



دائرة التعليم والمعرفة  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
AND KNOWLEDGE

# Inspection Report of Abu Dhabi Grammar School

Overall Effectiveness (Good)

Academic Year 2017 – 2018



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## School Information

General Information	Inspection date:	from	25 Jumada Al-Awwal 1439	to	29 Jumada Al-Awwal 1439
		from	12-Feb-18	to	15-Feb-18
	School name	Abu Dhabi Grammar School (Canada)			
	School ID	9049			
	School address	PO Box 27161 Tourist Club Area Abu Dhabi			
	School telephone	+971 (0)2 644 4703			
	School official email	Adgrammar.pvt.ae			
	School website	www.agsgrammar.sch.ae			
	School curriculum	Canadian (Nova Scotia)			
	School phases	Kindergarten (KG), primary, middle high			
	Fee range and category	21,000 – 45,100 AED (Medium to high)			
	Number of lessons observed	116			
Number of joint lessons observed	10				
Staff Information	Total number of teachers	77			
	Turnover rate	14%			
	Number of teaching assistants	11			
	Teacher- student ratio	1: 14			
Student Information	Total number of students	1122			
	% of Emirati Students	5%			
	% of Largest nationality groups	1. Jordan 19%			
		2. Egypt 13%			
		3. Syria 11%			
	% of SEN students	2%			
	% of students per phase	KG: 7%	Middle: 30%		
Primary: 44%		High: 19%			
Gender	Boys and girls				



## The Performance of the School

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



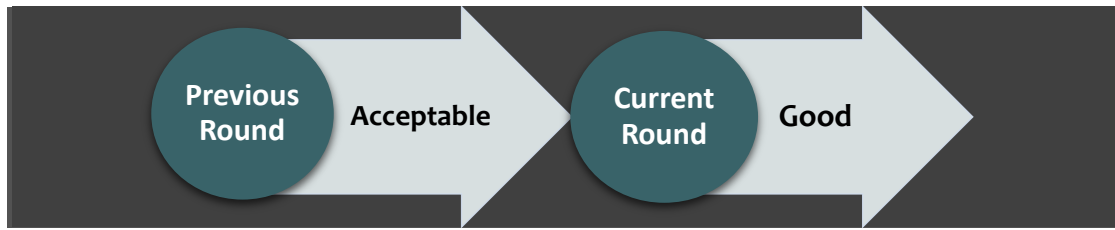
## Evaluation of the school's overall performance

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- The overall performance of the school is good. The school continues to improve its provision and to develop students' personal and academic achievement.
- Students' achievement is good overall. In English it is particularly good, and is consistent across phases. Progress is good in mathematics and science. In Islamic education, Arabic and social studies, achievement is acceptable and noticeably less strong than in English medium subjects. Students' achievement is weak in Arabic as an additional language in the high phase.
- Students' personal and social development and their innovation skills are good with students demonstrating an outstanding work ethic. Good behaviour, positive attitudes and a thorough understanding of life skills such as problem-solving, are the norm for most students.
- Teaching and assessment are good and continue to improve across all subjects, but at different rates. Teaching is stronger for subjects linked to the Nova Scotia curriculum, where teachers use innovative and varied methods, encouraging students to think for themselves.
- The curriculum is good, being developed well for all subjects. It is closely followed in each subject and adapted to the needs of most, but not all students.
- The protection care, guidance and welfare of students is very good with highly effective procedures. Systems are very frequently reviewed with regular update retraining. These ensure a very calm, orderly atmosphere within a professional and friendly environment. Over time, very positive relationships have been engendered through ensuring students understand the purpose of their education.
- Leadership and management are good, and at the heart of improvements. Sensible and well-considered developments, within realistic timescales, have ensured there is continuous improvement. The school is presently frustrated by the need for further development of the cramped site.



