هيئة الشارقة للتعليم الخاص
SHARJAH PRIVATE EDUCATION AUTHORITY

ITQAN Programme

School Performance Review (SPR) Report

Australian International School

24-27 October, 2022

Overall Effectiveness	VERY GOOD

ITQAN
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PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Sharjah Private Education Authority (SPEA) is grateful to Sharjah private schools and their stakeholders including students and their parents, teachers and staff, school leaders and governors for sharing their views of the school and engaging with our review teams during this School Performance Review (SPR). This report shares the findings of this four-day review. It identifies strengths and areas for improvement along with strategic recommendations intended to help the school bring about its own improvement.

Purpose

The main purpose of this SPR is to assist schools in their continuous improvement journey through an external validation of their progress, quality and capacity to improve in the context of Sharjah Private Education Authority's (SPEA) vision to achieve *'Excellence in Education'* by 2024. SPEA has been a pioneer in supporting the private education sector in Sharjah, driven by its mission of *'Enabling the learner's community to grow and achieve aspiring outcomes through supportive and effective services'.* This new and innovative approach to school review is an important part of our strategy for achieving this vision because it supports continuous school improvement.

Scope

This review is guided by Performance Standards 1 to 6 and seventeen related Performance Indicators taken from the 2015-16 UAE School Inspection Framework. These Performance Standards relate to Student's achievement, Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills, Teaching and assessment, Curriculum, The protection, care, guidance and support of students, and Leadership and management.

The findings relating to the six Standards and their associated Indicators will provide judgements based on the six-point scale in the UAE School Inspection Framework. These judgements will help schools understand the impact of their provision on students' academic and personal outcomes.

Where applicable, the SPR also gathered information about the provision for Arabic language, the school's use of international benchmarking data, and the provision for KG.

THE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE REVIEW PROCESS

The SPR uses the six Performance Standards (PS) and seventeen Performance Indicators (PI) from the UAE School Inspection Framework issued in 2015, as follows:

Performance Standard 1: Students' achievement, comprising:

- PI 1.1 Attainment
- PI 1.2 Progress
- PI 1.3 Learning skills

Performance Standard 2: Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills, comprising:
- PI 2.1 Personal development
- PI 2.2 Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures
- PI 2.3 Social responsibility and innovation skills

Performance Standard 3: Teaching and assessment, comprising:

- PI 3.1 Teaching for effective learning
- PI 3.2 Assessment

Performance Standard 4: Curriculum, comprising:
- PI 4.1 Curriculum design and implementation
- PI 4.2 Curriculum adaptation

Performance Standard 5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students, comprising:
- PI 5.1 Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection/safeguarding
- PI 5.2 Care and support

Performance Standard 6. Leadership and management, comprising:

- PI 6.1 The effectiveness of leadership
- PI 6.2 Self-evaluation and improvement planning
- PI 6.3 Partnerships with parents and the community
- PI 6.4 Governance
- PI 6.5 Management, staffing, facilities and resources

Judgements

The judgements stated in this report use the following six-level scale.

Outstanding	The quality of performance substantially exceeds the expectations of the UAE
Very good	The quality of performance exceeds the expectations of the UAE
Good	The quality of performance meets the expectations of the UAE
Acceptable	The quality of performance meets the minimum level required in the UAE
Weak	The quality of performance is below the expectation of the UAE
Very weak	The quality of performance is significantly below the expectation of the UAE

To gather the required information to inform these judgements, our team of reviewers carried out a wide range of activities during the four-day visit, including:

- visits to lessons in Arabic, Islamic education, UAE social studies, English, mathematics and science, and other subjects, including lessons reviewed jointly with senior leaders of the school;
- reviewing important documents such as, students' attainment data, school self-evaluation form, school policies and the school improvement plan;
- meeting the Governors, Principal, senior leaders, middle leaders, subject coordinators, teachers, parents, and students;
- reviewing teachers' lesson plans, samples of students' coursework and related information;
- attending school activities such as assemblies, arrivals, departures, and break times; and
- analysing the outcomes of the surveys returned by parents.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

