



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



Private School Inspection Report

Al Sorouh American School

Academic Year 2016 – 2017

lqraa

Al Sorouh American School

Inspection Date	November 13, 2016	to	November 14, 2016
Date of previous inspection	January 19, 2015	to	January 21, 2015

General Information	
School ID	200
Opening year of school	2010
Principal	The position is currently vacant.
School telephone	+971 (0)2 586 1133
School Address	Shakbout City Abu Dhabi
Official email (ADEC)	alsorouh.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School website	----
Fee ranges (per annum)	Average (AED 20,300–24,360)
Licensed Curriculum	
Main Curriculum	American
Other Curriculum (if applicable)	----
External Exams/ Standardised tests	----
Accreditation	----

Students		
Total number of students	103	
%of students per curriculum (if applicable)	Main Curriculum	100%
	Other Curriculum	0%
Number of students in other phases	KG	19
	Primary:	74
	Middle:	10
	High:	0
Age range	4 to 12 Years	
Grades or Year Groups	KG to Grade 6	
Gender	Girls and boys	
% of Emirati Students	78%	
Largest nationality groups (%)	1. Egyptian 10%	
	2. Yemeni 4%	
	3. Omani/Syrian 2%	
Staff		
Number of teachers	14	
Number of teaching assistants (TAs)	----	
Teacher-student ratio	KG/ FS	1:10
	Other phases	1:12
Teacher turnover	86%	

Introduction

Inspection activities	
Number of inspectors deployed	3
Number of inspection days	2
Number of lessons observed	39
Number of joint lesson observations	4
Number of parents' questionnaires	12; return rate: 5%
Details of other inspection activities	Inspectors held discussions with the owner, senior managers, teachers and other members of staff, students and parents. They reviewed a wide range of school documentation and students' work. They observed assemblies, school activities, arrivals, departures and intervals.

School	
School Aims	'The school aims to provide a strong academic foundation and rich curriculum in an educational program built on the core principles of: a multicultural environment; values and ethics; communication, team building and leadership; creative thinking.'
School vision and mission	'Al Sorouh American School vision is to create a community of learners and promotes learning as a lifelong process. Our school environment is positive and supportive, yet challenging, setting high expectations for student achievement and personal conduct.' 'Our mission in Al Sorouh School is to nurture and challenge all students to reach their own full potentials. Children will learn to be leaders, set ideals and become lifelong learning and productive participants in an increasingly diverse global community.'



Admission Policy	There is an open admissions policy at the school.
Leadership structure (ownership, governance and management)	There is currently no school principal. The school is being managed jointly by the academic supervisor, accountant and school secretary. The school owner regularly visits the school. There is no governing body.

SEN Details (Refer to ADEC SEN Policy and Procedures)

SEN Category	Number of students identified through external assessments	Number of other students identified by the school internally
Intellectual disability	0	0
Specific Learning Disability	0	0
Emotional and Behaviour Disorders (ED/ BD)	1	1
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	1	1
Speech and Language Disorders	0	0
Physical and health related disabilities	0	0
Visually impaired	0	0
Hearing impaired	0	0
Multiple disabilities	0	0

G&T Details (Refer to ADEC SEN Policy and Procedures)

G&T Category	Number of students identified
Intellectual ability	0
Subject-specific aptitude (e.g. in science, mathematics, languages)	2
Social maturity and leadership	1
Mechanical/ technical/ technological ingenuity	0
Visual and performing arts (e.g. art, theatre, recitation)	6
Psychomotor ability (e.g. dance or sport)	2

The overall performance of the school

Inspectors considered the school in relation to 3 performance categories

Band A	High performing (Outstanding, Very Good or Good)
Band B	Satisfactory (Acceptable)
Band C	In need of significant improvement (Weak or Very Weak)

School was judged to be:	BAND C	Weak
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	Band A High Performing			Band B Satisfactory	Band C In need of significant improvement	
Performance Standards	Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Acceptable	Weak	Very Weak
Performance Standard 1: Students' achievement						
Performance Standard 2: Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills						
Performance Standard 3: Teaching and assessment						
Performance Standard 4: Curriculum						
Performance Standard 5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students						
Performance Standard 6: Leadership and management						
Summary Evaluation: The school's overall performance						

