



مجلس أبوظبي للتعليم  
Abu Dhabi Education Council  
Education First **التعليم أولاً**



# New School Inspection Report

Al Saad Indian School

Academic Year 2014 – 2015

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Al Saad Indian School

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|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Inspection Date       | 11 – 13 May 2015                                                         |
| School ID#            | 248                                                                      |
| Licensed Curriculum   | Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)                              |
| Number of Students    | 99                                                                       |
| Age Range             | 3 to 12 years                                                            |
| Gender                | Mixed                                                                    |
| Principal             | Saroja Sahadevan                                                         |
| School Address        | Plot 11, Street 14, Al Bateen sector, Al Ghadeer, Al Ain                 |
| Telephone Number      | +971 (03) 785 2232                                                       |
| Fax Number            | _____                                                                    |
| Official Email (ADEC) | <a href="mailto:Saadindian.pvt@adec.ac.ae">Saadindian.pvt@adec.ac.ae</a> |
| School Website        | <a href="http://www.bhavansalain.com">www.bhavansalain.com</a>           |
| Date of opening       | September 2014                                                           |

## The overall effectiveness of the school

Inspectors considered the school in relation to 3 performance categories

**Band A** High performing (overall effectiveness grade 1, 2 or 3)

**Band B** Satisfactory (overall effectiveness grade 4 or 5)

**Band C** In need of significant improvement (overall effectiveness grade 6, 7 or 8)

The School was judged to be:

**BAND C;**

**GRADE 6**

### The main strengths of the school are:

- students speak confidently and are attentive listeners in subjects taught in English
- students are self-disciplined and show high levels of respect for each other
- staff nurture positive relationships and a caring atmosphere
- provision for creative arts and choice of languages enhances the curriculum
- the school gives priority to providing a safe and secure learning environment
- effective communication links with parents
- the school promotes an appreciation of UAE values and culture.

### The main areas for improvement are:

- students' academic achievement in all core subjects
- students' 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills, particularly working independently and collaboratively
- the quality of teaching and learning
- use of assessment for learning to effectively plan and deliver lessons that challenge all students
- the delivery of the curriculum and resourcing for Kindergarten
- curriculum planning to define specific and measureable learning outcomes for each grade and subject
- facilities and resources to adequately support curriculum delivery, particularly in computer and library access, and science investigation
- the need for greater rigour in self-evaluation.

## Introduction

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The school was evaluated by 3 inspectors. They observed 44 lessons, conducted several meetings with senior staff, coordinators, teachers, support staff, students and parents. They analysed test and assessment results, scrutinised students' work across the school, analysed the 66 responses to the parents' questionnaire and considered many of the school's policies and other documents. The leadership team was fully involved throughout the process and conducted 1 joint lesson observation with inspectors.

## Description of the School

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Al Saad Indian School opened in September 2014, in Al Ghadeer, Al Ain. It is a member of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan group. The school's vision is 'to prepare global citizens to provide leadership for the future', and its mission is 'to make the students mentally developed, physically strong, socially adjusted, emotionally balanced, and technically talented'. The school follows an Indian curriculum based on the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) requirements. Arabic, Islamic education and UAE social studies are taught using the required Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum.

There are 99 students: 63% boys, almost all are of Indian heritage and 38% are Muslim. There are 44 children in Kindergarten (KG), 45 students in grades 1 to 5 and 10 in grades 6 and 7. They are in mixed classes from Kindergarten (KG) to Grade 7. The school has identified no students with special educational needs (SEN) and 4 Grade 1 students are identified with specific gifts and talents (G&T). No students are identified with language and literacy difficulties. Student admission procedures include an interview in KG to assess school readiness, and written assessments of ability in English and mathematics in older grades.

The governing body consists of only 3 members: the chairman, director and principal. There are 19 full-time teaching staff and 4 administrative staff. There is 1 nurse and 1 security guard. Cleaning is outsourced.

Fees range from AED 8,500 in KG to AED 12,000 in Grade 7. There are additional fees for books and transport. This places the school within the low range category.

