



دائرة التعليم والمعرفة  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
AND KNOWLEDGE

# **Monitoring Visit Report of Aspen Heights British School (New School)**

**Academic Year 2017 – 2018**



## Contents

School Information.....	
Introduction.....	4
Description of school.....	5
The Effectiveness of the school.....	6
Performance Standard 1: Students' Achievement.....	7
Performance Standard 2: Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills.....	8
Performance Standard 3: Teaching and Assessment.....	9
Performance Standard 4: Curriculum.....	10
Performance Standard 5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students...	11
Performance Standard 6: Leadership and management.....	12
Capacity for further development.....	13
What the school should do to improve further.....	14



## School Information

General Information	Monitoring Visit date:	from	16 Shaban 1439	to	17 Shaban 1439
		from	02-May-18	to	03-May-18
	School name	Aspen Heights British School			
	School ID	289			
	School address	Al Bahya, Abu Dhabi			
	School telephone	+971 (0)2 564 2229			
	School official email	aspenheights.pvt@adec.ae			
	School website	www.ahbs.ae			
	School curriculum	British			
School phases	Foundation Stage (FS), Primary				
Staff Information	Total number of teachers	16			
	Number of teaching assistants	7			
	Teacher- student ratio	1 : 7			
Student Information	Total number of students	113			
	% of Emirati Students	60 %			
	% of Largest nationality groups	1. UK 8%			
		2. Egyptian 7%			
		3. Omani 6%			
	% of SEN students	20 %			
	% of students per phase	FS: 53%	Middle: n/a		
Primary: 47%		High: n/a			
Gender	Boys and girls				



## Introduction

---

- Two inspectors conducted the monitoring visit over two days.
- The inspectors made it clear to the school that this was a monitoring visit and not an inspection.
- Inspectors observed 24 lessons in the foundation stage (FS) and primary phases and across subjects. They scrutinised students' work in workbooks and in classroom displays. They observed an assembly, breaktimes and dismissal.
- The lead inspector conducted four joint lesson observations with the principal and one with the head of primary.
- Inspectors conducted meetings with the principal, head of primary, special educational needs (SEN) and gifted and talented (G&T) coordinator, governors and parents.
- The principal shared extensive school documentation with the inspectors, including the School Development Plan (SDP), the Self Evaluation Form (SEF) and internal school data.
- Inspectors viewed the school educational licence and the school fees structure.



## Description of the school

---

- The school is located in the Al Bahya residential district. Students both live nearby and travel across the city by car and school buses to attend the school.
- School mission: “Our mission is to ensure that all children of different nationalities grow and achieve together, as independent learners and responsible global citizens in a supportive nurturing learning community. We are committed to developing and supporting all members of our community; children, families and staff, by working collaboratively with colleagues across the globe through the International Schools Partnership”. School vision: “Our vision is dynamic and responsive to the needs of our local and global community, and our environment, underpinned by our core values: Excellence, Engagement, Environmental awareness and Creativity. Aspen Heights British School aspires to nurture children to become responsible leaders of the future, by facilitating hands-on, active learning, inspiring children to engage with one another and reflect on global environmental issues and facilitating an empowered and motivated learning community”.
- The school started in September with 50 students rising to the current 113. Only a few students have left the school because of international parents moving elsewhere. There are 111 new admissions registered for the next school year. The school has a target of 300 students from FS to Year 6.
- Students are from a diverse range of nationalities. Almost all students are English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners.
- Teacher turnover is very low. Teachers are appropriately qualified. The teacher student ratio is very low and there are teaching assistants in the Foundation Stage and in Year 1 and Year 2.
- The senior leadership is comprised of the principal, the head of primary and the SEN and G&T coordinator. A head of secondary is planned to take up post in January 2019, ahead of secondary students arriving in September. Governance includes a recently formed committee of two teachers, two parents, a representative of the owning body and is chaired by the principal. The owning body is International Schools Partnership (ISP), based in London and operating globally.



