since last inspection and capacity to improve



- The school continues to provide good quality education and has acted on most of the recommendations from the last inspection.
- In KG, children's achievements in Arabic as a first and second language have improved from acceptable to good. However, overall achievement in Arabic remains acceptable across the school. Achievement is now good overall in Islamic education and social studies. Overall, students' achievement in science is now very good.
- The quality of teaching and assessment has improved. Effective training has strengthened teachers' skills, resulting in much improved achievement, particularly in Islamic education, social studies and science.
- Students' personal and social development is now very good. Their attendance and punctuality have improved in response to successful initiatives by leadership and staff.
- The school now has effective systems in place to support students with special educational needs (SEN). Arrangements for meeting the abilities and interests of the students who are gifted and talented (G&T) are not yet fully embedded. Transition procedures are now very effective. Older students receive very good guidance on next steps in their education and career pathways.
- School leaders, including governors, have raised their expectations. They monitor the school's work closely and follow up areas for improvement rigorously. They have sustained good performance and improved key aspects of the school. Overall, school leaders' capacity to improve the school is good.



## Key areas of strength and area for improvement

### Key areas of strength

- The impact of school leaders on improving students' achievement in Islamic education, social studies and science.
- Students' positive attitudes to learning, relationships between staff and students, and attendance in school.
- Students' appreciation of the heritage, culture and future vision of the UAE and their understanding of Islamic values.
- Personal development and academic guidance for older students.
- Strong partnerships with parents and the community.
- Effective management of the day-to-day life of the school.

### Key areas for improvement

1. Improve achievement in Arabic as a first language in primary and middle phases, and as a second language across the school by:
  - i. modelling and consistently encouraging students to use standard Arabic to communicate their ideas
  - ii. offering more effective and regular learning experiences to help students develop their creative writing skills
  - iii. consistently checking the progress students make and offering them support so that they learn well.
2. Enhance teaching and learning by:
  - i. using assessment information effectively to plan for next steps in learning
  - ii. offering high-quality feedback to help students further improve the quality of their work
  - iii. including additional levels of challenge within medium-term and long-term planning
  - iv. delivering appropriately challenging tasks for all students within lessons, particularly for the more-able students and those who are gifted and talented (G&T)
  - v. enabling teachers in different subjects to share and observe best practice.
3. Further improve the impact of the middle leaders by:
  - i. providing high quality professional development for middle leaders so that they are further equipped to monitor and improve their subjects.



## Provision for Reading

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- There are two libraries in the school. They are well stocked with books in Arabic and English to provide a supportive environment for reading. Books are appropriate to students' ages and stages of development.
- Teachers allocate special reading sessions in the library to encourage students to develop interest in, and enthusiasm for, reading and research skills.
- The school provides a wide range of opportunities for students to read for information and pleasure. In KG, children enjoy reading books and acting out their favourite stories. Older students explore a wide range of books and use computers in the libraries for research.
- The school's annual action plan prioritises the importance of reading. New teachers receive professional development to strengthen their skills in the teaching of reading. Overall, teachers have good knowledge of how to teach reading and to assess students' reading regularly.
- Teachers encourage students to read in all subjects and how to read for meaning. Students take part successfully in the 'Read with Me' project and reading competitions.



## Performance Standard 1: Students' Achievement

Students' achievement Indicators		KG	Primary	Middle	High
Islamic Education	Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good
Arabic (as a First Language)	Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
	Progress	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Arabic (as additional Language)	Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Social Studies	Attainment	Good	Good	Good	N/A
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	N/A
English	Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Very Good
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	Very Good
Mathematics	Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Very Good
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	Very Good
Science	Attainment	Very Good	Very Good	Good	Very Good
	Progress	Very Good	Very Good	Good	Very Good
Other subjects (Art, Music, PE)	Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good
Learning Skills		Good	Good	Good	Good



### Overall achievement

- The overall quality of students' achievement is good. The school's assessment data shows that, by the end of KG2, the large majority of children attain well above age-expectations. The inspection has found that children continue to achieve well overall in relation to their individual starting points. Across the school, teachers' assessments indicate that the large majority of students attain well above the curriculum levels and their progress is outstanding, but this is not borne out in lessons during the inspection.
- Recent Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), IGCSE and A-level results show that the large majority of students are attaining well above age-related levels and international standards in English, mathematics and science. Students in the High phase make very good progress overall. Recent PISA mock examinations show that students attain well above the standards in the British section and in line in the American section in English, mathematics and science. In 2016-2017 MOE examinations for Grades 12, students' performance was outstanding in Islamic education and Arabic as a first and second language, indicating the majority of students attain well above the curriculum levels.
- Students make good progress overall in lessons. Students with special educational needs (SEN) and those who are gifted and talented (G&T) make progress similar to that of their peers, as do boys and girls.