## The Effectiveness of the School

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### Evaluation of the school's overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness of Al Saad Indian School is unsatisfactory. Attainment in all core subjects is generally below international standards and progress is slower than expected, with particular weakness in Arabic and information and communication technology (ICT). There is inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning. Curriculum implementation supports students' understanding of UAE values and culture; planning is not sufficiently detailed to meet the needs of all groups of students and implementation does not adequately develop the range of 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills.

The school's strengths are the students' personal development, their high levels of respect for each other and adults and their keen attitudes towards learning. This is encouraged by the caring ethos promoted by the principal and all staff. The buildings and premises are spacious and are maintained in a clean and safe condition. There are major deficiencies in specialist facilities and resources in all subjects and grades, and these have a significant negative impact on delivery of the curriculum and students' learning.

The school has developed policies and structures that ensure smooth day-to-day operations. Parents are supportive of the school. The principal is committed to improving the quality of education. Self-evaluation is not sufficiently realistic or rigorous enough to identify priority areas for improvement and drive developments with the required urgency.

### Students' attainment & progress

Attainment and progress are unsatisfactory. Evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of student work and data analysis show that students make unsatisfactory progress from their starting points in all subjects, particularly in Arabic where standards are well below age-related expectations. Overall in core subjects, students' standards are below the expected curriculum levels, particularly in the younger grades. Students acquire satisfactory basic skills in literacy and numeracy. The progress of higher and lower achieving students is restricted due to limited planning for their needs; they do not consistently receive sufficient support and challenge to help accelerate their progress.

Children in KG enter school with secure basic skills; they listen carefully and follow instructions obediently. In English, they use simple greetings and recognize some numbers, and a minority respond with confidence at a range of levels, from single word answers to simple sentences. Progress in developing vocabulary, skills in writing, and understanding of number and shape is slow as limited opportunities

and insufficient challenge are given to children to investigate, practise and develop their emerging abilities. There are insufficient opportunities for planned gross-motor skill development and experiential, creative activities, and this restricts development in both physical and social skills.

In Arabic, KG children have a limited understanding of vocabulary and older students struggle to understand instructions and speak; overall, students' listening, speaking, reading and writing are underdeveloped. Achievement in Islamic education is unsatisfactory. Students demonstrate limited knowledge of the principles of Islam, such as ablution and the number of prayers. In social studies, students have appropriate knowledge and understanding about life in the UAE.

In the subjects taught in English, students develop attentive listening and assured speaking skills. In English, students in the older grades speak confidently and read with understanding; when given opportunities they share ideas using accurate grammar and a range of vocabulary. Students' skills in extended and creative writing lack development.

Students' mathematical knowledge, understanding and skills are inconsistent; in the older grades, they understand and are able to explain mathematical terms, and in Grade 6 they explain the use of line segments in geometry and scales for measuring. Students are not able to apply their knowledge to solve problems in different contexts due to the lack of practical experience and limited strategies. In science, some students demonstrate an appropriate understanding of basic principles. For example, in Grade 2 students understand that a candle needs air to burn, only a few are able to explain why this is so. Throughout the grades, students do not have the opportunity to appropriately develop the ability to explore and to use practical and investigative skills.

Students do not develop effective 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills; for example they are given few opportunities to share ideas and justify answers in order to develop creative thinking skills. When given opportunities, students cooperate well with each other. Their ability to learn independently and collaboratively is less well developed. Students have no access to information and communication technology (ICT) and as a result their skills are underdeveloped.

### **Students' personal development**

Students' personal development is satisfactory. They have a keen interest in learning and are self-disciplined. They are well behaved in lessons and around school. Movement around the school and at break times is orderly. They display mature self-confidence when given opportunities, such as when they perform in assembly and lead the mass physical training session. There is no student council.

Overall and particularly in lessons, there are limited opportunities for all students to develop meaningful leadership skills.

Students interact harmoniously within and across grade levels and they demonstrate high levels of respect for each other, adults and the values of the UAE. These behaviours are fostered through whole school assemblies, special events and curriculum areas such as life skills. Students know the words to the National Anthem and sing confidently, with respect and enthusiasm.