## The effectiveness of the school

---

- This is already a highly effective school. School leaders are successfully creating a new learning community.
- Students, including SEN and G&T students, make very strong progress in key subjects and generally demonstrate strong learning skills. Attainment is broadly in line in FS and early primary but is less strong in upper primary.
- Students' personal and social development is very strong. They demonstrate highly positive attitudes, behaviour and relationships. Attendance and punctuality are good. Students show a clear understanding and appreciation of the values of Islam and UAE heritage and culture.
- Teaching is highly effective in securing rapid student progress from low starting points. Teachers plan well and make good use of the school's excellent resources. Assessment is regular and rigorous.
- The school offers an appropriately broad and balanced Arabic and English medium curriculum. The school's English curriculum offers a high level of challenge to students who were predominantly beginners in English when they joined. School leaders and teachers have very successfully modified and adapted the curriculum to meet the needs of their students.
- The school provides a very high level of care and support for all students. SEN and G&T students are quickly identified and provided with a personalised learning plan.
- School leaders are bringing experience, expertise and rigour to the creation of a new school. They are ensuring the school makes strong progress in meeting its mission and sharing its vision with all stakeholders.



## Performance Standard 1: Students' Achievement

### Overall achievement

- The large majority of students, who have entered this new school in each year group in both FS and primary, make very strong progress in key subjects, often from low starting points. This is as a result of well-targeted teaching and generally strong learning skills. Attainment in key subjects at the end of the Foundation Stage and in early primary, which comprises the large majority of students, is broadly in line with curriculum standards. Attainment in these subjects is not yet as secure among the minority in upper primary. Both attainment and progress are strong in music, art and physical education (PE).
- Students with SEN are well supported and make very good progress from their starting points. The few students identified as G&T make equally strong progress as their peers and attain well above age-related expectations.
- Teachers and students do not always have regular access to examples of attainment at the highest standard in all subjects.
- Students achieve well overall in Islamic education and social studies. They show a strong understanding of Islam and the culture and heritage of the UAE.
- Students' progress in Arabic is very strong from low starting points. Their attainment in reading and writing is broadly in line. Students' development of extended writing is more limited
- Students make strong progress in English, mathematics and science. The attainment of most students in English medium subjects, from entering the school with little English, is at least acceptable. Students are not always confident in expressing themselves in lessons. Only a few of the older students develop longer form writing in complex paragraphs and stories.
- Students' achievement in other subjects is strong. This is largely because their performance is less constrained by the limits of their English language skills in music, art and PE.



## **Performance Standard 2: Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills**

---

- Students' attitudes to school, to their teachers and to each other are highly positive. They are very keen to learn and are very well behaved in class and around school.
- Students readily adopt healthy lifestyles. They show an understanding from an early age of the importance of healthy food and regular exercise.
- Attendance, currently at 94%, is good and almost all students are punctual to school.
- Students' understanding of Islamic values is evident in their behaviour. They are able to speak about the practice of Islam in daily life. They have a strong appreciation of the diversity and traditions of UAE society. This is reflected in their involvement in creating the school's own museum of UAE culture and heritage.
- Students show a strong work ethic and innovation in projects and competitions. These are often linked to an emerging community involvement and social contribution. There are fewer opportunities for enterprise and entrepreneurship.
- Environmental awareness is very good. Students work on supporting endangered species and in planting and gardening around the school.





### Performance Standard 3: Teaching and Assessment

- Teachers have strong subject knowledge in both Arabic and English medium subjects. The teaching of English phonics is particularly effective because of the use of a consistent and well adapted system.
- Teachers plan very effectively. They make very good use of the excellent learning environment and resources available to them.
- Interactions and dialogue in lessons support learning but are not always sufficiently challenging to ensure the highest standards are achieved. Questioning is used very effectively in FS and lower primary. It does not build students confidence in using language in upper primary.
- Teachers often provide personalised learning objectives for each student in the currently small classes. They adapt their teaching to meet the needs of their students.
- Teachers' expectations in Arabic and English speaking, listening and reading are high. This is not always the case for students' longer form writing in paragraphs and stories.
- Higher level thinking skills and innovation are evident in most lessons.
- Internal assessment processes are rigorous. A system of external benchmarking is in place. Teachers make good use of well analysed data that promotes students' progress.



