



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



Summary Inspection Report

Rosary Private School

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Iqraa

Rosary Private School

Inspection Date	10 th – 13 th March, 2013
School ID#	114
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	Ministry of Education
Number of Students	3468
Age Range	3 – 18 years
Gender	Mixed in Kindergarten; separate boys and girls from Grade 1
Principal	Najah Mosa Hijazin
School Address	Al Mushrif, PO Box 597, Abu Dhabi, UAE
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Introduction

The school was inspected by 6 inspectors who observed 126 lessons and other student activities, scrutinised students' written work, analysed student and school performance data, studied school documents and talked with staff and students.

Description of the School

The school is co-owned by its local owner and the Rosary Congregation. The Rosary Supreme Congregation Council advises the principal and the Mother Superior visits on a regular basis. It was the first school to be established in Abu Dhabi and opened in 1969. It moved to its current, purpose-built premises in the Al Mushrif area of Abu Dhabi in the 1970s. The aims of the school include the intention to provide an 'Outstanding education that prepares students for local and global change and to cross social and religious barriers.' It is led by the principal and heads of the four sections; Kindergarten, elementary boys from Grade 1, elementary girls from Grade 1 and the girls' high school. The school is divided into arts and scientific sections.

In total there are 2443 girls and 1025 boys: 484 children in KG, 1655 in G1 – 5, 804 in G6 – 9 and 525 in G10-12. KG classes are mixed but boys and girls are taught separately from Grade 1 onwards. All boys leave the school at the end of Grade 6. Almost all students are Muslim and of these, 98% are of Arab heritage. 2.7% are Emirati and 0.3% students originate from Bahrain, the only other Gulf state represented. The rest come from a range of other Arab countries, principally Jordan (27%), Syria (27%), Egypt (14%), and Palestine (11%).

The school delivers the Ministry of Education (MOE) curriculum in Grades 1 to 12. The school has devised its own KG curriculum, and French is a mandatory third language for all students from Grade 2 to 11.

Teachers assess KG children and older students prior to enrolment. Formal and informal tests are used to identify students with learning needs, who are not normally admitted. All teachers have appropriate teaching qualifications. Fees are low, ranging from 5,330AED in KG to 11,665AED for Grades 10 to 12, excluding books, uniform and transport. The majority of parents have moderate incomes and the school provides scholarships for the most able and those in financial need. Staff salaries are low; the average class teacher's salary ranges from 5,500AED to 6,000AED per month, depending on experience and qualifications.

3.2% students are currently identified as having special educational needs, mostly relating to moderate learning difficulties. No students have physical difficulties and 0.3% students are identified as having particular gifts or talents.

The Effectiveness of the School

Band C

Grade 6

Inspectors judged The Rosary Private School to be in Band C; that is a school in need of significant improvement.

The school's 2011 and 2012 examination data show that Grade 12 standards in English, mathematics and the sciences were above the Ministry of Education (MoE) average, especially in physics. While work seen during the inspection indicates that this continues to be the case, overall standards remain below best international standards. However, provision in KG has improved and attainment and progress are now in line with international standards. In a few specific areas some of the G12 girls are working at a level that approaches international standards. This is the case, for example, with regard to their spoken English and French. These students speak fluently and confidently, with good pronunciation and accurate grammar. These standards are high because their teachers carefully and consistently check students' thorough understanding of the main learning points. They encourage students to read widely, providing regular opportunities for them to speak at length during lessons. Girls become able to express themselves very naturally in both English and French and some of the older girls continue their studies at the Paris-Sorbonne University in Abu Dhabi. However, this is not representative of the overall quality of teaching and learning, particularly for boys.

Standards in Arabic, Islamic Studies and Social Studies are below those expected. This is because students' knowledge and understanding is limited to the content of the workbooks and teachers do not develop the courses further. While some students can write well in Arabic, many students lack confidence when speaking. This is because many of their teachers do not themselves use Standard Arabic when addressing the class. In addition, few students can recite or interpret verses from the Holy Qur'an correctly. Teachers do not always make effective use of the information and communication (ICT) resources available during lessons. As a result, the standard of students' ICT work is below average.

