



مجلس أبوظبي للتعليم  
Abu Dhabi Education Council  
Education First



## New School Inspection Report

The Philippine School – Abu Dhabi

Academic Year 2014 – 2015

Arzooq

The Philippine School – Abu Dhabi

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| <b>Inspection Date</b>       | 4 – 7 May 2015   |
| <b>School ID#</b>            | 252  |
| <b>Lead Inspector</b>        | Jon Carter   |
| <b>Licensed Curriculum</b>   | Philippine   |
| <b>Number of Students</b>    | 844  |
| <b>Age Range</b>             | 4 to 16 years  |
| <b>Gender</b>                | Mixed  |
| <b>Principal</b>             | Jonathan Esguerra  |
| <b>Proprietor</b>            | Ali Mahmood Abdul Hussain Ali  |
| <b>Chair of Governors</b>    | Leticia Maniaul – Managing Director  |
| <b>School Address</b>        | 18 <sup>th</sup> Street, Baniyas East 7, Abu Dhabi                               |
| <b>Telephone Number</b>      | +971 (0)2 583 1044   |
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| <b>Official Email (ADEC)</b> | <a href="mailto:thephilippines.pvt@adec.ac.ae">thephilippines.pvt@adec.ac.ae</a> |
| <b>School Website</b>        | -----  |
| <b>Date of opening</b>       | 01 September 2014  |

## 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)

The School was judged to be:

**BAND C;**

**GRADE 6**

### The main strengths of the school are:

- students behave well and show a high level of respect for UAE and Filipino values
- the school effectively promotes a caring and positive learning environment where students' welfare is appropriately protected.

### The main areas for improvement are:

- the effectiveness of school governance to adequately hold senior leaders accountable for the quality of education
- the provision of appropriate teaching resources in classrooms and specialist facilities, particularly in the Kindergarten
- the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and the progress students make, especially those with special educational needs or the more able make
- the effective use of assessment to plan and deliver lessons which are well matched to students' needs and abilities
- the delivery of the Kindergarten curriculum to suit children's learning needs
- the school development planning to focus sufficiently well on the main improvement priorities, particularly on the quality of teaching.

## Introduction

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The school was evaluated by 4 inspectors. They observed 75 lessons, conducted several meetings with senior staff, the acting subject coordinators and groups of teachers, parents and students. They analysed test and assessment results, scrutinised students' work across the school, analysed the 469 responses to the parents' questionnaire and considered many of the school's policies and other documents. The principal and leadership team were involved throughout the process including 2 joint lesson observations with inspectors.

## Description of the School

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The Philippine School – Abu Dhabi opened in September 2014 as a new school for Kindergarten (KG) to Grade 10 in an ex-government school building. It accommodates the majority of the students from a now closed villa school. The school states its mission: 'To provide affordable but quality education – meaning students are able to acquire the needed competencies prescribed by the Department of Education, Philippines under the K-12 Curriculum, and ensure that they are on par with the international benchmark, and consistent with the mission and vision of ADEC'. The operation of the school is overseen by the directors of the associated school in Dubai. The principal is in the process of establishing a governing body, following a model he successfully implemented in Dubai. The school follows the Philippine curriculum. The school is not able to formally access the Philippine national achievement tests but uses past papers to support its assessment of students' performance.

There are 844 students; all are Filipino, 53% are boys, and 7% are Muslim. There are 108 children in KG, 219 in primary (grades 1–3), 233 in intermediate (grades 4–6) and 284 in high school (grades 7–10). All students are taught in mixed gender classes. There are 41 students identified with special educational needs (SEN). Their needs include health related disabilities, communication needs, autistic spectrum disorder and Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The school has no formal identification system for those who are gifted and talented. English is an additional language (EAL) for all students, although few are at an early stage of learning.

The leadership team has grown since the opening of the school. The Principal took up post on 15 March 2015. The 2 vice principals had been responsible for running the school since it opened. All 3 senior leaders held posts at The Philippine School – Dubai prior to their appointments in this new school.

The admissions policy is inclusive, in line with ADEC guidelines. Fees range from AED 3,266 to AED 6,600 per year. These are in the very affordable to affordable categories.

### **The Effectiveness of the School**

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The overall effectiveness of The Philippine School – Abu Dhabi is unsatisfactory. The school is judged to require significant improvement. Students make slow progress and do not reach expected levels of attainment in most subjects. This is because teaching does not ensure work is well matched to students' strengths and needs, particularly for those with SEN. There are insufficient classroom resources to support learning. In KG, both teaching and resources are very unsatisfactory.

