



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



Summary Inspection Report

Al Sorouh American School

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Iqraa

Al Sorouh American School

Inspection Date	5 th – 7 th May, 2013
School ID#	200
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	American
Number of Students	287
Age Range	KG- Grade 6
Gender	Mixed
Principal	None
School Address	Khalifa City B, Abu Dhabi, PO Box 132754
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Introduction

The school was inspected by three inspectors who observed 40 lessons. They met with the school owner, school leaders, teachers and students. The inspectors observed assemblies, break periods and students' arrival at, and departure from, the school. They analysed data and documents supplied by the school. In addition, responses from parents to a questionnaire about the school were analysed.

Description of the School

Al Sorouh American School opened in 2010. It is located in a developing residential area in Khalifa City. The school caters for 287 students from Kindergarten (KG) to Grade 6. The main nationalities represented are Emirati (93%), Yemeni (3%), the remainder come from other Gulf States. All students are Arab and Muslim. The school teaches an American curriculum in all grades through the medium of English. Screening takes place prior to entry and students with special educational needs (SEN) are not admitted. There is still a wide ability range within the school. The fees range from AED 2,232 in KG to AED 5,605 in Grade 6. This puts them in the very affordable range. There are additional fees for transport and books. Teachers' monthly salaries range from AED 3,500 to AED 5,600. There have been three principals since the school opened but no principal in post for the past year. There is no assistant principal or designated person in charge of the school.

The Effectiveness of the School

Band C

Grade 7

Inspectors judged Al Sorouh American School to be in Band C; that is a school in need of significant improvement.

The school was inspected in March 2011, when it was judged to be poor. Progress in addressing the recommendations made by that inspection has been minimal. There is no senior leadership team, which has significantly contributed to the uncertainty and lack of direction. Teaching remains ineffective in all but a minority of classes. The learning needs of children in KG are still not being fully met. The continued failure to appoint a principal is seriously endangering the education and life chances of students. Their behaviour is rapidly deteriorating and is now at an unacceptable level. Lack of support for teachers is undermining their ability to be effective educators and maintain discipline. The quality of the day to day running of the school is in significant decline. There is no strategic or effective operational decision making process.

Attainment and progress in all grades and across all subjects is well below International standards. Student progress is significantly hampered by teachers'

poor English language skills. Opportunities to research or apply knowledge are restricted and this impedes the development of 21st century skills. Standards of oracy and literacy in Arabic are weak. The best students are able to use pronouns with verbs when constructing simple sentences. The majority lack confidence in speaking and writing. Standards in Islamic and social studies are low as students have little understanding of Islamic values or history. They are unable to link these values to their everyday lives. Students demonstrated little ability to apply concepts they learnt in social studies. Writing is underdeveloped in English as there is insufficient opportunity to write independently or in different styles. Students find it difficult to speak in accurate and grammatically correct sentences. They lack the opportunity to apply mathematical and scientific skills. Concepts are learnt in isolation without purpose. Basic knowledge of number operations is uncertain for many students.

Progress is significantly limited in all subjects. The majority of lessons are based around a textbook. Many of the texts are too difficult because of most students' limited literacy skills in both English and Arabic. Students also struggle to understand oral instructions. Curriculum coverage dictates the pace and content of lessons, not student learning need. Learning in science is knowledge driven. There are few opportunities for students to develop research skills. In a science lesson on heat conductivity students were told which objects were effective conductors rather than discovering themselves through experimentation. Mental maths, investigational skills and higher order thinking skills are insufficiently developed across the school. Standards in KG are well below expectations and learning lacks purpose and context. Children learning Arabic and English in KG are introduced to letters and numbers in isolation. Progress is hampered by a reliance on whole class teaching. There are insufficient opportunities for students to learn through experiential play or to interact with each other. Developmental needs are not met and learning is limited.

Standards and progress in ICT are weak. Computer skills are not used to research or to support learning. Student's experience of using different mediums in art is severely limited. In music there is little difference in lesson content between the grades. Introduction to tuned and untuned percussion is not planned or delivered effectively. The development of skills in physical education (PE) is hampered by inadequate resources.

Valuable information from entrance screening is not used to establish a base line against which to measure student's progress. Assessments are carried out regularly, but insufficient use is made of this information to inform planning. Testing takes place but lacks any form of standardisation and therefore results are not useful as a measure of progress. In English, teachers are beginning to identify

under performance. Limited strategies to address this through additional support are now in place but have not had significant impact on student learning. Procedures to support the less and more able students are inconsistent and ineffective. All students irrespective of gender or ability follow the same curriculum at the same pace. There is no obvious difference in the rate of progress they make or standards they attain.

Student behaviour in many classes is unacceptable. Boy's attitudes to learning in grades four to six are extremely poor, as is their behaviour. Some teachers are unable to control them and students often demonstrate a lack of respect for their peers and teachers. This impacts adversely on both learning and the development of the interpersonal skills they will require for later life. Behaviour counselling is ineffective. In a minority of classes, students are engaged, listen attentively and are positive about their experiences. Students have a strong affinity for the UAE and they are proud to be Emirati. National Day and Heritage week are celebrated through music and drama. There is no active student's council and few opportunities exist for students to develop leadership qualities.