### Subjects

- Students' achievement in **Islamic education** is good overall. The majority of students show clear understanding of Islamic values and etiquette. Across all the grades, Quran recitation and Tajweed rules are good. Senior students articulate their understanding of Islamic values findings confidently at a level above curriculum expectations.
- Students' achievement in **Arabic as a first language** is acceptable overall and is good in KG and High. In KG, children develop good speaking skills and can read simple words. Most students in Primary and Middle develop adequate literacy skills. However, their writing skills are less well developed. Students' achievement improves in High where they confidently use correct grammar in their writing and comprehend poetry well.
- Students' achievement in **Arabic as a second language** is acceptable overall and is good in KG. Across the school, most students demonstrate appropriate understanding of basic grammar rules. However, students' speaking skills are less well-developed. This is due to teachers' greater use of English rather than Arabic to support learning in lessons. Their writing skills are not fully developed.
- Students' achievement in **social studies** is good. The majority of students attain levels that are above curriculum standards. For example, in KG, children develop good knowledge of the different animals that live in the UAE desert and talk confidently about how they survive. Older students share their knowledge about the impact of population growth on the UAE environment, exploring pollution and pressure on health and transport services.
- Students' achievement in **English** is good overall and is very good in High. KG2 children develop good speaking skills and respond well to instructions. Across the school, the



majority of students perform above age-related curriculum levels. The majority of students develop good speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. In High, students are very articulate and confidently lead on debates.

- Students' achievement in **mathematics** is good overall and very good in High. The majority of students attain above curriculum levels. In KG, children can count, recognise numerals and differentiate between heavy and light objects. In High, students develop very good critical thinking and problem-solving skills. They are well prepared for international examinations where they attained well above the expectations of IGCSE and A-level.
- Students' achievement in **science** is very good. The large majority of students attain well above curriculum standards and international norms. In KG, children develop very good knowledge, investigate resources and learn how things work. Older students acquire very good research and practical investigative skills. As a result, students are very well prepared for examinations.
- Students' achievement in **other subjects** is good overall. In KG, children enjoy **art** activities and develop creativity well in their play. Students make good progress in **information and communication technology**(ICT) and **computer science**; and appreciate **music** from different countries. Students participate well in **physical education** and enjoy sports competitions.

#### Learning skills

- Students' learning skills are good overall. Students interact well with one another and relate their learning very well to the real world. They use technologies effectively to support their learning. Students are innovative and develop good independent learning, critical thinking and problem-solving skills overall.

#### Areas of Relative Strength:

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- Students' performance in IGCSE and A-level examinations.
- Students' improved achievement in Islamic education, social studies and science.
- Students' learning skills.

#### Areas for Improvement:

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- Students' achievement in Arabic as a first and second language.



## 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	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good	Good	Very Good

- The quality of students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills is very good. Students behave well, display very positive attitudes towards learning and relate very well to one another and staff. They participate in sporting events and know how to keep themselves safe. Very good attendance, at 97%, and punctuality reflect students' enjoyment of learning.
- Students develop a very good understanding of UAE history, culture and Islamic values. They take turns in leading daily assemblies, recitation of the Quran and supplication. They organise celebrations such as National Day and Flag Day. Students are tolerant and respectful of peers' ethnicity and culture.
- Students' contribution to the life of the school and the wider community is good overall and very good in High. Older students lead fundraising activities to donate to the Red Crescent and abroad. They also volunteer to help at the local SEN centre and support KG classes. However, such initiatives are not as strong in other phases.
- The environmental group members enjoy leading activities including recycling and planting a sustainable garden. The students' council enthusiastically supports school life and represents peers' views in meetings with the school leaders. Young children assume roles as register and tidy-up monitors keenly.
- Students' creativity and innovation skills are good overall and very good in High. They develop these in lessons as well as through extra-curricular activities. In High, students create very innovative work. In the rest of the school, students are generally innovative in their work and like to share and display what they have made.

### Areas of Relative Strength:



- Very positive attitudes to learning and positive relationships.
- Students' understanding of UAE culture, heritage and Islamic values.

**Areas for Improvement:**

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- Further development of students' skills in innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurship in the lower grades.
- Additional opportunities for students in the lower grades to engage in activities that contribute to the school and wider communities.



### Performance Standard 3: Teaching and Assessment

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

- Teaching and assessment are good overall. Most teachers have good subject knowledge which they use well to plan engaging activities that motivate students. They question students well to test their understanding and challenge their thinking.
- Lessons are purposeful and the learning environments are welcoming. Students use ICT to support their learning effectively. Teachers help students to develop good investigative, problem-solving and critical thinking skills.
- Continuous assessment procedures are robust. The school compares students' performance effectively against the curriculum levels and also alongside national and international standards.
- Leaders and staff meet regularly to analyse assessment data for individuals and groups of students. They identify students who are falling behind and take effective action to narrow gaps. Lower-attaining students and those who require help receive additional adult support in classes. However, a small minority of teachers do not use assessment information to plan well for the students' next steps, particularly for the more-able students and in Arabic.
- Teachers mark students' work regularly, but they do not always encourage students to address their comments to improve their work.