Leadership and governance are unsatisfactory. Leaders know that key aspects of teaching are not good enough. They do not have a comprehensive understanding of what they need to do to secure improvements. The school keeps students safe. Behaviour is positive and students develop strong moral values.

#### **Students' attainment & progress**

Students' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory. The standard of work seen in lessons is typically below age-related expectations. Attainment in Filipino and social studies, as well as information and communication technology (ICT), is in line with expectations. Standards in all other subjects are below age-related expectations. There is a significant gap between students' attainment and the best international standards. Students develop satisfactory basic skills in literacy, thinking and ICT. Numeracy skills are underdeveloped across the school, especially in younger grades.

Students make satisfactory progress in Filipino and social studies. Their performance and progress in English, Arabic, mathematics, science, ICT and Islamic education is unsatisfactory. Students with SEN make slower progress than their peers in almost all lessons.

Students make weakest progress in English and mathematics. The pace of learning in these lessons is often too slow. This is because too much time is given to activities that make only a small contribution to learning. Similarly, the progress of more able students is held back by teachers' low expectations. For example, in lessons about statistics for older students, they made little progress because they unnecessarily spent more time collecting data than analysing it. Students who find learning more difficult make particularly slow progress because teachers do not put appropriate support in place.

In English, students' attainment is below average. Their speaking and listening skills are better than their reading and writing skills. Students in higher grades can explain their ideas in depth. This demonstrates that attainment levels in speaking and listening are in line with international standards. Standards in reading, especially comprehension, are below age-related expectations. Older students can sometimes write extended pieces of work at age appropriate levels; they do not demonstrate these skills consistently in lessons.

Students make quicker progress and reach higher standards in Filipino and social studies than in other subjects. When studying their home language, most students comprehend spoken and written language with ease. Younger students use their knowledge of phonics and word recognition skills well. In Grade 7 and above, students demonstrate that most have the ability to analyse literary works. Most students' vocabulary, speaking, reading, and writing in Filipino shows mastery and confidence that meets curriculum standards. In social studies, students adequately develop their understanding of UAE culture and consolidate their knowledge and understanding of current affairs in the Philippines. For example, they can list the presidents of their home country and identify factors that hinder national development there.

Students' achievement in Arabic is unsatisfactory. Most students' attainment does not reach the expected curriculum levels and they make unsatisfactory progress. Most students gain some vocabulary and respond well to their teachers. They do not develop reading and writing skills adequately. In Islamic education, students' attainment is below curriculum expectations. They make reasonable progress in memorising 'surahs' (verses) from the Holy Qur'an but have not developed an appropriate knowledge of the recitation rules (Tajweed). Students' understanding of other Islamic topics such as 'Seera' and 'Hadeeth' is also weak.

Standards in ICT are stronger in Grades 4 to 9 than in younger grades. This is because teaching ensures students understand the intended purpose of different programs to help them select the most appropriate one to use. Their progress is limited because teaching resources do not introduce them to more modern coding languages. This also restricts the development of their 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

Attainment and progress in science is unsatisfactory. Students do not develop the foundation skills of scientific enquiry in the younger grades. They can perform experiments, but cannot design them, even by the time they reach Grade 10. They have limited ability to make predictions or draw conclusions from patterns and observations. Students' abilities to make connections between scientific theories and their real life experiences are weak.

Standards in mathematics are typically below age-related expectations. Younger students' basic skills are unsatisfactory. They have weak knowledge of number bonds and multiplication facts. They rely on repeated addition as their sole method for multiplying simple numbers. Those in intermediate grades have a reasonable grasp of measurement skills. The work in the books of older students appears to be in line with and sometimes above international standards. However, much of this is copied from the board and does not accurately represent students' ability to use and apply the concepts they have been taught.

### **Students' personal development**

Students' personal development is satisfactory. They are usually polite, kind and behave well in lessons and across the school. Relationships between students and teachers are strong and based on mutual respect. Students listen well to the views of others. They develop a good understanding of the values and cultures of the UAE and they show strong respect for their own culture. In a few lessons, when teaching is not engaging or teachers have poor classroom management skills, young students misbehave. In Arabic, they show indifference towards learning the language. Students enjoy their time in the school but rarely demonstrate that they can work on their own initiative. Attendance is above average at 96%.

Opportunities for taking responsibility in school and making a contribution to the wider community are limited. A sizeable proportion of students participate actively and enthusiastically during social studies lessons and in the recently started recycling scheme. There is a developing students' council.