The Performance of the School

Evaluation of the school's overall performance

The overall performance of the school is weak. The current lack of a principal and governing body are major constraints on the development of the school. The majority of students are enrolled in the primary phase with a minority in KG and just a few in Grade 6 (which represents the middle phase). Attainment and progress are acceptable in Islamic education, social studies and other subjects in primary, and overall in Grade 6. Most students' acquisition of learning skills is weak. Few opportunities are given for students to develop their creativity, critical thinking and innovation skills. Most students behave well and have a positive attitude to learning. Teachers often dominate too much in lessons with students having minimal opportunities to think for themselves or to share and present their work. Students have a sound understanding of UAE culture and heritage but there are few displays in school celebrating this. The school is safe and secure and provides a harmonious environment for students' learning. Assessment data over-estimates students' attainment levels. Parents are supportive and appreciate the information they receive and access to teachers to discuss their child's progress.

Progress made since last inspection and capacity to improve

The school has made unsatisfactory progress in addressing recommendations from the last inspection report. Attainment has not improved sufficiently. English attainment is acceptable in Grade 6 where work is more challenging for students and progress in lessons better as a result. The school has recruited appropriately qualified teachers, but the lack of a principal is slowing the school's improvement. The school collects a wide range of internal assessment data but this does not accurately reflect students' attainment and progress. All classrooms have a data projector but high-quality resources remain limited. The taught curriculum and enrichment programme do not meet the needs of students with different abilities well enough. Classroom activities do not stretch and challenge high-attaining students. The school does not have the capacity to improve without the appointment of a principal and external support.

Development and promotion of innovation skills

The school is not developing students' innovation skills well enough. Lessons provide few opportunities for students to be creative or to build their confidence in trying things out for themselves. Teachers are not innovative in delivering subject content. A few older students have built interesting models of airplanes during the UAE civil aviation day. Students developed their understanding of Islamic traditions by building a realistic model of the Kaaba during the Islamic Hajj season.

The inspection identified the following as key areas of strength:

- students' positive behaviour, attitude to learning and relationships with peers and adults at the school
- the efficient day-to-day management of the school
- the safe, secure and well-maintained learning environment.

The inspection identified the following as key areas for improvement:

- the urgent need to appoint a school principal and a governing board
- students' achievement in all subjects
- the quality of teaching and learning in lessons
- the provision of enrichment activities for all students, particularly those who are gifted and talented
- the support for students who require additional help with their studies.



Performance Standard 1: Students' Achievement

Students' achievement Indicators		KG	Primary	Middle	High
Islamic Education	Attainment	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable	
	Progress	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable	
Arabic (as a First Language)	Attainment	Weak	Weak	Weak	
	Progress	Weak	Weak	Weak	
Arabic (as a Second Language)	Attainment	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	Progress	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Social Studies	Attainment	N/A	Acceptable	Acceptable	
	Progress	N/A	Acceptable	Acceptable	
English	Attainment	Weak	Weak	Acceptable	
	Progress	Weak	Weak	Acceptable	
Mathematics	Attainment	Weak	Weak	Weak	
	Progress	Weak	Weak	Acceptable	
Science	Attainment	Weak	Weak	Weak	
	Progress	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable	
Language of instruction (if other than English and Arabic as First Language)	Attainment	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	Progress	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Other subjects (Art, Music, PE)	Attainment	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable	
	Progress	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable	
Learning Skills (including innovation, creativity, critical thinking, communication, problem-solving and collaboration)		Weak	Weak	Weak	



The overall quality of students' achievement is weak at KG and the primary phase, and acceptable in Grade 6. Children enter the school with weak literacy and numeracy skills. The school does not use external examinations or assessments to benchmark students' performance and, while teachers' assessments indicate that all students reach at least acceptable levels of attainment, their actual work in lessons and coursework indicates that attainment levels are mostly lower than curriculum expectations, although better in Grade 6. The progress made by different groups of students is similar although girls tend to progress best because of their greater concentration.

In Islamic education, attainment and progress are weak in KG and acceptable in the primary phase and Grade 6. In KG, most children cannot respond to the Islamic greeting properly and their progress is slow as a result of teaching strategies not meeting their needs. Most students in Grade 2 can act out Ablution and list the things that annul it. In Grade 5, students can recite Qur'anic verses appropriate for their age, by heart fluently following recitation etiquette. Most can explain how the Holy Qur'an refers to the day of judgment, showing age-appropriate attainment.

