



دائرة التعليم والمعرفة  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
AND KNOWLEDGE

# Inspection Report of The Sheikh Zayed Academy for Boys

**Overall Effectiveness: Very good**

**Academic Year 2017 – 2018**



## Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| School Information.....  | 3  |
| The Performance of the School.....   | 4  |
| Evaluation of the school's overall performance .....   | 5  |
| Progress made since last inspection and capacity to improve .....                                    | 6  |
| Key areas of strength and area for improvement .....   | 7  |
| Provision for Reading.....   | 8  |
| Performance Standard 1: Students' Achievement.....   | 9  |
| Performance Standard 2: Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills ..... | 13 |
| Performance Standard 3: Teaching and Assessment .....  | 14 |
| Performance Standard 4: Curriculum .....   | 15 |
| Performance Standard 5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students...                    | 16 |
| Performance Standard 6: Leadership and management .....  | 17 |



## School Information

|                     |  |  |                 |    |                 |
|---------------------|--|--|-----------------|----|-----------------|
| General Information | Inspection date:   | from   | 28 Shaban 1439h | to | 1 Ramadan 1439h |
|                     |  | from   | 14-May-18       | to | 17-May-18       |
|                     | School name  | Sheikh Zayed Academy for Boys                |                 |    |                 |
|                     | School ID  | 264  |                 |    |                 |
|                     | School address   | Al Falah Street, Abu Dhabi                   |                 |    |                 |
|                     | School telephone   | +971 0(2) 203 3333                           |                 |    |                 |
|                     | School official email                                      | zayedpa.boys@adec.ac.ae                      |                 |    |                 |
|                     | School website   | www.zayedacademy.ae/boys                     |                 |    |                 |
|                     | School curriculum  | American                                     |                 |    |                 |
|                     | School phases  | KG - Middle                                  |                 |    |                 |
|                     | Fee range and category                                     | AED 47,900 to AED 58,200 (high to very high) |                 |    |                 |
|                     | Number of lessons observed                                 | 121  |                 |    |                 |
|                     | Number of joint lessons observed                           | 12   |                 |    |                 |
| Staff Information   | Total number of teachers                                   | 79   |                 |    |                 |
|                     | Turnover rate  | 19%  |                 |    |                 |
|                     | Number of teaching assistants                              | 30   |                 |    |                 |
|                     | Teacher- student ratio                                     | 1:12   |                 |    |                 |
| Student Information | Total number of students                                   | 1047   |                 |    |                 |
|                     | % of Emirati Students                                      | 93 %   |                 |    |                 |
|                     | % of Largest nationality groups                            | 1. Jordan 2%                                 |                 |    |                 |
|                     |  | 2. Egypt 1%                                  |                 |    |                 |
|                     |  | 3. USA 1%                                    |                 |    |                 |
|                     | % of SEN students  | 10%  |                 |    |                 |
|                     | % of students per phase                                    | KG: 22%                                      | Middle: 30%     |    |                 |
| Primary: 48%        |  | High: N/A                                    |                 |    |                 |
| Gender              | Boys and Girls: KG1 to Grade 3<br>Boys: Grade 4 to Grade 9 |  |                 |    |                 |



## The Performance of the School

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



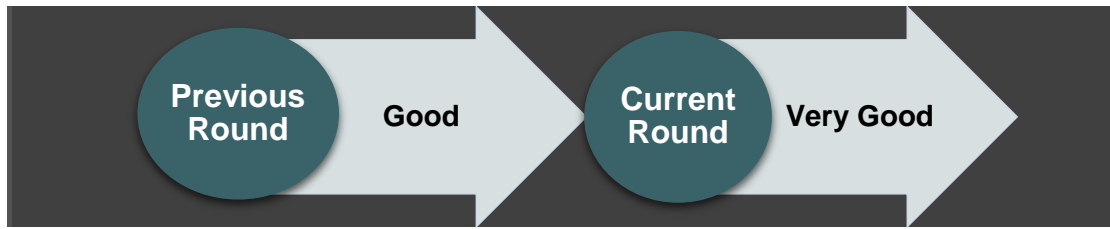
## Evaluation of the school's overall performance