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

The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. Lessons observed by inspectors ranged from satisfactory to very unsatisfactory. Only a small minority were deemed satisfactory, mainly in social studies and science. Many teachers have an inaccurate understanding of a number of key aspects of teaching practice. Their punctuality is of concern because many lessons do not start promptly.

In most lessons, teachers share learning objectives with students. The quality of these objectives varies considerably. They do not consistently make the purpose of the lesson sufficiently clear. In the least effective practice, teachers consider students' participation in activities to be part of the objective. This misunderstanding leads to insufficient emphasis on the subject being taught. For example, in a Grade 6 mathematics lesson, the primary objective was to play a hopscotch game, rather than use the measuring and calculation skills they had

been learning. Learning objectives are rarely used to review students' learning during or at the end of lessons.

Teachers have an unsatisfactory understanding of how to assess students' learning. Rubrics often measure irrelevant outcomes, such as the number of responses, rather than the quality and accuracy of students' work. Teachers do not use the information they get from checking students' work to plan learning activities that are well matched to the diverse range of needs and abilities in each class. Consequently, teachers do not make appropriate provision to support less-able students. More-able students are not challenged to make faster progress and achieve higher standards.

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

The delivery of the curriculum does not satisfactorily meet students' learning needs. Provision in the KG is very unsatisfactory as it does not stimulate children's natural curiosity about themselves and their environment. The curriculum is implemented too rigidly across the school. Teaching follows the prescribed delivery pattern which fails to ensure that students' learning is supported or extended appropriately. This is particularly demotivating for more able students and contributes to the unsatisfactory provision for students with SEN. Curriculum implementation does not promote the development of students' 21<sup>st</sup> century skills sufficiently well, particularly their ability to learn independently. The range of subjects taught in Grades 1-10 mainly meets statutory requirements; most Muslim students are not allocated the required time for Islamic education.

The social studies curriculum promotes the values and culture of both the UAE and the Philippines effectively. The school appropriately enriches the curriculum through extra-curricular clubs and sports. Students have limited opportunities to participate in trips and visits or make a contribution to local community life. The curriculum does help to prepare students for their future education through the provision of careers guidance and university admission tests in Grade 10.

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

The provision of protection, care, guidance and support of students is satisfactory. The school has a positive ethos in which students are safe and usually enjoy themselves. The school has not established systems to track students' academic progress and personal development effectively. Staff make some use of rewards during lessons; there are no systems in place to ensure implementation of this is consistent. Attendance is taken daily and monthly records are kept. The school does not maintain punctuality records.

There are appropriate checks on the suitability of all adults that work in the school and a central record is appropriately maintained. A child protection policy is in place and most staff and students understand it. There are very few incidents of bullying or intimidation. Students know that any such incidents will be dealt with swiftly and effectively. The first aid facilities are adequate; they are clean, hygienic and all medicines and students' records are stored securely. Muslim students have suitable opportunities and appropriate facilities for prayer.

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

The quality of the school's buildings is satisfactory. The premises are ADEC approved and are being leased to the school. It is of sufficient size for the number and age levels of students. The KG classrooms are all located on the ground floor. There is no dedicated outdoor learning area for exclusive use of the KG. Rooms are of sufficient size to accommodate the number of students in each class. Premises, including toilets, are tidy and clean. Specialist facilities for the library as well as for teaching ICT, science and sport are adequate.

Fire protection equipment is maintained and serviced on a regular basis by an external contractor. There are 2 security guards posted at entrances and exits and closed-circuit tv cameras (CCTV) are operational around the school. Ramps provide access to ground floor level classrooms and the administration building. This provides appropriate access for the physically disabled. Students with special needs would have difficulty accessing classrooms located on the upper floor as there are no ramps or lifts. Accessible toilet facilities are not provided for those with physical needs.

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

Resources are insufficient to support effective delivery of the curriculum and are very unsatisfactory. They do not enable students to learn actively or apply their skills effectively. There are too few resources in both classrooms and specialist facilities. There are sufficient number of suitably qualified teachers; they mainly rely on workbooks, worksheets and homemade additional resources to support the delivery of their lessons.

There are sufficient working computers in the computer laboratory; there are no computers to enable students to use their skills across the curriculum in any of the classrooms. Classrooms are not equipped with data projectors or interactive whiteboards to support teaching and learning. The library does not have any books to improve reading and research skills; the entire stock consists of textbooks. There are very limited resources in science. These are not sufficient to enable students to gain scientific enquiry skills.