In Arabic, students' attainment and progress are weak throughout the school. This is because of ineffective, teacher-centred lessons with little opportunity for students to practise speaking, understanding and reading skills. Children join KG with weak Arabic language skills. Most learn how to write letters but do not have opportunities to speak them. In Grade 1, most students find three letter words difficult to read. In Grade 4, most cannot read text following 'tashkeel'. They are not encouraged to speak classic Arabic. Most Grade 6 students lack fluency and accuracy in reading and are not guided in how to read with expression, showing levels below those expected by this grade.

In social studies, students' attainment and progress are acceptable. Most students are attaining in line with curriculum expectations. For example, in Grade 3, most students can explain what civilisation means and how this links to their own lives. In Grade 6, most can explain the concept of citizenship and the factors that contribute to it, confidently. This shows that they are making acceptable progress and most are attaining the levels expected for their age.

In English, attainment and progress are weak in KG and the primary phase and acceptable in Grade 6. At KG and the primary phase, students are not working at the levels expected for their age. In KG, for example, while most children can form the letters of the alphabet, only a few can use them appropriately when building simple words into short phrases. Grade 2 students listen attentively so that they can respond generally well to teacher questioning, and most Grade 4 students read the simple texts they are using successfully. Writing remains weak throughout the primary phase with few examples of the kinds of written work expected at this phase. Students in



Grade 6 make better progress where the work is more challenging and most attain broadly in line with age-related expectations. They read and analyse more appropriately challenging texts. They speak with more confidence and clarity when describing characters and story lines.

In mathematics, attainment and progress are weak overall. This is a result of ineffective teaching throughout the school. In lessons, most students do not demonstrate levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that are in line with age-related expectations. Children in KG enter with weak numeracy skills. A few are able to count confidently and perform simple calculations as they progress through the KG. In Grade 2, most students can count to 100 in tens but this is below age-related expectations. Students make limited progress in Grade 3 where work is pitched at a very low level. By Grade 6, girls' progress is better than boys because they have better learning skills. Girls can convert fractions into decimals and are more adept at using mathematical vocabulary.

In science, attainment is weak and progress is acceptable in the primary phase and Grade 6. Teachers tend to focus on students learning right or wrong answers rather than developing skills of exploration and investigation. Students rarely act as scientists designing and carrying out experiments, problem solving and asking questions. KG children learn the names of parts of the body and how to categorise living things. In Grade 1, the large majority of students can name the parts of a flower but not explain how flowers grow. Grade 5 students have difficulty classifying living things and they find scientific vocabulary too difficult to use. Grade 6 girls make better progress because their language skills are better. They can identify conditions for growth accurately.

Achievement in other subjects is acceptable except at KG where it is weak. KG children make limited progress in physical education (PE) because behaviour is poor and a minority of boys find physical exercise demanding. Progress is better from Grade 1 onwards and students participate enthusiastically in PE and music lessons. Most are developing age-appropriate ball skills, for example. Grade 1 art students collaborated well when producing UAE flags. Students generally have few opportunities to develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills in lessons although Grade 3 students are developing basic skills in making presentation slides.

Students' learning skills are weak because teachers rely too much on using worksheets and workbooks with few opportunities given for students to work collaboratively. When offered the opportunity, though, students show that they can communicate and collaborate well with each other, particularly as they get older, and that they can work independently. Skills such as creativity, critical thinking, problem solving and innovation are mostly weak.

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
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Personal development	Acceptable	Good	Good	
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Weak	Weak	Acceptable	

Students' personal and social development is broadly acceptable overall. Almost all behave well in lessons and work conscientiously on set tasks. KG children understand classroom rules and the importance of sharing. Students move between lessons in a safe, orderly manner. Students do not take sufficient personal responsibility for their own learning because of a lack of opportunity. Students' relationships with peers and adults at the school are warm and courteous. Students read and perform well at assemblies where they also appreciate the recognition of their work and good behaviour. Most students understand the benefits of healthy eating and regular exercise. They eat healthy foods and join in enthusiastically with the morning exercise. Students' attendance is very good at around 97%.