## Performance Standard 4: Curriculum

- The school's curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced in both Arabic and English medium subjects. The school has ensured that the English National Curriculum year groups are correctly aligned, with appropriately aged students and age-appropriate resources.
- The curriculum provides progression from FS to primary. It does not rely on textbooks to provide continuity. The school has planned well for the further development into middle and high.
- There are strong cross-curricular links between subjects and throughout the school. These are promoted by carefully planned weekly themes that are supported both in lessons and in assemblies and activities.
- School leaders and teachers have very successfully modified and adapted the curriculum to meet the needs of their students.
- A wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities (ECAs) support students' creativity and innovation. Enterprise and entrepreneurship is less systematically promoted.
- The school's English curriculum offers a high level of challenge to the students who were predominantly beginners in English when they joined.
- There are strong links, often supported by parental involvement, with Emirati culture and UAE society.



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

---

- Safeguarding and child protection arrangements are the school's highest priority and are all in place and shared with all stakeholders.
- The premises are well suited to meet the needs of all students, including SEN students.
- The school actively promotes safe and healthy lifestyles through break times and PE lessons. Students are themselves involved in the risk assessment of school trips.
- Relationships are strong and behaviour management policies are implemented consistently across the school.
- The school has worked hard to build attendance to a good level. The school has not yet succeeded in all parents recognising the impact of regular absences on their children's education.
- Provision for SEN is very well managed and emerging G&T provision is highly supportive.

DRAFT



## Performance Standard 6: Leadership and management

- This well-organised and ambitious school benefits from particularly effective educational leadership. Relationships and communication are highly professional and efficient. School leaders have had a strong impact on school performance. They are now focused on raising standards.
- The school's self-evaluation form (SEF) and school improvement plan (SIP) are powerful working documents. Leaders and governors have explicitly used the inspection framework as a model for the structure and accountability of their new school.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. They have become increasingly involved in their children's education through assemblies, parents' evenings and reporting. Parents have recently been leading the plans for the school's celebration of Ramadan.
- The school's proprietors, International Schools Partnership (ISP), and the governors have been instrumental in ensuring the school has made a strong start. They have ensured accountability while allowing leaders the time and resources to develop effective systems and educational rigour.
- The day-to-day life of the school is well organised for the benefit and advancement of the students' education. Well-qualified teaching staff are trained and deployed to very good effect. The excellent premises and resources are fully appropriate to students' needs.



## Capacity for further development

---

- The current capacity of the school's leadership to improve and develop the school is very strong. A highly capable leadership and a skilled and very stable teaching staff have created robust and very effective systems in the school's opening year.
- The school is exceptionally well-resourced. The proprietors have made a long-term investment in the school and this has allowed leaders to develop and consolidate their planning as the school grows.
- The school's initial success is evident in the increasing enrolment for the coming year. The school has very strong capacity to improve.

DRAFT



## What the school should do to improve further

---

1. Raise students' attainment in all key subjects by:
  - i. ensuring the continuation and acceleration of the strong progress students already make from their starting points
  - ii. providing teachers with regular access to examples of attainment at the highest standard in all subjects
  - iii. raising expectations in Arabic and English for increasingly longer form writing in paragraphs and stories in upper primary.
2. Improve student's interactions, collaboration and communication skills in both Arabic and English by:
  - i. promoting students' self confidence in classroom discussions
  - ii. students' increased engagement in debates and presentations both within school and in inter-school competitions and events.
3. Develop a whole-school programme to promote further students' enterprise and entrepreneurship by:
  - i. ensuring the participation of all stakeholders, including parents and the local community
  - ii. providing age-appropriate activities and experiences for all students.
4. Continue improving students' attendance by:
  - i. further engaging parents in promoting their children's regular attendance
  - ii. further rewarding and celebrating students' attendance.