Students of all nationalities make satisfactory progress in acquiring the basic skills required for learning, such as reading, writing and numeracy. Students with special educational needs make below average progress because they are usually given the same work as the rest of the class and find it too difficult. In addition, the most able students progress very slowly because teachers do not provide work that matches their high abilities.

The personal development of boys and girls differs greatly. Girls' behaviour and their attitudes to learning during lessons are usually satisfactory and sometimes good, especially in mathematics or English. They are often more interested in the

work than boys and participate more willingly. As a result, girls make satisfactory progress in their learning. Girls of all nationalities get along with each other and they respect the values, cultures and traditions of the UAE.

By contrast, boys' personal development and their academic progress are very unsatisfactory. During lessons, they often shout at each other and the teacher and become increasingly restless as the lesson progresses. During breaks, they play very roughly and do not always respect each other's belongings. Some boys said they do not feel safe from each other or from some staff and that bullying is widespread. Attendance is high at 98% and this was evident during the inspection.

Inspectors saw a noticeable difference in the quality of teaching and learning during the boys' and girls' lessons. The school's own analysis confirms that the gap in the standard of boys' and girls' work widens as students move through Grades 1 to 6. By the end of Grade 6, girls are working at a consistently higher level than boys. Teachers in the girls' section have responded positively to training provided. For example, they assess accurately and are starting to use this information when planning work that will challenge students of different abilities. In addition, they are making increasingly effective use of the newly installed laptops and projectors to clarify key learning points and add variety and interest. There have been distinct improvements to the quality of teaching in the girls' classes since the last inspection and this is reflected in their broadly satisfactory progress.

The standard of teaching in the boys' section is much weaker. Boys make slower progress in all subjects because too many teachers talk too much and do not expand or adapt the work contained within the standard textbooks. Work is often very routine, and boys find it of little relevance or interest. These teachers are not responding to the various training courses that have been provided. For example, they are not providing opportunities for group work and do not use assessment information to provide challenge for students of different abilities. In addition, the behaviour management skills of the boys' teachers are very weak. They do not adhere to the school's rewards and sanctions policy. Too many teachers shout at boys and they duly respond by shouting back. Behaviour deteriorates as lessons progress and boys become increasingly noisy and restless. They sometimes get out of their seats and walk around the classroom. Teachers accept this and make little or no attempt to re-engage them. As a result, learning during boys' lessons is often very unsatisfactory and sometimes poor.

Across the school, teaching in Arabic, Islamic and Social Studies remains very traditional and teachers adhere very closely to the textbooks. Whilst some teachers of the older girls are helping them to become more independent

learners, students' overall acquisition of the skills they will need for their future lives and the work place is weak. Learning during many lessons in mathematics, science, Arabic, Islamic and Social Studies remains driven by the textbook. Too few lessons are adapted to meet the needs of individual students and this limits progress. There are few opportunities for students to assume personal responsibility.

The KG curriculum has improved since the last inspection; it now includes regular opportunities for children to choose their own activity and learn through play. As a result, teaching has improved and attainment and progress is now satisfactory in KG. There is a clear focus on learning English and lessons include guided activities, such as learning blended sounds in English. By the time children leave KG, they can read common words in English and this is in line with the expected standard internationally. There are also some opportunities for group work, for example, when creating a collage representing a winter scene. These opportunities help children to make satisfactory progress in their social and creative development. Whilst children enjoy using the large sand area for timetabled active play, the curriculum does not include opportunities for children to choose whether or not they can play inside the building or outdoors.

The school successfully expands the traditional MoE curriculum by providing French for students in Grades 1 to 11. Close links with the French Embassy provide valuable opportunities for students to practice their spoken French in everyday contexts. Grade 12 students are also prepared for the International English Language Testing System exam. These initiatives enable students to develop valuable skills that will help them in their life after school and within the workplace. Teachers provide satisfactory guidance to students when they are making personal choices about what they could do when they leave school.

Some students who need support in mathematics or English can attend additional classes before or during the school day. Students also enjoy the few extra-curricular activities that are provided, such as the boys' football team and relish community events such as 'Spelling Bee' or the annual mathematics competition. These opportunities are limited in range and access restricted to the most able.

