



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



Inspection Report

Al Seddeeq Private School

Academic Year 2014 – 2015

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Al Seddeeq Private School

Inspection Date	4 – 7 May 2015
School ID#	148
Licensed Curriculum	Ministry of Education (MoE)
Number of Students	538
Age Range	3 to 15 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Amal Al Mansour
School Address	P. O. Box 16595 Road 2, Central District, Al Ain, UAE
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School Website	-----
Date of last inspection	2 – 4 June 2013

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 7
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The main strengths of the school are:

- the positive ethos and drive for improvement established in short time by the new principal and vice-principal
- the positive relationships and students' improved behaviour, attitudes to work and attendance
- the care staff provide for students' emotional wellbeing
- the improved partnership with parents.

The main areas for improvement are:

- the owners' and trustees' awareness of their roles and responsibilities with regard to provision of resources, the quality of professional development and clear delegation of their responsibilities
- academic achievement in all subjects for all students and especially those with additional learning needs
- the quality of teaching and learning in particular the opportunities for students to develop self-confidence and 21st century skills
- provision in the KG and teachers' understanding of how young children learn
- the very unsatisfactory quality of the buildings and premises
- the very limited range of resources, including teachers, teaching assistants and specialist staff for students with special educational needs
- leadership, particularly subject leaders' skills, the accuracy of self-evaluation and the effective implementation of school development priorities.

Introduction

The school was evaluated by 4 inspectors. They observed 67 lessons, conducted meetings with senior staff, subject coordinators, teachers, support staff, students, parents and the owner. They analysed test and assessment results, scrutinized students' work across the school, analysed the 242 responses to the parents' questionnaire and considered school policies and other documents. The principal and leadership team were involved and consulted throughout the process and carried out 2 joint lesson observations with inspectors.

Description of the School

Al Seddeeq Private School opened in 2001 in Al Ain. The school follows the MoE curriculum for private schools. The main language of instruction is Arabic. The school aims to 'develop students' skills – loyalty to country, self-confidence, cooperation and taking responsibility – in order to prepare them for a promising society'.

There are 538 students; 58% are girls, almost all are Muslim and of Arabic heritage. There are 20 nationalities represented in the school population. The largest groups are 25% Egyptian, 22% Syrian, 11% Jordanian, 10% Sudanese, 6% Omani and 5% Emirati. There are 106 children in the Kindergarten (KG), 325 in primary (grades 1 – 5) and 107 in secondary (grades 6 – 9). From Grades 5 – 6, boys and girls are taught in separate classes. There are no boys in grades 7 to 9. There are 4 students identified as having special educational needs (SEN). The school does not formally identify gifted and talented students. All applicants are accepted as long as the school believes it can meet their needs.

A new principal and vice-principal have been appointed since the last inspection. Very few teachers have left the school in recent years. A board of trustees was established 2 years ago with the co-owner as chairman.

Fees range from AED 2,850 to AED 8,400 per year, excluding books, uniform and transport. These are in the very affordable to low category.

The Effectiveness of the School

Evaluation of the school's overall effectiveness

The school provides an inadequate standard of education as most aspects of its work are very unsatisfactory. There have been some modest improvements in students' attainment and progress in Islamic education, social studies, English, mathematics and science. Attainment levels are well below international standards. In other subject areas, students make very unsatisfactory progress, including those with special educational needs (SEN). The progress made by more able students is poor. Behaviour and attendance are satisfactory, relationships are positive and students are respectful and tolerant.

There have been some improvements to the quality of teaching and learning as a result of professional development and the impact of monitoring by the new principal and vice-principal. These gains have not been sufficient to ensure that students make at least satisfactory progress because teachers do not have a good enough understanding of how students learn most effectively. They do not use accurate assessment practice to track students' progress and adjust lessons to their needs. The quality of the buildings and the range of resources do not adequately support the school in achieving its aims.

Students' attainment & progress

Students' attainment and progress are very unsatisfactory. Attainment is well below international standards in the majority of subjects and shows little sign of improvement, as progress is too slow. Attainment in Arabic, English, mathematics, science, information and communications technology (ICT) and other non-core subjects is very unsatisfactory. In Islamic education and social studies, attainment is unsatisfactory. Students with SEN make unsatisfactory progress; more able students' progress is poor, as teachers do not plan adequately to meet their needs.

Almost all students speak virtually no English on entry. In the KG, children are unable to identify letters of the alphabet and do not understand simple words or instructions. Students' basic literacy skills are underdeveloped and their pronunciation is inaccurate. Inadequate knowledge of phonics hinders progress in reading. Insufficient knowledge of grammar and limited vocabulary hinders progress in speaking and writing.

In the KG, children's understanding of the concept of number and their ability to count is underdeveloped. Basic numeracy skills and the ability to calculate using the 4 operations are very unsatisfactory throughout the school. Primary students have difficulty reading and interpreting a problem. Older students are more

confident in breaking a problem into component parts. Knowledge of geometry is generally satisfactory. Students' ability to see the relevance of mathematics to the real world is limited. In science, children in the KG have poor knowledge and understanding of the world and their skills in exploring and investigation are limited. Primary phase students have a basic knowledge of forces and states of matter. Secondary phase students have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of science. Their ability to plan and carry out investigations is very unsatisfactory.