The school has a contract to ensure that buses are maintained to a high standard. The canteen is clean and hygienic and food is stored in refrigerators. The school has rigorous procedures for evacuation.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management is unsatisfactory. Leaders and managers have an adequate, general understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They do not have detailed knowledge of the precise weaknesses in teaching, and limited understanding and expertise of how to raise academic standards. Governance is weak; the managing director understands that the school has weaknesses; the system for holding the principal to account is informal and not sufficiently focused on school improvement. The school does not have an appropriate plan in place for financing improvements, especially in respect of classroom resources and outdoor learning provision in the KG.

The self-evaluation document (SEF) is too broad and not sufficiently diagnostic. It accurately identifies the key weaknesses in teaching and learning; the analysis of what to do to improve is not specific enough. For example, leaders have realised that assessment is a key issue, but have not identified that teachers do not understand how to use rubrics correctly. Consequently, the school development plan (SDP) is too general. It does not focus on the main things that leaders and teachers need to do to improve the quality of education. The monitoring of lessons is too focused on the actions of the teacher, rather than the impact of teaching on academic progress and student learning.

Middle leadership posts, including subject coordinators and key teachers, have been established; permanent appointments have not been made. The teachers in these acting roles have limited responsibilities. For example, they do not participate in lesson observations to check the quality of learning and teaching. Some of the subject coordinators are hindering students' progress because they misunderstand the purpose of curriculum planning documents.

The school provides regular training for teachers. There is a mismatch between the school's needs and the provision of support and training. Teachers are not able to exemplify how continuous professional development (CPD) has had an impact on learning in their classrooms. Leaders have not evaluated the impact of CPD on improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Links with external organisations are limited. Parents are kept informed adequately but are not fully involved in the life of the school. Some parents report that they are not invited to attend events due to traffic issues in the local area.

## Capacity for further development

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School leaders have accurately identified the main weaknesses in the quality of teaching at the school. They do not demonstrate the necessary depth of understanding needed to address these weaknesses. Leadership and management have not demonstrated they have the capacity to rapidly improve the quality of teaching and raise academic standards without external support.

### What the school should do to improve further:

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1. Improve the quality of teaching, so that students' learning and progress is at least satisfactory in all subjects, by:
  - i. ensuring teachers are consistently on time to their lessons and start learning activities promptly
  - ii. using regular and frequent formative assessment in lessons to evaluate students' understanding, misconceptions and progress
  - iii. using assessment information to guide planning so the content of lessons is well matched to students' needs, abilities and curriculum expectations
  - iv. making appropriate modifications to learning activities for those with SENs so that they are supported to make similar progress to their peers
  - v. ensuring that learning objectives identify precise and relevant learning expectations are routinely shared with students and are used to review learning during and at the end of lessons.
2. Improve the provision in the KG, by:
  - i. providing a greater range of better quality resources which stimulate children's natural curiosity, especially for reading, basic numeracy, exploration and discovery
  - ii. providing access to the outdoor environment with appropriate experiences and resources that develop children's social interaction, language and motor skills
3. Improve the provision for students with SENs, by:
  - i. appointing a qualified, specialist special educational needs coordinator
  - ii. training teachers in the appropriate identification of students' barriers to learning and SEN, with external support where necessary
  - iii. monitoring the quality of teachers' planning and support for students identified as having SEN throughout the school.
4. Improve students' 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, by:
  - i. building regular opportunities into lessons for students to reflect and ask questions

- ii. promoting the appropriate use of purposeful, independent and collaborative work in which every student makes a meaningful contribution and demonstrates their learning and understanding.
5. Improve the quality of resources in classrooms and specialist areas, by:
  - i. providing basic learning resources in all classrooms so that students' progress is not hindered
  - ii. providing suitable specialist equipment in science so that students can develop their investigative and experimental skills
  - iii. providing a wide range of reading and research resources in the library to help students develop better skills in the 3 different languages taught at the school
  - iv. providing basic numeracy resources, such as multiplication squares and number lines, in classrooms for younger students and for students in older grades with SEN.
6. Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, by:
  - i. establishing a performance management system that will allow the managing director and governors to set targets for the principal and hold him to account for the performance of the school
  - ii. monitoring the quality of education more rigorously by evaluating the learning and progress made by students in lessons
  - iii. establishing systems that track students' academic progress and personal development and allow the performance of different groups to be evaluated
  - iv. ensuring school self-evaluation and development planning focuses sharply on a small number of achievable priorities that will have the most significant impact on students' learning and progress
  - v. linking training for teachers more accurately to both their individual needs and school priorities, and evaluating the impact it has on learning
  - vi. appointing staff to permanent middle leader positions and develop their skills by training them to monitor the quality of learning and teaching.