#### Areas of Relative Strength:

- Teachers' good subject knowledge and effective questioning to gauge understanding.
- Benchmarking of students' achievement and effective tracking of progress.

#### Areas for Improvement:

- Consistent use of assessment data to match tasks more precisely to different abilities and needs, particularly in Arabic.
- Consistently high-quality marking and feedback, particularly in Arabic.



## Performance Standard 4: Curriculum

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

- The English National Curriculum underpins the curriculum in the British curriculum section and The American Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) is made available to students from Grades 9 to 12. Both curricula are broad and relevant and help students to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in the subjects taught.
- The curriculum makes effective provision for continuity and progression in the students' learning, and prepares them well for the next stages of their education. Older students are offered a broad range of curriculum choices to meet their aspirations and aims.
- Links with Emirati culture and other subjects are very good. This allows students to transfer knowledge and skills between different subjects and develop very good understanding of UAE values.
- There are good opportunities for students to develop enterprise and innovation through lessons, extra-curricular activities and special events.
- Curriculum review and development are effective and take place regularly. Teachers modify the curriculum to meet the majority of students' learning needs. However, not all teachers consistently take sufficient account of the needs of the more-able and the G&T students. Differentiation is not sufficiently strong in Arabic.
- The Moral Education programme is taught in English and in Arabic as a discrete subject. It is also integrated well in other aspects of the curriculum. This results in students developing good understanding of moral values which is demonstrated in their sense of responsibility, tolerance, and work ethic.

### Areas of Relative Strength:

- Range of subject options available for older students.
- Links in lessons to broaden students' understanding of life in the UAE.

### Areas for Improvement:

- Modification of the curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of the G&T students, and of all students in Arabic.



## Performance Standard 5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The protection, care, guidance and support of students Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection/safeguarding	Good	Good	Good	Good
Care and support	Good	Good	Good	Good

- The protection, care, guidance and support for students is good. The school has effective procedures to protect students. All staff, students and parents are aware of child protection procedures. Students feel very safe and very well supported by their teachers; this builds their confidence and supports their learning effectively.
- Safety checks are frequent and thorough. As a result, buildings and equipment are well maintained. The school promotes safe and healthy living. Students and their parents benefit well from advice about personal hygiene, weight monitoring and breast cancer awareness.
- Systems for managing behaviour are effective and students relate very positively to one another and to adults. The school is successful in promoting very good attendance and improving punctuality.
- There are well established systems in place to identify and support students with SEN and those who are gifted and talented (G&T). Staff devise individual educational plans and provide good support for students with SEN. The school provides well for G&T students through extra-curricular activities and in subjects such as mathematics and science. However, such provision is not consistent in other subjects.
- The school provides for effective personal development. Older students enjoy work experience and receive very good guidance and support regarding their options and with applications for university.

### Areas of Relative Strength:

- Procedures to keep students safe and healthy.
- Effective procedures to improve students' attendance and punctuality.

### Areas for Improvement:

- Challenge for the students who are gifted and talented in lessons.



## Performance Standard 6: Leadership and management

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

- The principal and other senior leaders and staff provide an inclusive learning environment. They set a clear direction that is in line with the values and priorities of the UAE. Staff morale is high and professional relationships are positive. Leaders have yet to improve students' achievement in Arabic. Overall, the school's capacity for further improvement is strong.
- The school's self-evaluation is realistic. It highlights the school's strengths and informs developments. The school development plan (SDP) focuses accurately on what the school needs to do to improve further. However, its implementation is not embedded at all levels. Leaders observe staff regularly, give them specific feedback to help them strengthen their skills and hold them accountable for students' achievement. They have yet to focus sufficiently on the quality of all students' learning experiences in lessons, particularly in the Arabic language.
- Partnerships with parents are very strong. The school considers parents' views when shaping school improvement priorities. Parents take part in many activities that support the school's work. They report their children learn well and staff keep them well informed about their children's progress. The school has established very strong links with the local and other schools in the Emirate and beyond to share best practice.
- Governance is good. The Governing Body includes representatives from the school community, including parents. Governors are instrumental in shaping the school's ethos and vision. They meet regularly with senior leaders and hold them accountable for students' outcomes. They know the school's strengths and what needs to improve further.
- The day-to-day management of the school is efficient. Premises and resources are used effectively to support students' learning. This has yet to result in higher achievement for all students.



- To enhance its performance in international assessments, the school analyses students' results for examinations such as PISA and IGCSE and uses this data to inform teaching and learning. There are firm plans to promote students' performance in the coming TIMSS.

#### **Areas of Relative Strength:**

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- Improving students' achievement in social studies, Islamic education and science.
- Communication with parents.
- Effective management of daily routines in the school.

#### **Areas for Improvement:**

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- Greater clarity of leaders' roles in improving teaching and learning.
- Development of the middle leaders to monitor the quality in the teaching of their subjects.