## Progress made since last inspection and capacity to improve



- Good progress has been made in improving the overall performance of the school. All performance standards have improved and strengths identified at the last inspection have been maintained.
- Previous issues have been addressed. There is more consistency in the quality of teaching and learning and in the achievement of students. The biggest improvement is in the achievement in English medium subjects. Arabic medium subjects remain at acceptable levels.
- Levels of challenge have increased. Almost all students achieve their leaving certificate, enabling them to move onto their future careers, although higher achievers need even more challenge. Problem-solving, creative and critical thinking and entrepreneurial skills are developed well from Kindergarten (KG). Tracking of student progress is integrated within subjects and reflected upon by teachers.
- There is good capacity for further improvement since school leaders have the skills and vision, combined with accurate self-reflection, to continue driving the school forward.



## Key areas of strength and areas for improvement

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### Key areas of strength

- The improved curriculum, resulting in better achievement in English and more consistency in students' progress in mathematics and science.
- The very positive attitudes, work ethic and behaviour of students.
- The way the school cares, supports and safeguards students in their personal and academic achievements.

### Key areas for improvement

1. Improve the accountability of teachers for the progress of their students over time, and ensure students' achievement in Islamic education and Arabic is improved by:
  - i. identifying and eliminating the weaknesses in teaching and learning
  - ii. providing professional development in teaching pedagogy and practice
  - iii. analysing the effectiveness of training and its impact on teacher practice and student achievement.
2. Increase the achievement of higher attaining students, enabling them to achieve their full potential by:
  - i. analysing data to determine those who are achieving, or are likely to achieve, above, or well above expected standard
  - ii. ensuring they are given challenging extended or alternative learning activities in lessons
  - iii. revisiting student performance data to identify the impact improved practice has had on student achievement.



## Provision for Reading

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- The school has a suitable library, but most of the research and fiction reading material for both Arabic and English are dispersed either across classrooms or to the students. These, along with many e-books, are used well.
- Due to very regular guided and independent reading sessions, students have an increasingly good level of the various disciplines of reading. It is most effective in English where e-book libraries are compiled by students that support the development of their reading comprehension.
- The recent two-year plan to improve reading has had a significantly positive impact on driving up attainment in English, particularly through the increased expertise of teachers. The plan has not been as effective for reading in Arabic, particularly for the oldest students.
- Reading is well integrated through areas of the curriculum due to an emphasis within the Canadian curriculum for independent research and discovery. A new development, soon to be introduced, is in the use of peer reading between upper and lower grades in both Arabic and English. Reading areas are apparent in many of the lower age classes where students enjoy the activities provided for them.
- Assessment procedures are effective for English and to a lesser extent Arabic. Teachers use the information to plan future learning and to direct students to more difficult genre and texts.





## Performance Standard 1: Students' Achievement

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



### Overall achievement

- The overall achievement of students is good. Attainment and progress are good in English. Progress is good overall in mathematics and science and in Arabic as a first language in KG and primary phases. In all other subjects it is at least acceptable, except in Arabic as an additional language. Here, achievement is weak for those students in the high phase.
- Nova Scotia assessments broadly confirm similar findings. Most students meet the expected standard with a large majority exceeding this, particularly in grades 1 to 6. In Arabic, results are exceptionally high in the MOE examination, though this level of attainment is not reflected in inspection evidence. By grade 12, almost all students pass the Canadian certificate, enabling them to move on to university or to their chosen profession.

### Subjects

- In **Islamic education** students' achievement is acceptable and their knowledge and understanding is in line with curriculum requirements. Students in the middle phase make good progress and demonstrate understanding of Islamic conventions and concepts and respect the culture of Islam. A minority are not able to use correct Tajweed rules when reading the Qur'an.
- Students' achievement in **Arabic as a first language** is acceptable overall with most students understanding standard Arabic and responding appropriately. They read age appropriate texts with reasonable fluency, understand stories and answer comprehension questions suitably. Students apply grammatical rules in context and adequately build their learning to extended writing. Students have variable writing skills with better skills in KG and the primary phase.
- Students' achievement in **Arabic as an additional language** is acceptable except in the high phase where it is weak. Students increasingly understand and can read simple conversations in standard Arabic. They identify simple functional vocabulary when writing and by grade 9 they transfer information from short stories.
- In **social studies**, students' achievement is acceptable overall and best in KG. Most students attain acceptable knowledge of UAE social issues, the history and values of prominent figures. They make expected progress and have developed appropriate levels of learning skills particularly the communication and linking of learning experiences to the real world.