Teaching is predominantly unsatisfactory or worse across the school. The narrow range of teaching strategies employed by staff fails to motivate students. They become disengaged, behaviour deteriorates, and progress suffers. Poor teaching and inadequate classroom management strategies create an unhealthy and volatile learning environment. Teachers sometimes resort to shouting, which does not help the situation. Teachers have no support to develop their classroom management skills. The absence of senior leadership makes an already difficult situation much worse. There are insufficient opportunities for students to work in groups on extended tasks where they can be part of a team and learn to appreciate other points of view. More able students do not have the opportunity to work independently, engage in research or explore their thinking. Objectives are posted in most classrooms. These are merely an agenda of tasks and are rarely shared with the students, revisited or used to check understanding. Most teaching focuses on knowledge transmission, and questions are frequently closed, demanding only short factual answers. This hampers the development of student reasoning and thinking skills. Students are required to listen for extended periods and are guided through simple activities. This prevents them from really engaging with their work and organising their own learning.

Many teachers are inexperienced and new to the school. They have received minimal support to develop their teaching skills. Middle leaders have worked hard to provide advice, but have had insufficient time to be effective mentors. Professional development opportunities are extremely limited. The link with

Minnesota University does not focus on the key issues affecting teaching and therefore has little practical value or impact.

The school does not follow an American curriculum: it uses American teaching materials that do not match best international curriculum practice. The curriculum does provide sequence and progression but is not designed specifically for students learning through an additional language. Many students have difficulty understanding the complex language and fail to benefit fully from the programmes. Little use made of supplementary materials to meet the needs of SEN or gifted students. The range of subjects taught provides some breadth but time to engage in non-core subjects is limited. There is not a specific curriculum for KG. The computer curriculum focuses on basic skills and lacks challenge. There are no extracurricular activities.

The climate for learning in some classes is poor and demonstrates a lack of care. Students understand the difference between right and wrong, but several choose to ignore this. There are clear sanctions for addressing poor behaviour but the system is overloaded, inconsistently applied and ineffective. Students state that there are instances of bullying and intimidation. Pastoral systems to address this and support students lack impact. There is no child protection policy and staff have not received training in how to identify indicators of abuse. Personnel data is well recorded and held in a central register. The school is diligent in monitoring daily attendance and absences are followed up immediately. Medicines are safely stored and dispensed. The Mosque provides a good facility for prayer.

The school building is relatively new and well maintained. It contains sufficient specialist facilities to support the curriculum and provide a good quality of education. The buildings provide a safe environment. Exit routes are clearly marked and displayed. Evacuation procedures have been recently practised. All maintenance issues, including regular checking of fire extinguishers and electrical equipment, are effectively contracted out. The designated staff member for health and safety carries out his functions effectively. Hazardous substances are kept in a locked area. Security is stringent with all visitors required to sign in.

Resources to support the curriculum are unsatisfactory. Teachers are qualified and sufficient in number. They lack adequate fluency in English to competently deliver the curriculum. This adversely affects student acquisition of language. Each class has a data projector but lack of training means they are used ineffectively to support learning. Classroom resources are predominantly textbooks. There are insufficient classroom materials to adequately support learning. This is particularly evident in KG classes where there is a dearth of basic play equipment and manipulatives. There are no class-based computers for

student use. The library lacks a sufficient range of texts containing different genres to promote reading in English and Arabic. Science resources are insufficient for students to experiment and become scientists. Limited resources for physical education reduce sporting experiences. Students do not have free access to the ICT suite. Busses are not adequately maintained and seat belts are not worn. Fire extinguishers are out of date and first aid kits not readily accessible. Food is stored and served hygienically.

There is a climate of uncertainty and fragility caused by the absence of a principal and senior leadership structure. Subject heads are the most senior staff in the school. The head of English, finance officer and the principal's personal assistant have done a remarkable job to ensure the school is still open. One teacher stated, "We are like a boat without a captain going round and round in circles and being sucked ever deeper into the water." The school's financial processes are well managed and comply with ADEC requirements. Salaries are paid regularly and on time. The accommodation is in good condition. There are numerous empty classrooms for further expansion. The school has no links with other organisations. Teachers are available to meet with parents on a daily basis, and reports and an annual parents evening keep them informed. The school does not provide value for money and does not have the capacity to improve without addressing the leadership issues.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. As a matter of urgency:
 - i. appoint a principal and senior leadership team to provide strategic direction for the school and operational support to ensure it runs effectively on a day to day basis; and
 - ii. address the serious behaviour issues by implementing a consistent and corporate approach to behaviour management that is understood by the entire school community.
2. Raise student attainment and increase progress by:
 - i. improving teachers command of English;
 - ii. adapting the curriculum to increase student access and understanding;
 - iii. using available data to inform planning;
 - iv. matching tasks to student's learning needs;
 - v. providing increased opportunities for students to work in groups and engage in independent research; and

- vi. letting students do more independently.
- 3. Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - i. providing targeted professional development opportunities based on identified need;
 - ii. extending the range of teaching strategies used; and
 - iii. supporting each other in the classroom and sharing good practice.
- 4. Ensure learning experiences and teaching strategies for KG students match their developmental needs.