

INSPECTION REPORT

North American International School

Report published in April 2013

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT North American International School

Location	Al Mizhar
Type of school	Private
Website	www.naischool.ae
Telephone	04-2884844
Address	PO Box 20315 Mizhar, Dubai, UAE
Principal	Mrs. Sonia Mahajan
Curriculum	US
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-18 / Kindergarten 1 to Grade 12
Attendance	Acceptable
Number of students on roll	387
Students' nationalities	Arab
Number of Emirati students	142 (36%)
Date of the inspection	15th October to 17th October 2012

Contents

The context of the school.....	3
Overall school performance 2012-2013.....	3
Key strengths	4
Recommendations	4
Progress since the last inspection	5
Trend of overall performance.....	5
How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?.....	6
How good is the students' personal and social development?	7
How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?	7
How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students?	8
How well does the school protect and support students?	8
How good are the leadership and management of the school?	8
How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?.....	9
How well does the school provide for Emirati students?.....	9
How good is the students' personal and social development?	10
How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?	10
How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students?	11
How well does the school protect and support students?.....	12
How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?.....	12
How good are the leadership and management of the school?	12
What are the views of parents, teachers and students?.....	14
What happens next?.....	15
How to contact us	15

The context of the school

North American International School provided education for 387 students from 30 different nationalities. About one third of students were Emirati. The school offered a US-style curriculum following the Core Curriculum State Standards for English and mathematics. In other subjects the curriculum for North Carolina was used but the school did not use the associated assessments for the state curriculum. A number of students completed IOWA assessments in Grades 6 to 9 but these were not compulsory. Prior to high school graduation, all students took the SAT and TOEFL examinations.

The school was organised into four phases and, for the purpose of this report, these were Kindergarten, elementary (Grades 1 to 5), middle (Grades 6 to 8) and high (Grades 9 to 12).

At the time of the inspection, more than a third of the teachers were new to the school and had been teaching in North American International School for less than two months. Only around half of the teachers had a recognised teaching qualification.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Acceptable

Key strengths

- The quality of teaching in the upper school was good and this had led to better progress for the older students, particularly Grades 11 and 12;
- Staff provided a safe, healthy and positive learning environment for all students;
- The inclusive ethos of the school promoted the effective integration of students with special educational needs, including those with physical disabilities;
- The school advisory board, supported by the Principal of the school had developed more effective arrangements to hold the school to account.

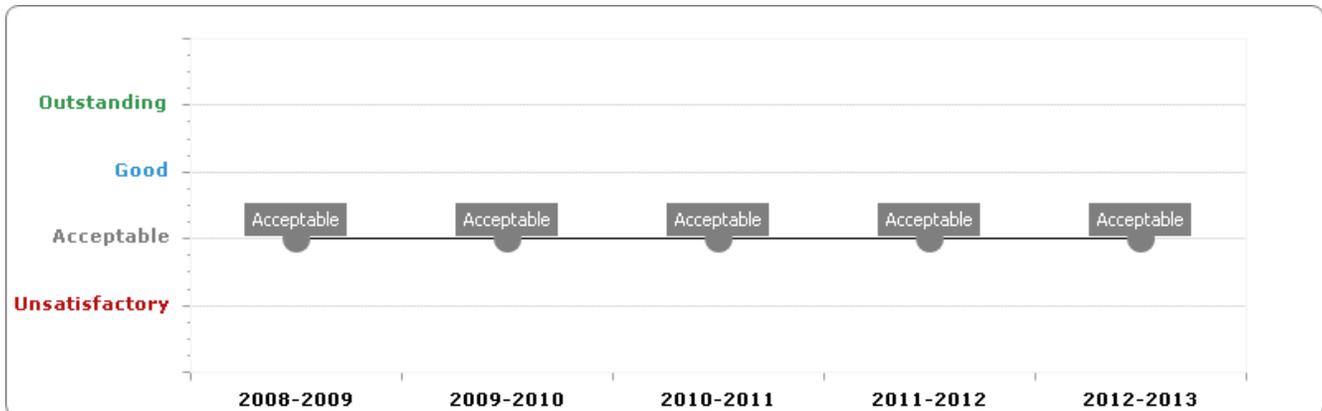
Recommendations

- Ensure that students make good progress in key subjects and that teaching in all phases is well matched to the differing learning needs of students;
- Introduce valid, reliable and standardised assessments for all students from Grades 1 to 12 to verify that the curriculum is followed and that students are making appropriate progress in all key subjects;
- Improve the quality of teaching for effective learning in the Kindergarten classes and ensure that children are provided with sufficiently regular opportunities to be active in their learning;
- Teachers should provide greater challenge in lessons, enabling more able students to achieve beyond the grade lesson objectives and achieve higher standards of work;
- In the elementary and Kindergarten phases of the school, enhance teachers' skills in supporting students with English as an additional language.

Progress since the last inspection

- The school had improved the curriculum for students in the upper school by widening the choice of subjects and adding regular work experience opportunities;
- The increased enrolment of students, including a proportion with English as an additional language had provided a significant challenge for school leaders and teachers;
- Two recommendations from the previous report had been met but two other recommendations remained as important weaknesses in the work of the school.