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- The overall performance of the school is very good. Since the last inspection, the school has increased its roll in all grades and now includes students up to Grade 9.
- Students' achievement is very good overall. Attainment is good overall. It is very good in the kindergarten (KG). The sharp improvement in attainment throughout the school is a result of the very good progress students make, including those with special educational needs (SEN). Students' learning skills are very good overall.
- Students' personal and social development is outstanding. They show pride in their school, their heritage, their faith and their culture. They show respect for each other, their teachers, their leaders and other cultures. Their highly innovative use of learning technology is an example of best practice.
- The effectiveness of teaching and the use of assessment are very good. Teaching is not less than very good in every subject and is outstanding in Arabic and English in KG. Teachers have strong knowledge of their subjects and know their students well. There is not always sufficient challenge for the most able. Assessment is regular and rigorous and contributes strongly to the very good progress students make through the school.
- The quality of the school curriculum is very good. It is outstanding in KG, where it readies students for the next stage of their education. It is coherent and well-reviewed throughout the school. The middle school curriculum has yet to prepare the most able students fully for the challenges of high school learning. The range of curricular and extra-curricular choices is outstanding and there are very good links between areas of learning.
- The quality of protection, care, guidance and support for students is outstanding. The school's safe and secure environment promotes healthy living and positive relationships for all students. The school provides skilled and caring guidance and support for all students. The identification and support of SEN students is an example of best practice. The provision for those who are gifted and talented (G&T) has yet to have as strong an impact.
- The overall quality of leadership and management is outstanding. Leaders at all levels are committed to Sheikh Zayed's mission to 'honour the past and educate the future'. In partnership with parents and the community, they are creating a successful school with an ambitious vision and a caring ethos. Expert and supportive governance ensures accountability and clear strategic direction.



## Progress made since last inspection and capacity to improve



- School leaders have addressed all the recommendations in the previous inspection report. They have improved almost all aspects of the school's performance. They have yet to show as strong an impact in the challenge for higher attainers.
- Students' overall attainment has improved markedly in all subjects and is now at least good throughout the school. Their progress is now very good.
- Students' personal and social development and the protection, care, guidance and support of students are now outstanding. Students thrive in a secure and stimulating environment.
- Leaders have developed teaching strategies that are student-centred. Teachers now use assessment very effectively in lessons and set clear goals through a dialogue with students. This has led to strong improvement in students' achievement.
- The school's very good curriculum means that parents and students have clear and effective academic guidance and support in their education. The KG curriculum is now outstanding.
- Under the leadership of an exceptionally effective principal, school leaders at all levels demonstrate an outstanding capacity to continue to innovate and improve over time.



## Key areas of strength and areas for improvement

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### Key areas of strength

1. The impact of school leaders and governors in promoting the school's mission among students, staff and parents.
2. The effectiveness of teaching in promoting students' engagement and progress in all subjects.
3. The success of the kindergarten curriculum in providing a strong start to children's education.
4. The impact of the school's protection, care, guidance and support on the personal and social development of all students.
5. Examples of best practice in the provision for students with special educational needs and in the innovative use of learning technology.

### Key areas for improvement

1. Further raise students' attainment in all subjects by:
  - i. continuing the school's unrelenting focus on students' progress
  - ii. ensuring all teachers have high expectations for the attainment of all students, particularly as they move up to the high phase.
2. Increase the level of challenge already offered to students, particularly higher achievers, as they progress through the school by:
  - i. further developing the school's programme and curriculum for identifying and supporting gifted and talented students
  - ii. all teachers' making more effective use of questioning to promote critical thinking and problem solving
  - iii. the further use of collaboration and research to develop students as independent learners.



## Provision for Reading

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- The school has two libraries in addition to reading corners in every classroom. Teachers regularly borrow books to use in lessons and students take home fiction and non-fiction texts in both Arabic and English.
- Students have a very wide choice of English books and resources. The school has not yet fully developed its stock of Arabic books and dictionaries.
- Students' experience of reading is enhanced in all phases through the innovative use of learning technology. Students read stories on tablets and interact with them through quizzes, games and written responses.
- Systematic phonics, reading and writing programmes are very effective in English and in Arabic. These are carefully graded and include daily sessions of guide reading.
- Students use the library in lessons to support their extended reading and writing. They develop their critical thinking and research skills, making links to real life experiences.
- Parents are partners in promoting students' reading. Reading coordinators and teachers send home progress reports and schedules. Special reading events are increasingly well attended.
- Reading is frequently promoted across the school. Teachers are well trained in integrating Arabic and English reading skills into their subjects.
- The school thoroughly analyses internal and external reading data. Teachers update their lesson plans to give students more opportunities to practice their reading.
- The school has an innovative system to follow reading at home, documented through students' own videos.