Most students have a broadly acceptable awareness of Islamic values though not all appreciate yet the relevance of these to their daily lives. Students are respectful when listening to the national anthem and during the reading of the Holy Qur'an. Most students understand the basic history and culture of the UAE and the small heritage display in the school reception area helps to consolidate their understanding. There are limited references around the school to promote students' understanding of the UAE as a modern, developed nation.

Social responsibility and innovation are not promoted sufficiently, with school and class leadership responsibilities being under-developed. The school has a students' council but its impact is minimal. Members of the council are not prominent around the school as monitors or role models, for example. Students' understanding and appreciation of other world cultures is underdeveloped. Students have previously raised funds for charities such as the Red Crescent. Examples of students' using innovation skills are few.

Performance Standard 3: Teaching and Assessment

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

Teaching and assessment are weak overall. Most teachers have acceptable subject knowledge but are less secure in their understanding of how to deliver effective learning and teaching. Teaching in KG is not matched well enough to meet children's early learning needs. They are not given the space to discover things for themselves through well-planned, purposeful play. Most teachers use a common lesson plan template but activities are rarely included which motivate and challenge all learners of different abilities. Teaching to develop critical thinking, problem solving and innovation skills is generally weak. Most lessons are too dependent on workbooks and worksheets. Teachers spend too much time writing on the board or talking. ICT is not regularly used in lessons. Teaching is effective on the few occasions where students are presented with open-ended, collaborative tasks and given time to reflect on their learning and present their work. In an effective Grade 6 English lesson, for example, clear learning outcomes, brisk delivery and challenging questions ensured students made progress in understanding plot and character in a story. In a Grade 1 music lesson, students' enthusiastic participation and their teacher's innovative use of floor pictures ensured they could match sounds accurately to musical notation. Classroom displays of students' work are limited.

While internal assessment procedures are regular and broad, they are not moderated in a way that ensures they are realistic and, as a result, they over-estimate the performance of students. The school uses a grading system to assess students' performance but this is not benchmarked against national or international standards. Teachers have a general understanding of students' strengths and weaknesses through the school's diagnostic tests. Teachers rarely use targeted questioning in lessons to assess students' understanding of the lesson's intended outcomes. Students are rarely given the opportunity to critically explain and assess their own and others' work.

Performance Standard 4: Curriculum

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

The implementation and adaptation of the curriculum are weak. The school follows an American curriculum based on the State of Virginia. The school relies on delivering this curriculum mainly through text books and worksheets. Subject content is often repeated across the grades. In English for example, students in the top three grades were all studying the same aspect of grammar with little difference in levels of difficulty. The overall learning experience for students can be insufficiently engaging and they sometimes become bored or are too passive. All students study music, art and PE and are enthusiastic participants in these subjects. The KG curriculum is not being delivered with an appropriate focus on learning through discovery and choice. There are insufficient opportunities for students to develop their research, problem solving and innovation skills in preparation for moving onto the next stage of their education. The school has not maintained last year's after-school activities which developed students' wider gifts, talents and interests. Links to UAE history and traditions are adequate. There is a small display of Arabic heritage artefacts but little shown in classrooms and around the school. The school celebrates traditional UAE events well enough. National Day celebrations have included a falconry display and a presentation on the care of camels.

The school identifies low-attaining students and additional work is planned for them but not delivered consistently in lessons. The curriculum is not adapted well enough for students who have identified special learning needs because of the lack of individual education plans (IEPs), or for those who are gifted and talented. The school had previously delivered additional support classes in the activities period. The school has organised a few trips for students. A minority of students have visited the local hospital and attended a science festival. Cross-curricular links are not formally planned. Strategies for improving Arabic and English literacy are not embedded across the curriculum to ensure skills are reinforced consistently. The current curriculum reviewing process does not ensure that it meets the needs and aspirations of all students.

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	Good	Good	Good	
Care and support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	

The protection, care, guidance and support for students are acceptable overall. The school provides a safe, secure and well-maintained learning environment for students. Health and safety arrangements are robust. The school premises are regularly checked for safety hazards. The school has adequate procedures in place to check that school transport meets regularity requirements. The school has undertaken an appropriate procedure for emergency evacuation. There are ramps but no lift to the upper floor. Senior staff at the school ensure arrangements for the arrival and departure of students are safe and well-ordered. The school's child protection policy is known by students, parents and teachers. The school nurse provides appropriate guidance to students on healthy lifestyles. The clinic is appropriately equipped. All children have access to an adult should they have problems at school. The specialist outdoor PE facilities are safe for student participation.

Students' positive behaviour is rewarded with certificates which they appreciate. In lessons, a few teachers do not always follow the school's behaviour management policy. Students who require special help have been identified and additional support provided including, for example, a 'shadow' teacher who provides guidance on class activities. The school has not provided IEPs, however. These would strengthen the quality of provision and ensure its consistent delivery. More could be done to identify other students who require special support. The school has not formally identified higher-achieving students or those who are gifted and talented. A range of enrichment activities has been planned but not yet implemented. The school collects regular data on students' attainment levels. These are collated and clearly presented but do not accurately reflect students' levels of attainment when compared with relevant curriculum standards. They are inconsistent with the school's classification of low-attaining students. The monitoring of students' academic progress across all their subjects is under-developed. The role of home-room teachers in effectively monitoring this is not yet in place.

Performance Standard 6: Leadership and management

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

Leadership and management are weak overall. The school is in its second year without a principal and this is hindering its improvement. The school lacks strategic direction and the kind of effective planning it needs to improve the quality of education at the school. The newly appointed academic supervisor ensures teachers' administrative responsibilities are carried out and the basic curriculum planned and delivered. Relationships at the school are harmonious. Communication channels are effective. Most teachers are new to the school and have been effectively inducted into school and curriculum procedures.

The school's self-evaluation form (SEF) identifies the school's strengths and areas for improvement but overestimates its current performance standards. Student attainment data has been collated but overestimates the performance of students. The school development plan (SDP) focuses on improving teaching and learning but this has not yet had an impact on improving students' achievement.

Parental communications are regular and appreciated. Parents are regularly informed of their children's academic and personal development and what they are learning. Feedback on attainment sometimes over-estimates the progress and levels achieved and parents would benefit from more accurate data on their children's progress. The school does not have a governing body. The owner alone provides governance direction and overall accountability. Presently this arrangement is insufficient to drive school improvement.

The school functions efficiently on a day-to-day basis. Community and other external links are limited to visits by the Civil Defence and a hospital trip. Classrooms and subject resources are adequate for the number of students at the school. There are limited displays of students' work in classrooms and around the school. The school has specialist rooms for art, music, science and ICT. These are regularly used by students. There is no specialist SEN withdrawal space or room and resources are limited for these students. Outdoor PE facilities are good.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. To improve the leadership and performance of the school by taking decisive steps to appoint a school principal and Board of Governors as a matter of urgency.
2. Improve attainment and progress in all subjects, by:
 - i. ensuring assessment procedures are fit for purpose, moderated, and provide accurate measures of students' attainment levels
 - ii. using data more effectively to provide clear, relevant targets for all students and teachers
 - iii. setting clearly defined improvement targets for all subjects and classes
 - iv. ensuring consistently effective monitoring of lessons and students' coursework which focus on student progress and the quality of progress.
3. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment in lessons, by:
 - i. ensuring all lessons have clear learning outcomes that focus on what students need to learn
 - ii. providing all students with challenging, open-ended, problem-solving activities in lessons
 - iii. ensuring all lessons include relevant assessment activities, including using targeted questioning more effectively
 - iv. developing more appropriate, flexible learning opportunities through which children in the KG can explore and discover for themselves
 - v. reducing the amount of time that teachers talk and over dominate lessons.
4. Provide more enrichment activities for all students, by:
 - i. reviewing the scope within and after the school day with a view to finding more time for curriculum enrichment experiences
 - ii. undertaking an appropriate assessment of students to identify which enrichments would best meet their needs, including for those who are gifted and talented.
5. Improve the quality of provision for students who require additional support, by:
 - i. ensuring procedures for identifying these students are accurate and comprehensive
 - ii. ensuring students who are identified are supported effectively in class and when withdrawn for one-to-one teaching
 - iii. providing these students with an IEP which is agreed with them and their parents and monitored effectively.