Trend of overall performance



How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Islamic Education				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Arabic as a first language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as an additional language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
English				
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mathematics				
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Science				
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Good	Good
Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness	Good	Good	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Quality of students' learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Health and Safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of Support	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	Whole school
Quality of leadership	Acceptable
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
Partnerships with parents and the community	Good
Governance	Good
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?

Students' attainment in all key subjects was acceptable. Overall, attainment was not better because teachers too often restricted the content of lessons to grade level work, even though many students were capable of more. Higher achieving students were not given sufficient challenge in their learning. In English, a significant minority of students had English as an additional language and experienced difficulty accessing the curriculum in other subjects. In mathematics, students in high school phase demonstrated particular strengths in number and algebraic computation. In Islamic Education and Arabic, attainment was better in the upper stages of the school. Across the school, most students found it difficult to use standard Arabic to express their ideas.

Students made acceptable progress in all key subjects. In Islamic Education, at the high school phase, progress was better because teachers integrated the content of lessons well with other areas of learning. Also, tasks were matched well to meet the different needs of students. Progress was too slow in some Kindergarten and early elementary classes where staff lacked skills and expertise teaching students with English as an additional language. In all subjects and across all phases, students with special educational needs made acceptable progress. Although teachers were inclusive and supportive, they did not consistently adapt the tasks well to help address the particular needs of the students.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school provide for Emirati students?

Around thirty per cent of students in the school were Emirati. In the last year there had been an increase in the number of admissions of Emirati students into the school. In English, a significant minority of students lacked key skills in English and this limited their success in accessing the curriculum in other key subjects. In mathematics and science, most Emirati students achieved broadly in line with other students. In the later stages of the school, Emirati girls outperformed boys and demonstrated confident skills as learners. The school noted that the turnover of Emirati students was greater than that of other students. The attendance of Emirati students was acceptable but approximately one fifth of the students were regularly late for school.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

From Kindergarten to High School, most students displayed positive attitudes and showed respect to other students, teachers, and staff. A school council, house team leaders and other responsibilities gave students opportunities to make decisions in the school. Older students attended the advisory board meetings and active student groups supported initiatives on a number of issues. Most students across all phases chose to eat healthy food during breaks and lunchtime and they exercised regularly. Attendance in the last semester was acceptable.

Students demonstrated a good understanding of Islamic values. The displays and school activities about Islam enhanced the awareness of school values. Most students demonstrated behaviour that reflected tolerance, friendship and respect for all people. Students discussed the influence of Islam in Dubai. They identified the local traditions and heritage of the UAE. Almost all students described their own cultures proudly providing basic details and examples. However, their awareness of other cultures including music, art and literature from around the world was limited. Students appreciated living in the multi-cultural society of Dubai.

Students demonstrated good environmental understanding and they were active in conservation efforts around the school. In lessons they shared their views regarding their concern to protect the environment and younger students understood the importance of being kind to animals. Students were also involved in a number of club activities which promoted care for the school and the wider environment.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

The quality of teaching was acceptable in Kindergarten, elementary and middle phases. It was good in the high school. In the early stages of the school, teaching was not consistently well suited to the learning needs of the youngest students. There were too few opportunities for children to learn through play. In kindergarten classes, tasks lacked challenge and purpose. In the elementary stage, teachers planned their lessons carefully and made effective use of resources to help engage students. Too often, though, tasks were not well matched to the different learning needs of students. At the middle stage, Grades 6 to 8, teachers managed their classes well and time was managed effectively. Expectations, however, were not sufficiently high and the content of lessons was not adapted to provide challenge for all. In the high school, the quality of teaching was better because teachers' interactions ensured that students were active participants in lessons. Throughout the school, but particularly at the Kindergarten and elementary stages, teachers did not demonstrate effective skills supporting students for whom English is an additional language.

The quality of students' learning was acceptable though it was good in the high school phase. In Grades 10 to 12, students were mature and independent learners. They took responsibility for their own learning and worked hard to achieve well. They collaborated in a range of learning situations and were aware of their strengths and weaknesses. In the elementary and middle phases, students had positive attitudes to learning. They were often, however, passive in lessons and teachers provided insufficient opportunities for students to use their critical thinking skills.

Assessment was acceptable across all levels in the school. The school employed a variety of approaches at different grade levels and, consequently, teachers had a broad knowledge of their individual students' strengths and areas for development. Across all phases, however, the tests and examinations used by staff were not effective in providing teachers and school leaders with a clear indication of students' progress. The school lacked valid and reliable assessment data for all students in key subjects.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students?