- Students' achievement in **English** is good throughout and they quickly become confident in their speaking, listening, reading and writing. By the middle phase, a large majority are writing extended pieces and can coherently explain ideas they researched. By the high phase most read and write at above expected levels but higher achievers do not always reach their potential.
- Students' achievement in **mathematics** is good overall and most students attain at levels above curriculum standards. Most students use new technologies and make progress which exceeds age-related expectations in handling numbers, algebra and geometry. In KG, children's achievement is acceptable because they do not have enough opportunities to work independently or in groups.
- Achievement in **science** is good overall and students develop their understanding of planning investigations and experimental variables. By the high phase, students can identify the independent, dependant and control variables in an investigation. They research subjects in depth and independently present findings innovatively using different technologies.
- Students' achievement in the many other subjects is good especially in art, music and history. In design and information technology, student achievement is very good while in physical education, students achieve in line with expectations. In history, older students understand how to use reliable sources of information. Children in KG improve their use of English and their understanding of numbers through participation in music and singing.

#### **Learning skills**

- Students' learning skills are good and they are often very highly involved and motivated. Most know how to improve, take pride in their learning and can easily work independently or in groups. Through cross-curricular themes they can see how one subject interlocks with others. Students' extensive and very confident use of different technologies develop good critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

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

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- Improvement in all aspects of English across all grades
- Students' improved progress in mathematics and science

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

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- Achievement in the Arabic medium subjects especially in Arabic as an



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- additional language in grades 10 to 12.
- Higher level mathematics work in KG.



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

Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
Personal development	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good	Good	Good
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Students' personal and social development is good overall with an outstanding attitude to learning, combining effectively with an exceptionally high work ethic.
- Students develop as self-reliant and independent learners, demonstrated by very good behaviour. Strong and constructive relationships are embedded. Students know what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, although food choices do not always support this. They participate enthusiastically in sporting activities. Attendance at 96% is very good.
- Students have an appreciation and respect for the UAE culture and talk increasingly knowledgeably about the heritage of the Emirates, Canada and the wider world.
- Students are involved in a range of programs to help develop their environment such as a group who travelled to Kenya as volunteers.
- Students are involved in numerous school activities and leadership roles in some. They are keen learners even when teaching is not well focused. They use a very wide range of technology enabling them to be innovators and develop creative thought. They independently undertake research and problem-solving tasks. Students came first at the International Conference on leadership, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Students have regularly been placed in the top 10 teams nationally at the 'Idea Factor' business contest and taken 1st and 3rd place more than once. Students are effectively developing their learning skills that underpin innovation in lessons.



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

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- Students' strong work ethic and willingness to improve.
- The behaviour and attitudes of almost all students in and around school.

### **Areas for Improvement:**

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- Demonstration of a healthy lifestyle through their choice of foods.



### Performance Standard 3: Teaching and Assessment

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

- The overall quality of teaching and assessment is good. Most teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge, have positive relationships and deliver appropriate activities. Teaching actively promotes good English skills. ICT is used very effectively to support teaching both as a tool for teachers and to facilitate students' research, problem-solving and independent learning.
- Tasks are linked to real world situations and give a context to students' learning. Collaborative and independent work is promoted by most teachers although in Islamic education and Arabic as a second language, this is not as well developed.
- Most teachers use questioning and follow up questions to thoroughly engage students, ensuring students justify their answers. Teachers do not always encourage students to think deeply enough about their learning to promote higher levels of understanding and attainment.
- Regular assessments of student achievement happen in all subjects being closely linked to curriculum, national and international standards. Senior leaders analyse data and share the findings with teachers. Use of assessment data to inform teaching and personalise learning is less well developed.
- In a large minority of subjects, teachers provide students with detailed written feedback that helps students to improve their work. Verbal feedback is given in most lessons when students have misconceptions about a concept and this is effective in helping move a student's learning forward.

#### Areas of Relative Strength:

- Use of ICT by teachers and students.
- Open-ended questioning that encourages students to reflect and be critical.



### Areas for Improvement:

- Teaching strategies to promote deep thinking, independence and collaboration, particularly in Islamic education and Arabic as a second language.
- Use of assessment data to inform teaching and personalise learning further especially in Islamic education and Arabic as a second language.





## Performance Standard 4: Curriculum

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

- The overall quality of the curriculum is good. There is a clear rationale aligned to the school and Emirati visions, balancing knowledge, skills and understanding. It fulfils all the requirements of the Nova Scotia International program and UAE statutory requirements.
- The curriculum meets the needs of most students but is less effective in challenging the more able. Almost all students are well prepared for the next phase of their education.
- There is a wide range of subjects and other activities. Cross-curricular links are meaningful, effectively helping students transfer learning. Regular reviews are conducted and monitored externally by the Nova Scotia authorities.
- Teachers modify the curriculum to meet the needs of almost all groups of students, except higher achieving students. Less consistency is seen in the Arabic medium subjects particularly in the High phase.
- Good opportunities for enterprise, innovation and creativity are provided through most curricular areas such as the highly sophisticated use of an ICT educational commercial platform.
- Learning experiences are integrated well, enabling students to develop clear understanding of the UAE's values, culture and society.
- Moral education is taught through discrete lessons using appropriate material and linked well to requirements. It further promotes students' positive values.

### Areas of Relative Strength:

- The highly developed use of technology to support all curricular areas.
- The wide range of curricular options

### Areas for Improvement:

- Activities in the Arabic medium subjects particularly in grades 10 to 12.
- Development of extended learning opportunities for the more able.



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

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

- The overall quality of the protection, care, guidance and support of students is very good. Staff, students and families are fully aware of the rigorous procedures for supervising students and keeping everyone safe. The school does everything possible to protect students from all forms of abuse and bullying including cyberbullying.
- Leaders ensure that the clean, hygienic buildings and equipment are well maintained. Staff and students make the best use of the cramped outdoor space through very careful organisation of break times and PE lessons. The promotion of healthy lifestyles is evident in the curriculum and in displays.
- Staff and students enjoy very positive relationships and demonstrate a thirst for learning. Strategies for promoting high attendance and punctuality are very effective.
- Systems for identifying and supporting SEN students result in high quality teaching and support in most lessons. Systems for the gifted and talented are less well developed. The learning needs of the highest achievers are not yet met consistently well.
- Guidance and support is well organised. Students receive helpful support from staff and other students when they join the school. Personalised guidance is provided for older students about future employment or university places.

### Areas of Relative Strength:

- Child protection, the care, welfare and safeguarding of students.
- Arrangements to ensure health and safety of students.

### Areas for Improvement:

- The provision of space for outdoor play and learning.
- The identification of and support for the high achieving students.



## Performance Standard 6: Leadership and management

Leadership and management Indicators	
The effectiveness of leadership	Good
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good
Partnerships with parents and the community	Very Good
Governance	Good
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The principal and senior leaders provide a clear vision, middle leaders have appropriate roles and morale is high. Senior leaders do not, however, hold all teachers sufficiently to account for the progress of students over time. Consequently, achievement in the Arabic subjects is not progressing at the same rate as in English subjects.</li><li>• Improvements and forward-planning show a good capacity for the future. Highly evaluative self-evaluation and school development plans are based on secure information compiled through stakeholder collaboration. Regular monitoring and development of teaching is not consistently effective; it is better for the English medium subjects.</li><li>• Parents and others form a strong and close working bond. Effective and regular communication is enhanced through good use of technology.</li><li>• The proprietors are involved and kept informed by the school, students and parent body. The governing board have a positive impact on the school.</li><li>• Day-to-day management is very good with adequately qualified staff. The buildings are cramped due to increased student numbers but effectively maintained with well-used extra facilities. Resources are well deployed.</li><li>• The school has been very involved in preparation for the TIMSS examinations in 2019 by using the question-a-day programme. Students are encouraged and supported to complete their tasks. Mock PISA results are analysed and used effectively to promote students' performance.</li></ul>	
<b>Areas of Relative Strength:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The improvements made since the last inspection.</li><li>• Leadership to ensure more students make better than expected progress.</li></ul>	



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### **Areas for Improvement:**

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- The monitoring and professional development of some teachers.
- Ensuring that teachers are held to account for the progress of all their students