Some students enjoy participation in regional competitions, as in the case of the recent success of 2 students in a chess competition. Students also enjoy participating in timetabled activity sessions. There are not enough opportunities for all students, especially the youngest, to participate in a range of social, cultural, sporting and other activities and to contribute in class and the wider community. Limited opportunities for active learning lead to weaker development of personal qualities such as curiosity, flexibility and persistence.

Students express an appropriate understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lifestyles. Attendance levels at 90% are average, higher in KG2 to Grade 3, and students are punctual at the start of the day and to lessons.

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

The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. It is inconsistent and ranges from satisfactory to very unsatisfactory. The very large majority of lessons were deemed to be unsatisfactory. Examples of more effective teaching were found in Grades 2 and above, and in English, mathematics, science and non-core subjects. Teachers' knowledge of the subjects they teach is secure. KG and Grade 1 teachers lack sufficient understanding of how young children learn effectively and consequently their impact on children's progress and attainment is limited.

Teachers cultivate positive and encouraging relationships with students. Classroom routines are well established and expectations for behaviour are clear and well followed by very cooperative students motivated to learn. Lessons are largely teacher-centred and teachers talk too much and as a result students have limited opportunities to interact. They listen attentively and are eager to participate even when activities lack interest. In more effective lessons, teachers use open-ended questions; this practice is inconsistent, and in most lessons teacher questioning is restricted to seeking a correct factual response.

The common lesson planning format lacks detail and does not take sufficient account of students' prior learning and attainment levels. Too little attention is given to differentiation, and to planning for activities, teaching and outcomes that will meet the full range of learning needs in a class. In many lessons, there is a

reliance on textbooks and identical worksheets. This does not provide enough challenge for the more able or support for students who find learning difficult. There are very limited learning resources available for teachers and students in all subjects, especially for younger children, and this restricts activities, strategies and learning opportunities. Most teachers share lesson objectives with students; these are limited to topics or activities. Teachers make inconsistent use of specific and measureable learning outcomes that make clear to students the purpose of the lesson so that they know what they need to learn. In a few lessons, teachers make appropriate use of a plenary session so that students know what they have achieved and what they still need to learn. There is no individual target setting.

Students take part in regular formative and summative assessments. Use of assessment for learning is inconsistent and is not employed effectively to monitor and track student progress, to set targets nor to help students identify how to improve their work. Peer and self-assessment is emerging in a few of the more effective lessons for older students.

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

The implementation of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Planning and implementation of the curriculum do not have sufficient impact on students' learning. The curriculum is not planned with sufficient detail, and with the integration of adequate learning resources, to provide a sufficiently activity-based programme to promote 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, develop personal skills and qualities, or meet the needs of more able students and those who have difficulty learning. The KG curriculum is not adequately planned and resourced to provide an activity-based programme that meets the learning needs of this age group.

The school provides an appropriate range of subjects. Values education is an important aspect of planning and is integrated in most subjects. Implementation also appropriately supports students' understanding of UAE values, culture and heritage. The provision of creative arts and the languages, Hindi, Malayalam and French, offers choice and helps to enhance the curriculum. The prescribed teaching time for subjects taught in Arabic is appropriate.

Schemes of work have not been developed sufficiently to identify and define specific learning outcomes in sufficient depth for each subject, nor to ensure that the curriculum is relevant for all groups of students, especially high and low achievers. The school schedules one remediation lesson each week for all students in an effort to better meet individual needs; for this period students are placed in 3 different ability groups. This has not resulted in a discernible impact on student progress yet.

There are a range of activities timetabled during the school day; these include creative and sporting opportunities. There is insufficient provision of wider-curricular activities and subject-based field trips to extend students' learning. The school has not developed connections with local and regional organisations to enhance the educational programme.

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

The quality of protection, care, guidance and support is satisfactory. The safety, security and well-being of students are key priorities for the school and it gives appropriate attention to providing a safe school environment. Parents are very satisfied with this aspect of provision. Led by the principal, all staff foster a warm and caring atmosphere in which children are confident to approach members of staff with their news or concerns. Strategies are effective in promoting personal development; the pastoral system does not monitor and track academic progress with enough rigour to identify individual learning needs and support at least satisfactory progress by all students.