All students speak Arabic as a first language. They speak colloquial Arabic; their use of academic Arabic is not well developed. Younger students do not have a good grasp of short and long vowels in reading and are unable to write short sentences. Older students read fluently and understand most of what they have read. They know the basic rules of grammar. Writing in many grades is often limited to short sentences or copying from a text.

Most students have a basic knowledge of Islam. Younger students can memorise some chapters from the Holy Qur'an; they do not respect the recitation rules. Their knowledge of the prophet's (PBUH) life is inadequate. Older students know the general principles of Islam; they are unable to discuss them in any depth. In social studies, students have a basic knowledge of the UAE and its place in the Middle East. They have difficulty locating countries on a map.

Students enjoy working in groups; this is not always effectively managed and limits their ability to work independently. Their research skills are inadequate. Assessment systems for measuring attainment and progress are very unsatisfactory.

Students' personal development

Students' personal development is satisfactory. Most students are keen to learn. They know the difference between right and wrong and behave well in lessons. They respect teachers and usually play well together. They are appreciative of the traditions and values of the UAE and show respect for its flag and national anthem. They enjoy participating in the few trips that are provided.

A few older students are members of the Health and Safety Committee. They help supervise students during fire drills. Most students care for their immediate environment and keep their school tidy. They have very few opportunities to enjoy sporting, cultural and scientific activities. Most students know how to live safe and healthy lives; they do not always make healthy choices. Too many students lack the self-confidence and personal qualities they will need for the next stages of the education. Attendance at 93% is average.

The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is very unsatisfactory. Inspectors saw lessons that ranged from satisfactory to poor; only a few were deemed satisfactory, mainly in mathematics and science. The least effective teaching is in the KG, and Arabic and English subjects. Relationships between teachers and students are positive. Teachers manage behaviour well. Students listen well and try hard. In the best lessons, teachers use appropriate methods and resources to engage and motivate students. When strategies are inappropriate and there are insufficient resources available, younger students lose interest.

In most lessons, teachers do not make it sufficiently clear what students will learn. They prioritise the acquisition of knowledge with limited opportunity for students to develop skills and understanding. They know their students well; they do not take account of their prior learning. Almost all teachers have the same expectation for all students; those with SEN find the work too hard and the more able students are not challenged and find the work too easy. Consequently, most students make insufficient progress.

As a result of professional development, there are some improvements in the strategies used by most teachers to engage students; this has resulted in students' improved attitudes to learning. Most teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of their subjects; their understanding of how students learn best is limited. In most lessons, students are organised into groups even when this is not appropriate. There is insufficient time for them to work independently. They are not encouraged or enabled to think for themselves; most questions require them to recall information. Books contain a limited amount of work. Marking is cursory with no targets set for improvement and no evidence of teachers assessing students' work to track progress over time.

Students have a weekly technology lesson to develop their skills; they have no regular access to technology in lessons to carry out research and to extend their learning. There are no additional staff to support learning in the KG or in other classes.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The implementation of the curriculum is very unsatisfactory. It is sufficiently broad and balanced. In the majority of subjects, the intended outcomes and expectations are not adequately defined and not measurable. Curriculum expectations are not modified to cater for the range of students' needs, interests and learning styles. The delivery of the KG curriculum is poor as most learning entails children listening, remembering and repeating what they have learnt with little or no understanding. They have insufficient opportunities to learn through

play and to develop their social and basic skills. KG children and older students have very few opportunities to make choices and to develop as independent learners. There are no opportunities for investigation. Students are rarely able to develop their gifts and talents.

Islamic education and assemblies provide adequate opportunities to develop students' understanding of the values, culture and heritage of UAE. They enjoy occasional trips and the weekly enrichment activities. Teachers rarely plan activities that have a context in the real world. Links with external partners and other agencies are too few for students to develop the skills and self-confidence necessary for life in the 21st Century.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The protection, care, guidance and support of students is satisfactory. The school has a positive ethos. Staff take their duty of care seriously and students feel safe and secure. The approach to managing behaviour is positive. Rewards are fair and usually appropriate. There are effective procedures for supporting students' personal development; monitoring of their academic progress is not systematic. Very few students with additional learning needs are identified and individual education plans (IEPs) are inappropriate. Those with physical needs are well cared for.

The school maintains a central register listing all adults in the school. Bullying is rare and effectively dealt with. A daily attendance register is taken and attendance has improved. The child protection policy is clearly understood by all staff. Students know who to go to with a problem. They have access to a prayer room. The nurse provides satisfactory care and ensures medicines are stored appropriately. She actively promotes healthy lifestyles through the curriculum and in partnership with staff and parents.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The quality of the school's buildings and premises is very unsatisfactory. The plot is barely adequate with no room for extension. Many classrooms are too small for the number of students. Curtains are usually drawn and lighting is artificial. Ventilation systems in some rooms are noisy. In almost all cases, displays are sparse, unattractive and rarely contain students' work. The technology room is adequate in size. The science laboratory is too small. In the absence of any sports facilities, students visit a local sports club to help deliver the physical education (PE) curriculum. The KG rooms and outdoor area are unsuitable for play, practical activities or to enable children to be independent learners.

Key staff have responsibility for monitoring health and safety and reducing risk. The school is clean and most areas are maintained adequately. School records show that electrical equipment is checked for safe usage. The perimeter is secure; guards check visitors' identities on entry and closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras are installed. Cleaning materials and chemicals are stored safely. The premises do not adequately facilitate access by students with additional physical needs.

The school's resources to support its aims

The school's resources are very unsatisfactory. There are insufficient teachers with appropriate qualifications for the number of classes; a few teaching assistants are deployed as class teachers. There are no support assistants in the KG or elsewhere in the school. Students have adequate access to technology and the internet in the laboratory. There are projectors in classrooms for teachers to enhance learning. In other respects, resources to support learning in lessons are insufficient.

The library has too few books and no access to technology for students. Resources for investigations in science are insufficient as are the resources for physical education. Resources and equipment to promote experiential learning and play in the KG are inadequate; there are very few resources for children to develop their fine motor skills; the outdoor area has a poor stock of equipment for developing gross motor skills. School transport is not systematically maintained. The canteen is licensed and snacks and drinks are stored appropriately.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management is very unsatisfactory. The board members do not have clearly defined roles. The board of trustees and the owners do not have an independent and objective view of the school. Teachers are optimistic and committed to improving. The owners have allocated insufficient funding to enable them to do their job effectively.

Insufficient attention has been paid to the quality of learning and monitoring progress over time. The principal and vice principal are skilled in advising teachers how to improve; subject leaders have neither the necessary skills nor sufficient designated leadership time to effectively develop their teams.

The new leadership team has quickly got to know the school well and their priorities are appropriate. They have effectively tackled almost all health and safety concerns. Their commitment to promoting the values of the UAE and to improving the ethos of the school have had a positive impact on students'

behaviour, attendance and attitudes to learning. The quality of care provided has improved. The principal's vision for improving students' academic achievement is beginning to have some effect in some subjects. Students are better motivated. The partnership with parents is increasingly effective.

Evaluation of current performance is not based on valid and accurate evidence. The self-evaluation form (SEF) was completed with an appropriate range of evidence but judgments were optimistic. The associated school development plan (SDP) outlines a useful set of priorities with clear mechanisms for monitoring; timescales for completion are unrealistic and the plan is not fully costed.

Partnerships with parents are mostly positive. School leaders listen to students' and parents' concerns and respond to their suggestions where possible. Reports to parents on students' progress are regular. There are too few links with external organisations.

Progress since the last inspection

There have been some improvements in all performance standards in response to recommendations made by the last inspection. Attainment is no longer poor but it remains well below international standards. The most significant improvements have been in the ethos of the school, the quality of care, guidance and support, the improved partnership with parents and the impact these have had on students' personal development. Almost all health and safety issues have been tackled, with the exception of the maintenance of school transport.

Whole-school professional development has not been sufficiently effective in helping teachers to meet the needs of all students; expectations remain too low in too many lessons. Some classrooms are overcrowded. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities regarding child protection. Subject leaders are well meaning; they do not have the skills or time to effectively improve provision in their subjects and raise standards. Some teaching assistants are deployed as class teachers as there are insufficient number of teachers with appropriate qualifications.

The new principal and vice-principal have a clear vision for improvement and have demonstrated the capacity to bring about change for the better in some areas. The owners and trustees are less effective and are holding back the school's development. They are not clear about their roles and responsibilities and do not provide adequate resources. The school has not demonstrated that it has the satisfactory capacity to develop further and will require external support if it is to sustain and build on the modest improvements achieved since the last inspection.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Strengthen the impact of leadership and management by:
 - i. clarifying and agreeing the roles and responsibilities of the board of trustees and the appointed school leaders
 - ii. evaluating the effectiveness of the school's performance using objective, accurate data and information
 - iii. constructing a fully costed SDP with measurable outcomes and realistic timescales that focuses on what the school needs to do to rapidly provide at least a satisfactory standard of education
 - iv. providing a plentiful supply of high quality resources to enhance and enrich learning in all subjects, particularly in the KG
 - v. monitoring all aspects of health and safety with particular reference to the maintenance of school transport.
2. Raise attainment and further accelerate progress in all subjects and in the KG, by ensuring teachers:
 - i. clearly identify what students will learn in each lesson
 - ii. deliver lessons to provide appropriate challenge and enjoyment, particularly those in the KG, those with SEN and the more able
 - iii. use effective questioning to assess understanding and to promote higher order and creative thinking
 - iv. provide students with opportunities to work independently
 - v. use assessment information to accurately record and track the academic progress of students in each lesson and over time
 - vi. recruit suitably qualified staff.
3. Provide regular opportunities for students to develop self-confidence and leadership skills across the school.
4. Extend the opportunities for students to be involved in sporting, scientific and cultural activities both in school and in the wider community.

Inspection Grades

	Band A High performing			Band B Satisfactory		Band C 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: The school's overall effectiveness								