## Performance Standard 1: Students' Achievement

| Students' achievement Indicators      |            | KG          | Primary   | Middle    | High |
|---------------------------------------|------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|------|
| Islamic Education                     | Attainment | Good        | Good      | Good      |      |
|                                       | Progress   | Very Good   | Very Good | Very Good |      |
| Arabic<br>(as a First Language)       | Attainment | Very Good   | Good      | Good      |      |
|                                       | Progress   | Outstanding | Very Good | Very Good |      |
| Arabic<br>(as an Additional Language) | Attainment | N/A         | Very Good | Very Good |      |
|                                       | Progress   | N/A         | Very Good | Very Good |      |
| Social Studies                        | Attainment | Good        | Good      | Good      |      |
|                                       | Progress   | Very Good   | Very Good | Very Good |      |
| English                               | Attainment | Very Good   | Good      | Good      |      |
|                                       | Progress   | Outstanding | Very Good | Very Good |      |
| Mathematics                           | Attainment | Very Good   | Good      | Good      |      |
|                                       | Progress   | Very Good   | Very Good | Very Good |      |
| Science                               | Attainment | Good        | Good      | Good      |      |
|                                       | Progress   | Very Good   | Very Good | Very Good |      |
| Other subjects<br>(Art, Music, PE)    | Attainment | Very Good   | Very Good | Very Good |      |
|                                       | Progress   | Very Good   | Very Good | Very Good |      |
| Learning Skills                       |            | Very Good   | Very Good | Very Good |      |



### Overall achievement

- The overall quality of students' achievement is very good. Attainment is good overall. All students in all grades are new to the school in the last three years. Leaders have successfully tackled a legacy of low attainment from previous education. School internal assessments show that most students across all subjects attain above curriculum standards in primary and well above in middle. Attainment above age related expectations was seen in lessons and in scrutiny of students' work. MAP tests in English, mathematics and science show a weak but rapidly improving profile against international benchmarks.
- Attainment is very good in the kindergarten (KG). It is very good in Arabic as a second language and overall in non-core subjects throughout the school.
- Overall, the large majority of students make very good progress in every subject. Progress is outstanding in both Arabic and English in KG. English is an additional language (EAL) for almost all students in the school. The progress of different groups of students, including girls in KG to Grade 3, and SEN students, is broadly similar to that of other students. The most able students do not always achieve at the highest level. Students' learning skills are very good.

### Subjects

- Students' achievement in **Islamic Education** is very good overall. The majority of students attain above curriculum expectations and are making very good progress. Children in KG 2 can clearly recite verses from the Holy Qur'an and a large minority from memory. By Grade 9, students can confidently analyse and explain the meaning of different verses and give examples from real life situations.
- Students' achievement in **Arabic as a first language** is very good overall. It is outstanding in KG, where children's attainment is very good, particularly their speaking and listening skills. Students' creative writing and reading are above curriculum standards in primary and middle. Older students' skills in speaking standard Arabic are less well developed. Children's progress in KG is outstanding and older students are making very good progress.
- Students' achievement in **Arabic as a second language** is very good. The very few students attain levels well above the curriculum standards and make better than expected progress. Their Arabic skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing are very well developed. They can use a wide range of appropriate vocabulary.
- Students' achievement in **social studies** is very good. The large majority



of students are attaining above curriculum expectations. They are making very good progress. The majority of children in KG know important facts about the UAE. Grade 4 students show very good knowledge about the foundation of the UAE and the work of Sheikh Zayed. Grade 8 students can compare and contrast ancient and modern civilisations, discussing their settlement in specific regions. Students are very willing to share their learning and support their peers in innovative project work.

- Students' achievement in **English** is very good overall. It is outstanding in KG. The majority of students are attaining above curriculum expectations as are the large majority in KG, where children start with little or no English. By the end of KG2 they listen carefully to instructions and confidently speak in and write simple sentences. Students' make very good progress as learners of English as an additional language. By Grade 9 they can discuss an author's intentions and write with fluency and accuracy.
- Students' achievement in **mathematics** is very good overall. Their attainment is good, and their progress is very good. Children's achievement in the KG is very good. In primary and middle, the majority can calculate and reason highly effectively in number and algebra. Their mental mathematics skills are well developed. The majority can recall numbers fact quickly. Students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills are not as well developed in all lessons, resulting in higher-achieving students not always being fully challenged.
- Achievement in **science** is very good overall. Students' attainment is good across all cycles. Students make very good progress throughout the school. Students gain very good scientific, enquiry and investigative skills. Students apply their learning skills in science very well, using key scientific methods for experiments and using scientific vocabulary. In the higher grades there is less challenge for students to research independently.
- Achievement in **other subjects** is very good. Students' attainment is very good across all phases. Students make very good progress. They develop increasingly creative and artistic skills, often collaboratively, and develop their aesthetic appreciation of art and music. They develop physical skills in PE. Their use of technology is exceptionally strong as they apply their learning skills both in and out of the classroom.

### Learning skills

- Students' learning skills are very good. They are outstanding in Arabic and English in KG. From KG onwards, they develop positive attitudes, habits and routines. Their engagement is strong, and they collaborate well in practical subjects such as PE, art and music. They frequently take



responsibility and know how to improve from teachers' oral feedback. Students produce innovative projects which show confidence and often link to UAE culture and heritage. Application to the real world is evident in lessons and in clubs and activities. Students make highly effective use of learning technologies in lessons. Their critical-thinking and problem-solving skills are less well developed.

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

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- Students' progress as seen in lessons, work scrutiny and internal data.
- Constant and innovative use of learning technology.
- The achievement of SEN students in lessons and in supported work.

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

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- Students' critical-thinking and problem-solving skills when tackling the most challenging tasks.



## 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  | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |      |
| Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures       | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |      |
| Social responsibility and innovation skills                                       | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |      |

- Students' personal and social development is outstanding.
- Students have a very strong work ethic. Their highly positive attitudes to learning and to school result in excellent behaviour for all age groups. They are respectful of others, confident and caring. Students have excellent relationships with their peers and with staff.
- Students feel safe at school and understand the importance of following safe and healthy lifestyles. Attendance is good at 94% and students are generally punctual to school and almost always to lessons.
- Students at all grades, from many different schools, have formed a united and happy community. They display the highest regard for the history and culture of the UAE and demonstrate Islamic values in their everyday lives. They have a curiosity and a respect for other world cultures.
- Students make highly innovative use of learning technologies in creative and imaginative projects, both curricular and extra-curricular. They develop their entrepreneurial skills, from, for example, a Grade 1 art sale to Grade 9 making their own video commercials.

### Areas of Relative Strength:

- Students' positive attitudes and respect for others and for the UAE.
- Students' innovation and awareness of environmental issues.
- Students' adoption of a healthy diet and life style.

### Areas for Improvement:

- Further improve students' attendance and punctuality to school.



### Performance Standard 3: Teaching and Assessment

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

- The quality of teaching and assessment is very good overall.
- Almost all teachers apply very good knowledge of their subjects and of how students learn. They plan purposeful lessons. Teachers' caring relationships with students promote active engagement in lessons. Well trained learning assistants strongly support learning in the classroom.
- Teachers' use of questioning assesses students' understanding and promotes meaningful dialogue. However, questions do not always promote critical thinking, problem-solving and independent learning skills. More able students, including those who are G&T, are not always fully challenged in lessons.
- Teachers develop students' creativity and innovation skills highly effectively. In lessons, students demonstrate that they are innovative learners and use technology very well.
- The school's internal assessment processes are highly efficient and provide reliable and accurate information about students' progress. Academic outcomes are benchmarked accurately against national and international expectations in almost all subjects.
- Teachers have robust systems for routinely monitoring students' progress and have very good knowledge of students' capabilities. They provide effective guidance to enable them to improve. Students are frequently involved in assessing their own learning, setting targets and reviewing their progress in lessons. Work in books is marked helpfully so that students respond.

#### Areas of Relative Strength:

- Teachers' secure subject knowledge.
- The school's internal assessment processes.
- The analysis of data to monitor students' progress.

#### Areas for Improvement:

- Higher level thinking skills, to provide challenge for the most able students.