The quality of the curriculum was acceptable in Kindergarten and good in elementary, middle, and high school. Curriculum for Kindergarten to Grade 12 was aligned with Common Core State Standards in English, language arts and mathematics, with Ministry of Education standards in Islamic Education and Arabic, and with North Carolina standards in all other subjects. The curriculum had a clear rationale and generally was broad and balanced. In Kindergarten, the curriculum offered limited opportunities for children to learn through play. At most stages, progression and continuity were supported by detailed curriculum maps and unit plans. Transition arrangements between the elementary, middle, and high school phases of the school ensured that most students were ready for the next stage of learning. The curriculum was reviewed regularly and updated. Although the curriculum provided more opportunities for independent learning and critical thinking, provision was not consistent. The curriculum was broad, but it was not consistently adapted to meet the needs of the more able and the underachieving; the curriculum did not provide good levels of challenge. A variety of extra-curricular activities enriched the curriculum.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Rigorous and robust arrangements helped ensure the health and safety of students. There was high quality medical expertise and facilities. The school had appointed a strong, committed health and safety committee, who ensured that regular system checks and completion of logs took place. There was a high level of staffing throughout the school at all times and all staff members were trained to deal with child protection issues. Support staff, including the bus drivers and bus wardens, received first aid training. The school was clean, well maintained and appropriately safe, though there was a lack of sun protection in certain outside areas. Students were aware of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and the canteen provided a balanced menu each day.

Across the school there were positive and supportive relationships between staff and students. Good arrangements for care and guidance were in place and students benefited from well researched and individualised careers advice.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?

The school had an open enrolment policy and benefited from the admission of students with a range of special educational needs. Staff were caring and supported the students medical needs with due attention. The school had appropriate procedures for identifying students with special educational needs and the schools arrangements were well managed. Support was given to students through withdrawal groups and setting in key subjects. Individual education plans were in place and were helpful in guiding staff regarding the needs of students. In the main classes, however, the information about individual students was not used effectively in modifying the curriculum or in adapting the work provided for students. Students with special educational needs made acceptable progress overall.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

Leadership was acceptable. The school leaders provided a clear direction and vision for the school. The Principal and supervisors delegated responsibilities to subject leaders and teams and this led to effective communication within the school and a strong commitment from all staff to the ethos, values and success of North American International School. However, two recommendations from the last inspection report had not been fully met. The school leaders had not been successful in accurately monitoring students' progress using reliable, valid and internationally benchmarked assessments. Progress of students was, therefore, not overseen with sufficient precision.

جهاز الرقابة المدرسية في دبي
Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau

The school had a wide range of self-evaluation arrangements. Regular surveys to parents, teachers and students helped gather the views of stakeholders about the work of the school. The Principal, advisory board and school managers used the responses to inform the school improvement plan and guide decision-making. The school improvement plan contained clear and pertinent actions with achievable goals. Self-evaluation was acceptable, however, because the school had yet to accurately monitor progress and consequently, development strategies were not entirely fully informed.

Partnerships with parents and the community were good. The school had established productive links with parents through the Parent Forum and through regular communication between school and home. The school website provided key information about school activities but there was insufficient information for parents about the curriculum and, in particular, regarding the expected standards. The school enjoyed relevant links with the wider community and had recently introduced work experience for students in the upper stage through links with local businesses.

Governance was good. The advisory board included representation from parents, teachers, school owners and students. They met regularly and reviewed important aspects of the work of the school, including the development plan and recent examination results. The advisory board benefited from the advice and support of members with educational expertise and this helped guide ongoing school improvement strategies.

Management, including staffing, facilities and resources were good. The school was well organised and well resourced. Interactive whiteboards and laptop computers had been introduced into many classes. The school premises were accessible to all, including those with additional needs. Staffing levels were appropriate though around a half of teaching staff lacked specific teaching qualifications.

[View judgments](#)

What are the views of parents, teachers and students?

Before the inspection, the views of parents, teachers and senior secondary students were surveyed. Key messages from each group were considered during the inspection and these helped to form judgements. A summary of the survey statistics and comments from those who responded to the survey follows:

Responses to the surveys			
Responses received	Number		Percentage
Parents	This year	75	30%
	Last year	53	28%
Teachers	11		25%
Students	6		17%

*The percentage of responses from parents is based on the number of families.

Only a minority of parents completed the on-line survey. Most parents stated that their children made good progress in English, mathematics and science. A significant minority of parents felt that progress in Arabic as a first language was not as good as that in other subjects. Students and parents felt that teaching in the school was good though around a third of students believed that they had too few opportunities to use information and communications technology to support their learning. Parents, teachers and students agreed that the school was successful in ensuring the safety of children. Most students reported that they felt safe and well looked after. Although students enjoyed lessons, almost half stated that they had insufficient opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities. They wanted greater choice and improved access particularly for girls. All teachers and most parents and students believed the school to be well led. Parents felt that they were consulted about decisions but wanted a greater role in participating in decision making, where the decisions affected their children.

What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an updated action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the most recent report. This plan should address:

- Recommendations from DSIB;
- Areas identified by the school as requiring improvement;
- Other external reports or sources of information that comment on the work of the school;
- Priorities arising from the school's unique characteristics.

The next inspection will report on the progress made by the school.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

How to contact us

If you have a concern or wish to comment on any aspect of this report you should contact:

inspection@khda.gov.ae

Copyright © 2013

This report is for internal use only and for the self-evaluation purposes of the school.
It should not be used for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement.