



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



Summary Inspection Report

Grace Valley Indian School

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Iqraa

Grace Valley Indian School

Inspection Date	9 th – 12 th June, 2013
School ID#	208
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	Indian (CBSE)
Number of Students	789
Age Range	3 – 15 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Sainudeen Perumannil
School Address	Falaj Hazza, Manasir, Al Ain, PO box 67378, UAE
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Introduction

Four inspectors inspected the school. The inspectors observed 75 lessons and carried out joint observations with the Principal. Inspectors attended assembly, held meetings with students, parents and staff and carried out learning walks. They scrutinised the results of assessments, attendance records, the school improvement plan and the information from analysis of parent questionnaires. Inspectors checked policies, procedures and records for health and safety purposes.

Description of the School

Grace Valley Indian School opened in purpose-built premises in May 2010 to provide an Indian curriculum for students from KG to Grade 4. The school is situated in Falaj Hazza, Manasir, at the edge of the school zone in Al Ain. The school is housed in a two-storey building. The lower floor houses KG and Grade 1 and the first floor houses Grades 2 to 8. Within the school plot there is land which has the permission from the municipality for construction of additional classrooms. The school has grown quickly since 2010 and now provides education from KG to Grade 8. Since the last inspection in 2011, student numbers have more than trebled. The aim of the school is 'to be an institution of excellence, dedicated to producing leaders of the future'. It caters to the needs of the Asian population in Al Ain. The school has 789 students from KG to Grade 8, 482 of them are boys and 307 are girls. 86% of students are Muslim. KG has 273 children, primary (Grades 1-5) has 447 students and middle school (Grades 6-8) has 69 students. The school population is made of 36% Indian, 33% Pakistani, 12% Afghani, 10% Bangladeshi, 2% Iranian, 2% Nepalese and 2% Sri Lankan. There are no students from UAE or any other Arab country. 2% are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Most students come from families with professional or middle-class business backgrounds. The school has an open admission policy for CBSE students from UAE. For all other students the school has a selective entry test in mathematics and English. The school admitted 310 students this academic year. The principal, vice principal, supervisors, subject coordinators and two members of the governing body make up the leadership team. Annual fees are from AED 6,645 for the KG rising to AED 7,900 in Grade 4 and AED 10,800 in Grade 8. This includes bus fees, stationery, tuition fees and uniforms. Teachers' annual salaries range from AED 27,600 to AED 102,000.

The Effectiveness of the School

Band C

Grade 7

Inspectors judged Grace Valley Indian School to be in Band C; that is a school in need of significant improvement.

This judgement reflects the school's position against international best standards. Although students, achieve well in tests, particularly in their mother tongues, to make the progress towards world-class provision which the Emirate of Abu Dhabi requires for all its schools, Grace Valley Indian school must do more to develop the 21st Century skills the nation needs. For this reason, this report recognises the good things which the school Principal and teachers currently do but also gives a clear recommendation of what more needs to be done to take the school forward.

Students that started at the school in 2010 in Grade 4 are now in Grade 8. The school has managed this growth appropriately. Simultaneously, the school has admitted large numbers of students to all grades from various countries. Many of these students arrive with no experience of an English medium curriculum. The school has adapted the curriculum to match the needs of these students new to the country. They provide opportunities for them to talk in many native languages, which keep them connected to their mother tongue. In most cases, students' proficiency in their mother tongue is satisfactory.

Standards and progress are very unsatisfactory in all subjects including English, mathematics, science, Arabic, Islamic studies, and social studies. SEND students and those who are gifted and talented (G&T) make significantly less progress than their peers. In English in KG, most children can follow simple instructions from the teacher, identify the first three letters and sounds of the alphabet and recognise a few simple words. In Grade 7 and 8 the majority of students are able to read a piece of fiction text confidently, understand it, and explain a few key ideas. Across all grades, students' listening, speaking and writing skills are underdeveloped, as they have limited opportunities for discussion and extended writing. In mathematics, most students are able to clearly explain and justify their methods and reasoning using appropriate mathematical vocabulary. However, they are unable to use and apply these skills in new situations to solve problems. In Arabic, students speak inaccurately, and show significant weaknesses in reading, writing and spelling. In Islamic studies, students are able to recite short verses from the Holy Qur'an. Students have some knowledge and understanding of the UAE culture, climate and history. In science, students' practical and high-order thinking skills are underdeveloped. They do not know how to work scientifically for example by making predictions, testing out ideas, and drawing

conclusions. Students in lower grades have a sound understanding of basic scientific principles but are unable to link these with everyday life. In information and communication technology (ICT) students understand the basic technological vocabulary and keyboard functions. In Grade 8, a few girls are able to analyse data using spread sheets.

Students develop positive social relations with their peers and adults. They were very polite and friendly when they greeted the inspection team in school. They were keen to talk about the activities they do and held doors open for members of the team. They are proud of their cultural heritages, are well behaved and have good attendance. The teaching and learning style limits students' development of 21st century skills. There are too few opportunities for working collaboratively, researching independently or engaging in critical thinking and problem solving activities. They have few chances to develop ICT skills across all subjects. Students are not involved in peer or self-assessment and do not know what they had to do to improve their work. Students are not equipped with the social and interpersonal skills they need to progress well to the next stage of their education.

Teaching and learning across the school is unable to meet the needs of all students. Teachers have low expectations for all students and especially SEND students and those who are gifted and talented. Teachers are suitably qualified but too often teachers are not sufficiently fluent in English so they are not able to model the language well in their teaching. Some teachers do not have a high level of teaching competence in their subjects. KG teachers are not qualified in early years' education and lack the understanding of how young children learn through play. In Grades 1 to 8, teachers rarely use methods and resources which effectively engage students in their learning. Few teachers involve students in group and practical activities that help to motivate and stimulate better learning. Professional development has been provided in effective teaching strategies and learning through play for KG. Leaders do not monitor this training effectively so they do not know that it is not having the desired impact on children's outcomes in KG. Teachers use a limited range of assessment techniques that are not standardised or planned consistently across the school. Teachers do not make effective use of assessments to plan lessons to match the needs of the range of students' abilities in their class. Progress and attainment are not measured against national or international standards.

An overreliance on the narrow academic curriculum means that students are mainly learning through textbooks. There are minimal material resources in classrooms. The narrow, book based curriculum mean students get too few

opportunities to use their own initiative or foster their talents. Most teachers are committed to imparting the content of the curriculum so lessons are focussed on acquiring knowledge rather than developing learning and investigative skills. There are extra-curricular activities both within and outside the school to extend the formal curriculum. These happen infrequently and are not linked well enough to whole school activities to promote better learning outcomes. While there is celebration of students' abilities and talent in music, dance and plays during Annual Day, Sports Day and UAE National Day, there is no timetabled music and dance in school.

The school runs safely on a day-to-day basis but takes insufficient care of the students' health and safety. While there is a licensed clinic and nurse, which is an improvement from the last inspections, safety procedures in the school regarding evacuation during fire drills, seat belts on buses and an effective child protection policy are absent. The Social Worker's teaching commitment and the lack of a separate room for his use, restricts his work and limits his opportunities to be proactive. There is no separate counsellor for female students. Systems to support the students' personal development, such as personalised academic care and preparation for their future education, are weak. There is no system to track students' academic progress as they move through the school so students' individual needs are often not met and they do not achieve their potential. Students' underachievement goes unnoticed so teachers are unaware that they need to do more to provide suitable activities to enable students to 'catch up'. Students who are more able are similarly not identified so they are not challenged appropriately in lessons.

The school building has grown since the last inspection with additional classrooms, a library and a computer laboratory. This has not led to overall improvement in the quality of the building, as some of the classrooms are cramped and not conducive to learning. There are insufficient number of toilets for staff and students and air-conditioning is often ineffective. The school has invested in data show projectors for all classrooms. These are not well used so do little to enhance learning. The playgrounds are only partially covered. KG has an outside play area that barely meets the needs of these young children.

Leadership and management are very unsatisfactory. School improvement is limited because of the influx of the large number of newly enrolled students, which means day-to-day management impacts on long-term strategic decisions. The Principal is aware of the challenges the school faces and has satisfactory knowledge about international benchmarking but there is no sense of urgency or drive to move school improvement forward quickly enough. Strategic planning

has no clear focus, lacks measureable targets, and has few links to the school budget. Systems for staff appraisal are weak with staff not held to account for their performance or for the progress of their students. There is too little guidance, counselling and support for students, especially for young children and the girls. School leaders know what needs to be done so they demonstrate a capacity to bring about improvement with external support. Parents are supportive and there are strong links with the community and external organizations. Students and parents alike find these links enjoyable and valuable. The focus on healthy eating, environmental issues and special days at local shopping centres creates some awareness among the students. Despite the comparatively low fees and the obvious passion for improvement shown by the principal the school does not offer value for money because standards are too low and students make slow progress.

What the School should do to improve further:

1. Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - i. ensuring teachers provide a wide range of learning experiences which give students an opportunity to develop their 21st century skills;
 - ii. providing targeted professional development for the staff based on needs and supports the school's vision;
 - iii. ensuring KG staff has appropriate training in early years' curriculum;
 - iv. establishing an assessment system that tracks students' academic progress; and
 - v. using assessment information to match learning activities to students' differing abilities.
2. Improve the governance and leadership and management by:
 - i. using precisely written plans for strategic improvement, with clear and measurable goals, regular monitoring and links to the school budget;
 - ii. developing rigorous systems of staff appraisal and empowering the middle managers to play a decisive role;
 - iii. ensuring all students have access to guidance, counselling and support, particularly KG and female students by appointing a qualified female social worker and a separate counselling centre; and
 - iv. ensuring the buildings are fully air conditioned and classrooms have enough space to provide active learning.

3. Improve the curriculum and make it broad and balanced by:
 - i. ensuring that there is transition, continuity and progression across all subjects and grades; and
 - ii. giving students an opportunity to participate in extra and co-curricular activities for students to develop 21st century skills and to enrich and support the formal curriculum.
4. As a priority, ensure that there is a Child Protection Policy in place and the school community has sufficient awareness and training to identify and respond appropriately, should a need arise.