## Performance Standard 4: Curriculum

| Curriculum Indicators   | KG          | Primary   | Middle    | High |
|---|-------------|-----------|-----------|------|
| Curriculum design and implementation  | Outstanding | Very Good | Very Good |      |
| Curriculum adaptation   | Outstanding | Very Good | Very Good |      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The quality of the curriculum is very good, overall. It is outstanding in KG. Curriculum design and implementation, and its modification to meet the needs of all groups of students in primary and middle, are very good. It strongly promotes Arabic and English literacy. It is very well aligned to the UAE national vision.</li><li>The curriculum has a clear rationale, aligned to the Massachusetts State Standards. It is under continuous review, adding new courses at a rate of 14 a year. It provides students in all phases with a balance of knowledge, skills and understanding. It is modified very well for SEN students. Modification is less well developed for G&amp;T students.</li><li>The curriculum provides rigour and challenge for students in KG, preparing them well for the primary phase. The school offers a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular choices, providing students with highly innovative and creative projects. These often have very strong links to UAE society and significantly support students' highly developed entrepreneurial skills. Cross-curricular links are strong, such as in topics on healthy living in PE and Biology.</li><li>Moral values are at the core of the school's ethos and are also addressed in specific moral education lessons. The school's own 'Leadership Curriculum' fulfils Sheikh Zayed's maxim, 'Honouring the past, educating the future'. It aims to create the leaders of tomorrow and includes an effective military programme for Grade 6 to 9.</li></ul> |             |           |           |      |
| <b>Areas of Relative Strength:</b>  |             |           |           |      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The adaptation of the curriculum for children in KG.</li><li>The range of curricular and extra-curricular choices available to students.</li><li>The school's promotion of innovation and links with UAE society.</li></ul>   |             |           |           |      |
| <b>Areas for Improvement:</b>   |             |           |           |      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Modification of the curriculum to meet the needs of higher attaining students.</li></ul>  |             |           |           |      |



## 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 | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |      |
| Care and support   | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |      |

- The overall quality of protection, care, guidance and support for students is outstanding. Staff, students and parents share a secure understanding of the school's rigorous procedures for keeping students' safe, including child protection. The school maintains detailed and clear policies concerning all aspects of protection and care of students.
- Supervision of students is highly effective because everyone understands their roles. The premises and learning environment meets everyone's needs. There are very effective strategies in place for promoting healthy lifestyles.
- Staff-student relationships are noticeably positive and respectful. Highly effective systems and procedures for promoting positive behaviour have proved successful because they are understood by almost all students. Guidance is followed consistently, resulting in very positive, confident and increasingly independent learners. Promotion of good attendance and punctuality is sound.
- The school has thorough systems for identifying SEN and G&T students, but the G&T students are not always challenged enough in class. The support for SEN students is exemplary both in lessons and in the school's dedicated learning support area.
- The high quality and efficiency of systems for monitoring students' well-being leads to highly effective personal and academic guidance. This enables smooth transitions to date from KG to primary and primary to middle.

### Areas of Relative Strength:

- Staff-student relationships and behaviour management.
- The school's promotion of safe and healthy living.
- The identification and support provided for SEN students.

### Areas for Improvement:

- Support and challenge for more-able students.
- Attendance systems





## Performance Standard 6: Leadership and management

| Leadership and management Indicators           |             |
|--|-------------|
| The effectiveness of leadership                | Outstanding |
| Self-evaluation and improvement planning       | Outstanding |
| Partnerships with parents and the community    | Outstanding |
| Governance                                     | Outstanding |
| Management, staffing, facilities and resources | Outstanding |

- The overall quality of leadership and management is outstanding. School leaders, with effective support and challenge from governors, have shared an ambitious vision for the school. This has resulted in improvements in every aspect of the school's work. Students now make very good progress overall leading to improving standards. Very strong educational leadership at all levels has demonstrated an outstanding capacity to innovate and improve over time.
- All staff contribute to the detailed self-evaluation form (SEF) and the comprehensive school development plan (SDP). School leaders at all levels use rigorous monitoring and high quality training to help teachers raise students' achievement. Leaders have yet to ensure there is always appropriate challenge for the most able students.
- Outstanding parental involvement has been central to school improvement and informs the school's processes and planning. The school provides outstanding communication and detailed reporting. Community, national and international partnerships are equally strong and impact widely on students' learning opportunities.
- School leaders' management of the excellent facilities and day-to-day life of the school is outstanding. The training and deployment of teachers, learning assistants and resources are highly effective.
- Students have not yet entered international examinations. School leaders have ensured the school has prepared for and contributed to the promotion of the UAE in international assessment through the use of MAP testing.

**Areas of Relative Strength:**

- Leaders' shared vision for the school, particularly with parents.
- Leaders' monitoring, evaluation and improvement of the effectiveness of teaching.
- The school's self-evaluation and improvement planning.

**Areas for Improvement:**

- School leaders' promotion of challenge for the highest achieving students.