School	School ID	123
	School location	Maliha-Kaba Road Industrial Zone 18, Sharjah
	Establishment date	2005
	Language of instruction	English
	School curriculum	Australian Curriculum for Queensland, Australian Early Years Learning Framework.
	Accreditation body	Education Queensland – ATAR and International Baccalaureate (IB).
	Examination Board	Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority and IB
	National Agenda Benchmark Tests/ International assessment	ATAR, IB, PISA; ACER, PIRLS, TIMSS; PAT reading, science, mathematics, CAT4, IBT Arabic, EmSat.
Staff	Fee range	AED36,700 – AED 66,300
	Principal	Mt Steve McLuckie
	Chair of Board of Governors	Mr. Othman Al Sharif
	Total number of teachers	150
	Total number of teaching assistants	22
	Turnover rate	8.6%
	Main nationality of teachers	Australian
Students	Teacher: student ratio	1:22
	Total number of students	1478
	Number of Emirati students	1057
	KG: number and gender	54 females: 56 males
	Primary: number and gender	366 females: 466 males
	Middle: number and gender	133 females: 156 males
	High: number and gender	102 females: 133 males
	Nationality groups	1.Emirati
		2.Australian
	Total number of students with special educational needs	80

PROGRESS JOURNEY

Previous Inspection in 2018:	Current Review:
ACCEPTABLE	VERY GOOD

SUMMARY OF REVIEW FINDINGS

These findings draw from our team of six reviewers' 176 lesson observations, of which 148 were carried out jointly with school leaders.

SUMMARY OF THE OVERALL PERFORMANCE OF THE SCHOOL:

The school's overall effectiveness is very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection in 2018. Students' achievement has improved in most subjects. However, Arabic as a first language remains acceptable. Students' learning skills are now very good, and their personal and social development and innovation skills are outstanding. Teaching and learning have improved and arrangements for students' health and safety, and safeguarding, have also improved. The refurbished buildings provide a stimulating learning environment. Leaders, led by a dedicated principal, have set an aspirational strategic goal to improve further.

KEY AREAS OF STRENGTH:
- The improvement in students' progress from low starting points on entry in most subjects, particularly in science and other subjects.
- Students' personal development, appreciation of Islamic values and respect for the UAE heritage.
- Curriculum design and implementation, underpinned by the effective CPD programme.
- Positive relationships and the arrangements for the protection, care and guidance for students particularly for promoting wellbeing and keeping them safe in school.
- Leadership's clear direction, careful planning and positive partnerships with the school community.

KEY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:
- The achievement of students in Arabic languages across all phases.
- The consistent implementation of effective teaching and assessment strategies and adaptation of the curriculum to better extend the learning of all students, especially the higher-attaining students, including the gifted and talented within classes.
- Students' social responsibility, innovation skills and attendance.

School Performance Review of Australian International School
24-27 October, 2022

PERFORMANCE STANDARD 1:
STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT

Students' achievement overall is Very Good

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

Islamic Education	• Students' achievement in Islamic education is very good overall. The large majority of students make better than expected progress in all phases. This does not match with the school's matched cohort data that shows all students make outstanding progress across the school. • Internal assessment shows attainment as outstanding. This is not seen in lessons and in students' work. • In lessons and their recent work, students make above expected progress across all phases from their starting points. In phase 2, students develop their understanding of the pillars of faith quickly by discussing the characteristics of angels. In phase 3, students learn about obligatory prayers, and can explain the concept clearly. In phase 4, students develop an understanding of marriage rules in Islam and have above expected knowledge of Islamic values and their impact on daily life. Students' ability to critically analyse verses of the Holy Qur'an are less well-developed in phases 2 and 3. Their recitation skills are mostly good, but a few do not apply Tajweed rules accurately. • All groups of students make above expected progress.

Areas of Strength	Areas for Improvement
• Students' general understanding of the meaning of Holy Qur'an verses. • Students' deep understanding of Islamic principles and the impact of these values on daily life.	• Students' critical analysis of the deeper meaning of verses.

Arabic	• Students' achievement in Arabic as a first language (AFL) is acceptable. Their achievement in Arabic as a second language (ASL) is good. Students make acceptable progress in AFL and good progress in ASL. This is not aligned with the school's data that indicates outstanding progress.
	• In AFL and ASL, relevant internal assessment and examination results indicate attainment to be outstanding and good respectively. This is not seen in lessons and in students' recent work.
	• In AFL, progress is acceptable overall. Students develop acceptable speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills as they move from phase 1 to 4. Overall students' fluency in speaking and extended writing skills are marginally less well developed than their listening and reading skills. By phase 2, students can read aloud, listen, and answer content-based questions. When responding, they can speak using connected sentences with appropriate conjunctions, and verb tenses. They can find key information from different types of texts. By phase 3, students actively participate in class discussions, using connected sentences mostly correctly. Their reading and writing improve and, by phase 4, most students listen actively, and their secure speaking skills enable them to discuss points from audio texts using wider vocabulary and more complex sentence structure.
	• In ASL, students in all phases develop above expected language competencies. They listen, answer content-based questions, and participate in open discussions using correct sentences. By phase 2, students can describe characters when they retell stories. Phase 3 students can write a short summary paragraph, having learned a wider range of vocabulary and sentence patterns. Students in phase 4 can engage in debate about more technical topics, like pollution. However, language fluency and pronunciation are less well-developed skills.
	• All groups of students make at least the expected progress in AFL and good progress in ASL.

Areas of Strength	Areas for Improvement
• Children's reading skills in phase 1. • Students' listening and comprehension skills.	• Students' overall fluency in speaking. • Students' extended writing skills.

Social Studies	• Students' achievement in social studies is very good. They make very good progress in both phases. • The large majority of students attain above the curriculum expectation. This is not aligned with the school's internal data that shows outstanding attainment. • In lessons and recent work, the large majority of students make above expected progress. In phase 2, students develop a sound understanding of UAE culture, heritage, national emblems, values, and government structure. They can detail the geographical features of the Arab Gulf countries. In phase 3, students' understanding of the UAE's economic geography improves and they can explain how location and geographical features affect population. They develop a deeper understanding of the economy, as they identify investment streams. Overall, students are less secure in their understanding of the constitution, sustainability and bartering. Students new to the school demonstrate a less broad knowledge of the UAE. • Most groups of students make above expected progress. Higher-attaining students do not always reach their full potential.	
	Areas of Strength	**Areas for Improvement**
	• Students' understanding of the UAE economy and culture. • Students' understanding of the national emblems and values.	• Students' understanding of constitution, sustainability, and bartering

English	• Students' achievement in English is very good overall, but it is only good in phase 1. In lessons and recent work, students make very good progress in all phases. This broadly matches with the school's data. • Attainment is good overall. Internal data indicates attainment is broadly good. The IB assessment and QCE examination results are broadly good also. • In lessons and their recent work, phase 1 children develop an understanding of phonics necessary to learn to read and can follow simple instructions, showing developing listening skills, and pronouncing new words. In phase 2, students' reading, speaking, listening and comprehension skills are developed in line with curriculum expectations, but their writing is less advanced, especially their use of imagination in creative writing. By phase 3 students language skills improve and a majority are confident in reading and discussing ideas within groups. They are less confident in making presentations to audiences and their creative writing remains less-well developed. By phase 4, students can engage in debate about moral dilemmas posed by a wide range of international authors. • Most groups of students make above expected progress. The higher achieving students do not always achieve their potential.	
	Areas of Strength	**Areas for Improvement**

	• Children's phonics skills in phase 1. • Students' reading and speaking skills in all phases.	• Students' extended and creative writing skills.

Mathematics	• Students' achievement in mathematics is very good overall. They make very good progress in all phases, and this broadly aligns with the school's assessment data. • Attainment is very good overall. Internal data indicates attainment is very good. The IB assessment and QCE examination outcomes are very good in phase 4. • In lessons and recent work, phase 1 children develop number concepts quickly, as they sing number songs. They know that numbers get bigger when you add them together. By phase 2, students can use mental mathematics to add to the nearest 10. In phase 2, students are less confident to independently choose efficient mathematical approaches to practical problems and to explain their mathematical reasoning. By phase 3, a majority of students can explain equivalency in fractions and understand the meaning of numerator, denominator, and the highest common denominator. They can calculate a range of multi-step equations confidently. By phase 4, students understand and can label key features on graphs and solve examination style questions that call on a range of mathematical skills. • Most groups make very good progress but there is less challenge for those who are gifted or talented overall.	
	Areas of Strength	**Areas for Improvement**
	• Children's numeracy skills in phase 1. • Students' mental maths skills.	• Students' ability to explain their mathematical reasoning in phase 2.

Science	- Students' achievement in science is very good overall. It is good in phase 1. Children make good progress in phase 1 and students make very good progress in phases 2, 3 and 4. This broadly aligns with school assessment data. - Attainment is very good overall. School data from internal assessments and external assessments in IB and QCE examinations broadly agrees with this. - In lessons, phase 1 children develop observation and recording skills as they explore their location. Phase 2 students develop confidence in communicating scientific ideas, for example comparing the lifecycles of different organisms and drawing labelled diagrams to record what they learn about light. Their investigative skills are less well-developed because there are minimal opportunities to handle equipment. Phase 3 students show increasing confidence in conducting investigations and they can design experiments, for example into the differences between series and parallel circuits. Phase 4 students confidently perform experiments, such as investigating the cobalt chloride equilibrium system, and can write comprehensive scientific reports. These skills are not as well-developed in other phases. - Most groups make the same very good progress, but the higher-attaining students do not always achieve their potential.

Areas of Strength	Areas for Improvement
- Students' observation and recording skills in all phases. - Students' independent investigative skills in phase 4.	Students' practical skills and ability to use science equipment in phases 1 and 2.

Other subjects	• Students' achievement in other subjects is very good overall. Students make very good progress all phases, except in phase 1 where progress is good. • Students' attainment is very good overall. School data indicates attainment is very good over the range of subjects and in external assessments such as IB and QCE examination. The QCE examination results for film, television and new media are outstanding as are the IB results for French, economics, psychology, theatre, and business management. • In art, children in phase 1 can draw figures with details such as arms and legs and older students can create colour patterns and draw with an increasing focus on shape and form. Older students use a rage of media cleverly to project mood and personality when forming self-portraits. In music, children sing tunefully, understanding rhythm and expression and older students understand how to write music and to vary musical sequences to express mood and tone. However, they have fewer skills in playing musical instruments. In physical education, students explore space, coordinate different movements, and show increasing dexterity in ball-handling. They know how to attack and defend and the importance of hydration. In the wider range of other subjects, students make very good progress and develop a wide range of skills. For example, in business management students demonstrate enterprise skills, and can apply these in buying and selling simulations. • All groups make the same very good progress overall.

Areas of Strengths	Areas for Improvement
• Students' holistic knowledge of fitness and well-being in PE. • Students' use of a range of media to express their ideas in art.	• Students' performance skills in a range of musical instruments.

Learning Skills	• Students' learning skills are very good overall. They are good in phase1. Students are highly engaged learners. Regular reflections enable students to identify strengths and areas to improve. As they move up the phases, they take increased responsibility for their own learning and progress. • Students interact positively and work productively in groups. Collaboration is less well-developed in phases 1 and 2. Language fluency is a barrier for some students in explaining their learning and making class presentations. • Students generally make strong connections between their learning and the UAE context. Links between subjects are stronger in science and humanities than in other areas. • Students confidently use technology to learn and find information at all levels. The school's inquiry-based approach develops critical thinking skills. Grade 3 students can solve problems such as where to park your car to keep it shaded. Students' innovation and enterprise skills are less consistently developed.

	Areas of Strengths	Areas for Improvement
	• Students' use of technology to learn. • Student engagement and interaction.	• Students' collaboration skills in phases 1 and 2.

PERFORMANCE STANDARD 2:
STUDENTS' PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THEIR INNOVATION SKILLS

Indicators:	KG	Primary	Middle	High
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students' personal and social development is outstanding overall, and their social responsibility and innovation skills are very good.
- Students respond very well to critical feedback, demonstrating very responsible attitudes, self-discipline, and exemplary behaviour. They are very respectful to others, both peers and teachers, so bullying is extremely rare.
- Students demonstrate secure understanding of safe and healthy lifestyles. They usually make wise choices about their own health and are keen to participate in physical activities. Students are planning an event for Breast Cancer Awareness Day.
- Students' attendance is good at 95%, and punctuality is outstanding.

Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students' deep appreciation of how Islamic values influence UAE society is shown by the caring and respectful way that they treat others. Students' in-depth knowledge of the UAE heritage is demonstrated by their involvement in cultural events, such as planning for Flag Day.
- Because the school is a multi-cultural school, students develop an excellent awareness of their own and other world cultures. Students and their parents celebrate their differences at events such as International Day.

Social responsibility and innovation skills	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good

- Students participate willingly in activities that support the school and wider communities, such as reading to younger students, providing Iftar for the whole school in Ramadan, and raising money for the Red Crescent.
- Students' work ethic is strong. A few successfully initiate and manage projects such as the enterprise-coffee shop, and adjacent senior lounge.
- Environmental action is at the forefront of many student projects, but recycling has not yet recommenced post-COVID. They participate in the Green Earth Celebration by planting trees.

Areas of Strength:

- Students' appreciation of Islamic values and knowledge of the UAE and other cultures.
- Students' attitudes, behaviour, and consideration for others.

Areas for Improvement:

- Students' self-responsibility with respect to regular attendance.

Indicators:	KG	Primary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	**Good**	**Very Good**	**Very Good**	**Very Good**

- Teaching and assessment are very good overall. Most teachers have a very good knowledge of the subjects they teach and how students learn them.
- They plan engaging activities that motivate students to learn. Lesson plans cater better for the less able than for the differing needs of more able students.
- Teachers use questioning skilfully to gauge students' understanding and encourage critical thinking and problem-solving, particularly in science and DigiTech. They do not always promote students taking responsibility for their own learning, especially in phases 1 and 2.
- Teachers use a range of teaching tools, including technology, but teaching to encourage innovation is inconsistently seen within lessons and the development of students' research and higher order thinking skills is not always evident.

Assessment	**Good**	**Very Good**	**Very Good**	**Very Good**

- Internal assessment processes are very well established and linked to the school's curriculum standards. Benchmarking and analysis of data are comprehensive and effective, enabling school leaders to measure students' achievement over time against appropriate and reliable national and international standards.
- The school's leaders analyse assessment data regularly and share it with teachers so that they can use it to plan effectively, re-teach concepts, and personalise plans for lower attainers. Assessment data is not used consistently to extend the learning of the higher-attaining students.
- Teachers continuously provide oral feedback to students and assess their written work. They have very good knowledge of students' capabilities. Students are not always enabled to self- and peer- review.

Areas of Strength:

- Teachers' knowledge that creates a positive learning environment.
- Use of assessment data to personalise learning for the lower attaining students.

Areas for Improvement:

- Teaching to promote self-responsibility and innovation in phases 1 and 2.
- Differentiation to better meet the needs of the higher-attaining students.

PERFORMANCE STANDARD 4: CURRICULUM

Indicators:	KG	Primary	Middle	High
Curriculum design and implementation	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good

- The curriculum is broad and balanced and is well-matched to the needs of all abilities. The Australian and the Ministry of Education curricula are integrated and compliant. Students have good opportunities to build on what they know and can do, although higher-attaining students are insufficiently challenged.
- An excellent range of options enables senior students to make well-informed choices about their plans for the future. Cross-curricular links, particularly strong in science and 'other subjects', enable students to transfer learning across disciplines.
- Reviews are regular, the most recent enabling the school to offer a vocationally oriented stream through ATAR.

Curriculum adaptation	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good

- The curriculum is modified effectively to meet the needs of ESL learners, and students with special educational needs. However, modifications to extend the higher attainers in lessons, including the gifted and talented, do not consistently supply the needed challenge.
- Opportunities for innovation and creativity are regular in science and arts, but not as consistent within lessons in other subjects. The range of extracurricular enhancements, such as sports and clubs, provides many other opportunities. Links with Emirati culture and society are fully embedded and highly successful.

Areas of Strength:

- Continuity and progression of the curriculum.
- Links with Emirati culture and the UAE.

Areas for Improvement:

- Adaptation of the curriculum to better meet the needs of higher attainers, including the gifted and talented.

PERFORMANCE STANDARD 5:
THE PROTECTION, CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT OF STUDENTS

Indicators:	KG	Primary	Middle	High
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection /safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The protection, care, guidance, and support for students is outstanding. All staff, students and parents are fully aware of the school's safeguarding procedures. The school is highly effective in protecting students from harm. Rigorous safety checks are in place and the supervision of students is exceptionally effective.
- The refurbished building is clean, well-maintained, and meticulous records are kept. The facilities are now very well suited to the learning needs of all except those with mobility issues.
- The school's promotion of safe and healthy living is very effective. Health and wellbeing are fully integrated into the curriculum, for example in science, English and physical education.

Care and support	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good

- Exemplary staff-student relationships are evident, and students enjoy school life. Students' attendance is good, but there is scope for improvement here.
- The school has rigorous systems to identify students with special education needs. The school has recently conducted CAT4 tests that will strengthen these systems. Very effective support is in place for all students, with interventions well-matched to student needs. Provision within lessons for the higher attainers is less successful,
- The well-being and personal development of all students are closely monitored and are a strength of the school. A designated career advisor provides guidance programmes and events, and monitors students' progress towards their chosen goals.

Areas of Strength:

- Positive relationships and promoting student wellbeing.
- Arrangements for the safety, protection, and guidance of students.

Areas for Improvement:

- The rigour of identification and provision for gifted and talented students within lessons.
- Promotion of the importance of student attendance.

PERFORMANCE STANDARD 6: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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

- The quality of the leadership in the school is very good. Leadership's clear direction, underpinned by the school's mission, "Reach for the stars" inspires the school-wide drive to improvement whilst recognising UAE priorities. Leaders maintain an inclusive ethos.

- Leaders at all levels demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the requirements of the Australian and UAE curricula. Their comprehensive understanding of teaching, learning and assessment ensures very high levels of progress for learners. There is a need to strengthen the provision for Arabic language by inclusion of a senior specialist as an integral part of the school's senior academic leadership team.

- Communications with all stakeholders are professional and effective. Relationships and morale throughout the school are very positive, reflected in the productive learning environment. Leaders at all levels are very clear about what needs to be done to continue improving the school. That leaders have been very successful in developing the school, is seen by the improvement shown in most areas since the previous review in 2018. The school has been innovative in addressing facilities issues by repurposing spaces and persistent in addressing barriers to learning posed by language difficulties.

- Self-evaluation and improvement planning are very good, using both internal and external data. The systematic and consultative review processes result in the prioritization of key areas for improvement. Very effective systems that induct new teachers and monitor the impact of teaching and learning, also inform departmental plans. The alignment of comprehensive department plans with AIS's annual improvement targets, strategic goals and plans to meet UAE national priorities, has seen improved achievement in all subjects except for Arabic.

- The 'Advancing Partnerships' programme actively promotes parent and community engagement. Very effective communication strategies, including meetings and social media,

make parents feel supported and well-informed about their children's academic progress and social development. Parents can drop into school at any time to talk over any concerns, but there is also a regular reporting schedule supported by meet the teacher events. Parents' views are gathered through regular surveys, the most recent of which helped inform school decision-making round the four-day week and resulted in offering additional Arabic sessions after school. Productive links with local and international communities enrich students' learning, with opportunities to volunteer with Red Crescent and participate in 'Breast Cancer Awareness' and skiing trips.

- The Governing Board, including the owner, meets regularly and has plans to increase stakeholder representativeness following advice from the recent SPEA review (May 2022). Regular reports and frequent meetings at school ensure that the Board is aware of student achievement rates, resource requirements, or concerns of the school and local community. The owner is passionate about the school, influencing the school's direction, and holding the principal accountable through targets set in the annual and strategic plans.

- The management of the day-to-day life of the school is highly effective, and the school is compliant with health and safety regulations. Well-qualified staff are effectively deployed and benefit from a comprehensive CPD programme tailored to meet their needs. At-risk learners are supported by teacher assistants within classes and in break-out areas nearby. The re-fitted facilities, including a superb library, gym and sports facilities provide a stimulating learning environment. Plans for a lift to ease access for those with mobility issues are in place. However, laboratory access is restricted, technology facilities are limited, and the foundation education facilities could benefit from direct access to outside play areas to further children's active inquiry-based learning. A wide range of high-quality resources is well-matched to the curriculum requirements. Teachers are innovative, many making resources from recycled components that model the school's sustainable approach.

Areas of Strength:

- Leadership's clear direction and effective improvement planning.
- Positive community partnerships.

Areas for Improvement:

- Facilities to support science education.
- Strengthening AIS's senior academic leadership to fully represent the needs of Arabic-medium subjects.

SPEA ADDITIONAL FOCUS AREAS

Provision for Arabic Language

- The school has 31 teachers of Arabic, the teacher: student ratio being 1:45 overall.
- The attractive library, complete with interactive spaces, encourages use. Provision is extensive with half of the approximately 40,000 books being Arabic (including Islamic), including Arabic home readers (5,500 books), class readers, teacher resources (10% or 4000 book). The general collection for borrowing includes 20% non-fiction (8,000+ books) and 70% fiction (28,000 books). Borrowing records and stocktaking are well-kept using digital software (Oliver). The library has a comprehensive event programme including talks by visiting authors and lunchtime activities.
- Classrooms have their own book collections that are changed regularly in accordance with children's levels, supplemented by digital resources, such as the 'I read Arabic' levelled readers in primary. Wheelers eBooks and Audiobooks provide another 1,000,000+ resources. Free reading alongside the comprehensive structured reading programme encourages reading for pleasure.
- Extra-curricular activities to promote reading include the Premier's reading challenge, the Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Reading Challenge, and visits to the Sharjah Book Fair. Senior students facilitate additional after-school reading support and in class visits the upper grade students read to younger ones.
- Parents are engaged in supporting their children's reading via a home reading programme for Arabic that starts from Prep-6. Parents are encouraged to use the 'I read Arabic', to join the Sharjah library and to borrow books from the AIS collection. As a result of parents' concerns about the level of Arabic, an after-school homework club is available.

The school's use of external benchmarking data

- The school benchmarks using the following assessment results:
    a. ATAR/QCE/IB All Grades 11 and 12 in that stream.
    b. PISA -15-year-olds specified sample 3-yearly.
    c. PIRLS, all grade 4.
    d. TIMSS, grade 4/grade 8 specified sample.
    e. PAT reading, science, and mathematics (Grades 10,8,7,6,5,4,3).
    f. CAT4 Grade 9 and 10.
    g. EmSat - only students wishing to enter a UAE university.
    h. ACER IBT Last sat in 2017. Arabic will commence in November 2022 for Grade 12.
- To prepare students for these examinations, questions to encourage critical thinking and problem solving are included within the curriculum at all levels and subjects. Mock exams are held to familiarize students with examination protocols, including the exam timetable, study leave, and structured support from teachers during study leave.
- The QCE and IB international test results are sent directly to the students. AIS collects that data, then puts it into a transcript for the Ministry of Education.
- Diagnostic test results are communicated to parents as part of a wider learning conversation. Parents are made aware of the importance of international tests through the advancing partnerships programme. Benchmarking data is often used when trying to explain to parents
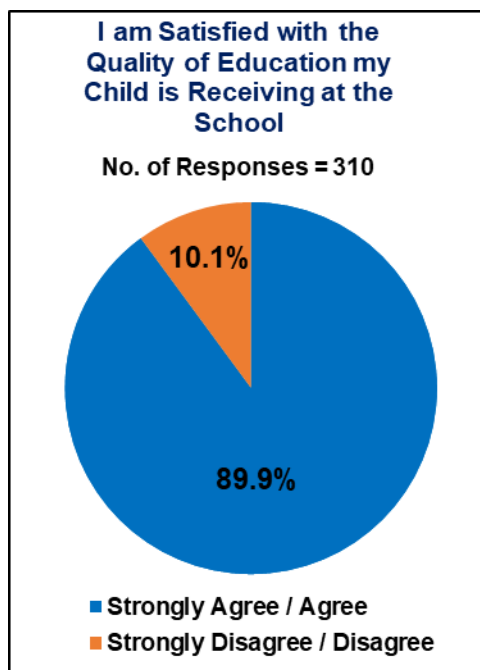
the significance of their child's progress result, but this data is not sent home directly with comments because this leads to misinterpretation.

Provision for KG

- The school equivalent of KG1 is ELC (6 classes with 109 children) and KG2 is Prep (4 classes with 78 children), with the lower number in Prep due to change in the age cut off. Next year AIS expects 6 classes in both year groups. There are full time teacher assistants (TA) in each class in ELC (7 TAs) and Prep (5TAs) and Grade 1 and in Grade 2 upwards two classes share a TA. The ratio of teachers to children is ELC - 1:20 and in Prep - 1:25, with a 1:6 ratio in a group with a TA. There is a float TA to step in or take the children to the clinic.
- The ELC is in a separate building and Prep in in the main building and follows a different curriculum from ELC. To support learning indoors, rooms have 'learning areas' and children's groupings arranged according to the teacher's assessment of needs. The section is well resourced, with a range of art supplies (paint marking, glue, scissors, collage); home and role play (e.g., doctor, aeroplane, pirate ship); construction (wooden blocks, Lego, Duplo, Connectors); sensory exploration (sand, water); and a book corner, which allows for reading, solving puzzles and problem solving. Learning is supported by digital devices (iPad and IWB).
- The outdoor environment and learning resources are set up each morning according to the focus, but typically in the ELC include a water trough, climbing areas, interactive peg boards, bikes, obstacle courses (where children can crawl into a tunnel jumping in and out of hula hoops). In Prep, resources include a climbing frame and slide, balls, sensory walk, and a STEM wall. Teachers take the children outside if it links with what they are teaching, and children can choose to go outside at break time.
- Arrangements for induction when children start in the ELC are that a parent information session is held at the end of the previous academic year where prospective parents are given a story to read to their child about starting school. Baseline testing is done, using the Brigance Assessment (Australian EY wholistic assessment - diagnostic). AIS is an inclusive school, so almost all children are accepted, including SEN if AIS can cater for their needs. The assessment identifies the level of support needed and identifies any potential G&T students. The week prior to starting, an orientation week is held, where children visit their new classroom, tour the school, and meet the teacher with the parents to engage in a simple activity to simulate what they will be doing at school. The school has a staggered start, with five children coming at one time until there is a full class. Transition for ELC to prep occurs at the end of the previous academic year, with a meet the teacher, visit the new classroom and carry out a 30-minute activity over three weeks.

VIEWS OF PARENTS

I am Satisfied with the Quality of Education my Child is Receiving at the School

No. of Responses = 310

10.1%

89.9%

- Strongly Agree / Agree
- Strongly Disagree / Disagree

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS

- Improve the achievement of students overall particularly in phase 2 and in Arabic as a first language (AFL across all phases by:
    - using disaggregated assessment data more rigorously to identify learners who require additional support
    - smoothing the transition between phase 1 and phase 2
    - building in more opportunities to practise Arabic within school life and across other subjects
    - training Arabic teachers in strategies to further improve reading.

- Implement consistently effective teaching and assessment strategies and adapt the curriculum to better extend the learning of all students, especially those in Phase 2, the higher-attaining students, including the gifted and talented, within classes by:
    - reviewing the planning template to make it easier for teachers to detail specific strategies that personalise learning
    - using identified best-practice teachers to help others shift the focus from teaching to learners and learning
    - adapting the curriculum to personalise learning
    - extending the range of differentiation techniques teachers use (content, process, product, pace, place, resources, assessment)

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- making an additional time allocation for specific groups
- using existing timetabled slots for better effect (DEAR programme in homeroom/circle time)
- continuing curriculum matching and common themes to reduce repetition and emphasise skill development (such as scientific report writing to help extended writing in English).

- Improve students' social responsibility, innovation skills and attendance by:
  - working with parents to develop an understanding of how absence impacts learning
  - engaging students in solving the attendance problem
  - reinstating the wider range of opportunities to develop social responsibility in place pre-COVID
  - identifying and integrating the skills that underpin innovation (such as ideation and initiative) within lessons across all subjects.

In addition to considering the full content of this report and identifying actions required to bring about improvement, the school should build the strategic recommendations into its improvement planning process.

In consultation with the assigned School Improvement Advisor, the school should send its revised improvement plan, including specific actions, timescales, and success measures, to SPEA within two months of the publication of this report. Four months later, the school should submit a detailed report on progress to SPEA.

SPEA's next school review will validate the progress report and include a review of further progress made by the school in implementing the recommendations from this SPR report.

If you have a concern or wish to comment on any aspect of this report, please contact SPEA on schools.review@spea.shj.ae within three weeks of receiving this report.