The school has diligently put in place policies and procedures to protect and support students. Supervision is close, caring and respectful. The principal and key members of staff have a visible presence throughout the day. There is a child protection policy and a child protection officer who has provided training to teachers. Staff has a clear understanding of their responsibilities, and students clearly indicate that they have trusted staff members with whom they can talk. Students agree that rewards and consequences are fairly administered by staff.

The prayer rooms provide spacious facilities for prayer; they lack sufficient carpeted areas to encourage further use, particularly for Islamic education lessons. Provision of first aid facilities and care is satisfactory.

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

The quality of the school's buildings and premises is unsatisfactory and does not support effective curriculum delivery. There are severe shortages in specialist facilities that significantly impact on implementation of the curriculum. The school has no specialist provision for science. There is no library provision or computer laboratory. Specialist rooms are provided for additional languages, indoor board games, music, art and yoga. Sports facilities vary in quality; the boys' basketball-volleyball court is unshaded and offers only limited shade during recess and lessons, and the football field surface is too rough for effective use. There is no provision of large play equipment for KG children.

The premises are spacious and allow for expansion. The buildings and accommodation are newly painted and maintained regularly in a clean and safe

condition. Corridors are bright with some colourful displays of student work and useful information to add interest; display in classrooms is more limited. The 2 auditoriums, 1 with air-conditioning, 1 open to the outside, provide appropriate facilities for larger gatherings and physical education.

A member of staff is responsible for monitoring health and safety, and procedures are appropriately followed. Security procedures are thorough, and security at the entrance gate is attentive throughout the day.

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

The school's resources are very unsatisfactory and do not support its aims. The quantity and range of materials and equipment in classrooms are very limited and do not adequately support delivery of the curriculum. Each classroom has data-show facilities and a whiteboard; these are used only by teachers. Students have no access to computers and other technology. Library resources are restricted to very limited numbers of storybooks in classrooms. There are no science resources for practical and investigative work. Resources to support PE are limited.

Teachers are sufficient in number, particularly given the low number of students in most grades, and have appropriate qualifications. There is no provision of teaching assistants to support learning in KG classes.

Procedures to maintain transport in a reliable condition, and for its safe use by students, are followed appropriately. There is no canteen; all students bring packed lunches and procedures for eating in classrooms are hygienic. The school conducts regular risk assessments, and evacuation drills are documented and completed in a timely manner.

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

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Administration and management is organized so that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The principal provides encouraging guidance and strategic direction to all staff; this has created loyalty to the school and support for its ambitions. In addition, senior leaders cultivate strong commitment to the school by all students and parents. Senior leaders and staff promote an appreciation of UAE culture and values within the community which is appreciated by parents.

The governing body meets regularly and has a full involvement in establishing policies, procedures and strategic priorities. There are not enough members of the governing body to constitute a fully functioning board. The support given to the school and the accountability processes followed by the board are not sufficiently thorough. There has been an inadequate response to the serious deficiencies in specialist facilities, resource provision in general and KG resources

in particular. Governors do hold the principal sufficiently to account for the performance of the school, particularly in relation to academic standards.

Self-evaluation procedures are not sufficiently rigorous and do not involve representation from all stakeholders. The school's self-evaluation document (SEF) has been completed with input from teachers. The judgments are overly positive and not fully supported by evidence; they appear to be more aspirational than a realistic evaluation of current provision and outcomes. The school development plan (SDP) has been completed with input from staff; it has most expected elements, and goals are achievable; it lacks sufficient urgency in its timelines, for instance with regard to the provision of resources.

Performance management procedures have been restricted to ensuring teachers settle positively into the ethos of the school. Teachers conduct peer observations to share practice and support each other. The formal lesson observation process is not sufficiently rigorous in focusing on the impact teaching makes on learning and in providing constructive feedback to teachers. There is not enough monitoring of teachers' planning, or effective use of assessment for learning and student performance data, in order to create activities that provide appropriate challenge and support for all abilities. The school provides regular professional development sessions for all teachers. There is insufficient monitoring of the impact of this in the classroom.

The school has speedily established a range of effective communication links with parents. There is no structure to seek and take account of the views of all parents and students on school development. Responses to the questionnaire and in the parent meeting were positive and parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with the education in the new school context, particularly children's enjoyment of school, communication and the range of activities. Areas of concern focused on limited provision of resources and curriculum-related field trips.

### **Capacity for further development**

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The school has grown quickly, from 27 to 99 students, since it opened. It has considerable capacity to increase enrolment. Parents are positive about the education their children receive and express support for the early achievements and the planned developments. They recognise their feedback is valued by senior leaders. The planned improvements in specialist facilities and resources are lagging behind the learning needs of the students and are urgently required to support effective curriculum delivery.

The school has no benchmark by which to judge the standards of student work against international expected levels, and current judgments are overly positive.

Professional development is not sufficiently linked to the results of lesson observations in order to target identified teaching needs and provide support to improve the impact of teaching on learning.

The principal and senior teachers are committed to improving the quality of education and are responsive to guidance. Senior leaders demonstrate unsatisfactory capacity for sustained improvement without external support.

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

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1. Urgently develop the quantity, range and effective use of resources by ensuring that:
  - i. the KG programme is appropriately resourced to provide experiential learning opportunities
  - ii. all students have regular access to ICT as a tool for learning
  - iii. the science curriculum is adequately resourced to promote practical and investigative skills
  - iv. library access is provided, with sufficient books in languages taught in the school to promote literacy and research skills
  - v. classrooms have sufficient mathematical materials and equipment to deepen understanding and help develop practical skills
  - vi. additional equipment is put in place for physical education and sports to match the number of students.
2. Administer standardised testing in order to benchmark student attainment against international expectations.
3. The overall effectiveness of teaching so that lessons consistently secure at least satisfactory progress by ensuring that:
  - i. planning for lessons is detailed and takes account of students' prior attainment by using the results of assessment to provide challenge for all students, particularly high achievers, and support for students who find learning difficult
  - ii. teachers share measureable learning objectives and review them during and at the end of lessons to check that students know what they have achieved and what they still need to learn
  - iii. teachers make more effective use of assessment for learning to monitor student progress and help students identify how to improve their work
  - iv. students are given meaningful opportunities to learn independently and work collaboratively.

4. Strengthen curriculum planning and implementation by:
  - i. developing schemes of work that establish specific and measurable learning outcomes for each subject and grade, including KG
  - ii. providing opportunities for KG children to develop independence and engage in free-choice experiential learning activities
  - iii. enhancing students' personal skills
5. Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - i. ensuring school self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate so that the school recognises its strengths and identifies priority areas for improvement so as to develop a comprehensive school development plan
  - ii. providing opportunities for high quality professional development to target teaching needs identified through a rigorous appraisal process
  - iii. monitoring the impact of professional development in order to provide support and guidance to teachers
  - iv. expanding the current Board of Governors to include more representatives as per the 'Organising Regulations of Private Schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi'.

## Inspection Grades

|                                                                    | Band A<br>High performing |           |      | Band B<br>Satisfactory   |              | Band C<br>In need of significant improvement |                     |      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|------|--------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------------|------|
| Performance Standard                                               | Outstanding               | Very Good | Good | Satisfactory & Improving | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory                               | Very unsatisfactory | Poor |
|                                                                    | 1                         | 2         | 3    | 4                        | 5            | 6                                            | 7                   | 8    |
| Standard 1: Students' attainment and progress                      |                           |           |      |                          |              |                                              |                     |      |
| Standard 2: Students' personal development                         |                           |           |      |                          |              |                                              |                     |      |
| Standard 3: The quality of teaching and learning                   |                           |           |      |                          |              |                                              |                     |      |
| Standard 4: The meeting of students' needs through the curriculum  |                           |           |      |                          |              |                                              |                     |      |
| Standard 5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students |                           |           |      |                          |              |                                              |                     |      |
| Standard 6: The quality of the school's buildings and premises     |                           |           |      |                          |              |                                              |                     |      |
| Standard 7: The school's resources to support its aims             |                           |           |      |                          |              |                                              |                     |      |
| Standard 8: The effectiveness of leadership and management         |                           |           |      |                          |              |                                              |                     |      |
| Summary Evaluation: <b>The school's overall effectiveness</b>      |                           |           |      |                          |              |                                              |                     |      |