The school makes all the required checks when recruiting staff and there are suitable arrangements for first aid and the dispensing of medicines. Several students told inspectors that teachers subject them to verbal abuse and sometimes hit them. Senior managers acknowledge this happens but the leadership has not taken the necessary steps to halt the practice. A child protection policy is in place but there has been no staff training. Procedures for protecting students from threats or violence are poor and boys say that bullying is

widespread. During the inspection, inspectors did not see any corporal punishment take place, but heard several staff shouting in an intimidating and verbally aggressive manner.

The building is a purpose built school. It is well maintained and is exceptionally clean. Since the last inspection, the school has significantly reduced the number on roll and this has reduced the class sizes for many of the younger children and students. However, older students remain in classrooms that are too small to comfortably accommodate them. Students and staff cope because students store their bags neatly and usually remain seated during lessons. Some of the specialist accommodation is also limited in size, for example the biology laboratory. There is a large indoor auditorium and gym but no suitable outdoor surface for physical games such as football. Physical education lessons usually take place on the hard paved areas and these have the potential to cause serious injury should a student fall or trip. In KG, there is a large sand area and an indoor multi-purpose closed hall. There are sufficient toilets for the number of KG children but they are not accessible from within the classroom and are adult-sized.

The school is adequately resourced and there is a sufficient number of appropriately qualified and experienced teachers. Each KG class has one teaching assistant and they make a satisfactory contribution to children's learning. Teachers enjoy improved access to focused training, which is either delivered directly by a team of external specialists or senior leaders. The school cannot match salaries paid within government schools and, as a result, teacher turnover is high.

The range of learning resources has improved significantly since the last inspection. One remaining shortfall is the number of computers for the older girls and they are not all able to use one during ICT lessons. In addition, effective use is not always made of the available resources. For example, the well stocked library is inadequately timetabled and some of the teachers of the younger students use the ICT suites as teaching spaces. They do not always set work that actually requires the students to use the computers.

The five Sisters work closely and harmoniously to lead and manage this large school. The principal receives effective support from The Rosary Supreme Congregation Council, which is based in Jerusalem. The Mother Superior visits the school every three months in order to provide an objective viewpoint and advise the principal on key matters. Parents who completed their questionnaire are supportive of the school and there are no particular areas they would like to change. The owner plays no direct role in the day-to day running of the school or in its strategic development.

Individual leadership responsibilities are clear. The Sisters have worked hard to address the many recommendations made by the last inspection and the two subsequent monitoring reports. The prompt recruitment of an experienced academic adviser and involvement of an external firm of education specialists has brought about significant improvements to the quality of education provided, principally within the girls' section. While the school acknowledges that many of the initiatives taken are relatively recent, it has successfully addressed all the areas for improvement raised in the most recent monitoring report.

Senior managers, subject coordinators and teachers are all now involved in the school's development. Fees are low, the budget is carefully managed and the school provides satisfactory value for money. The improvement plan is a useful document with measurable objectives and interim success criteria.

Funding is closely aligned with the school's strategic priorities. The school is becoming increasingly analytical and is using assessment data to, for example, identify trends within year groups and compare standards between classes. In addition, it has established a thorough system of peer and lesson observations, triangulating the findings to assess and monitor the effectiveness of individual teachers. The leadership team has a broadly realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, but does not recognise the urgent need to improve the quality of education and student welfare within the boys' section of the school. In addition, while the school is aware that the standard of boys' work is significantly below girls of the same age, no effective steps are being taken to redress the balance. Although the school has made some satisfactory improvements since the last inspection, the very unsatisfactory teaching and behaviour in the boys section mean that leaders and managers have not demonstrated satisfactory capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Provide child protection training for all staff and ensure that clear procedures are in place to safeguard students' safety and well being during the school day, most specifically within the boys' section.
2. Raise standards in the boys' section by:
 - i. Improving behaviour management during lessons and during break times
 - ii. Eradicate physical violence and verbal abuse by teachers towards students in the boys' section as a matter of urgency

- iii. Improving the quality of teaching and learning in order to ensure all students are engaged
 - iv. Improve the leadership and management of the boys' section.
3. Improve the use of assessment data to set tasks during lessons that fully challenge all students.
 4. Raise attainment of students in spoken and written Standard Arabic, by ensuring all teachers use Standard Arabic during lessons.
 5. Ensure provision of toilets is age appropriate for the children of Kindergarten.