



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



Summary Inspection Report

Saint Joseph's School

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Iqraa

Saint Joseph's School

Inspection Date	19 th – 22 nd November, 2012
School ID#	115
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	Indian (Central Board of Secondary Education)
Number of Students	1,501
Age Range	Kindergarten (KG) – Grade 12
Gender	KG – Grade 4 – Mixed Grades 5 – 6 – Boys and Grades 6 – 12 - Girls
Principal	Sister Carmen
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Introduction

The school was inspected by five inspectors. They observed 106 lessons and met with school leaders, teachers and students. The inspectors looked at teachers' planning and school documentation including information about assessment. In addition, a meeting was held with 10 parents and parent questionnaire responses were analysed.

Description of the School

The school was founded in 1967 and moved to its present site in 1986. It is led and managed by the Carmelite Sisters, an Indian order of Catholic nuns, supported by a board of governors. The great majority of students, 99%, are of Indian heritage, with the rest coming from seven other different countries, including America, Canada, Philippines, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Only 5% of these students are Muslim and none is Arab. The aims of the school are to provide a holistic education to 'impart character traits, trust, and honesty, to instil positive attitudes to learning and to guide each child in the development of interpersonal relationships.' The school is affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), and uses an Indian curriculum taught through English. All classes in Arabic, Islamic and social studies are taught in line with the Ministry of Education (MOE) curriculum. The school serves students from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, including middle class and professional families.

There are 52 children in the kindergarten (KG), 704 students in primary, 407 in middle and 338 in upper schools. The number of boys and girls is 297 and 1,204 respectively. The school is in the process of phasing out its KG provision and awaiting Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) approval. This is because there is insufficient space for accommodating both KG and Grade 1 classes on the ground floor as recommended by the Civil Defence report. Currently, there are only two classes in KG. The school has identified students with special educational needs (SEN) who have physical disabilities. A small number of students are stated to be gifted and talented academically and a few others are identified as excelling in sports and arts. The school sets its own admission tests based on CBSE syllabus. The school fees range from AED 3,600 in KG to AED 7,200 in the upper school per annum. Forty students from lower economic background are offered free education. The transportation fees are charged separately by the bus company.

The Bishop of Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Arabia owns the school on behalf of the church in partnership with a local owner. The school now has a board of governors which is accountable to the management board, chaired by the Bishop.

The board of governors is fairly new and aims to support the school in providing a strategic direction to its work.

The Effectiveness of the School

Band C

Grade 6

Inspectors judged St Joseph's School to be in Band C that is a school in need of significant improvement.

The school was inspected in May 2010 and at the time was judged to be poor. The report recommended that the school should review some of the health and safety requirements, increase the effectiveness of leadership and management, improve the quality of teaching and strengthen the curriculum. It advocated activities adopting play based learning in KG and extending opportunities for physical education, art and creative activities.

The school has made good progress in addressing most of these issues and this is beginning to have a positive impact in all areas of its work. The overall effectiveness is still unsatisfactory but these developments indicate a significant improvement since the last inspection. An effective management structure has been established. This has ensured that senior leaders have gained an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have developed a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in moving the school forward. There is a clear line of accountability to the new board of governors who are increasingly involved in supporting the leaders in improving the quality of education in school. The quality of teaching has improved but remains unsatisfactory overall. The curriculum is now broadly satisfactory. It still remains weak in KG as there is no outdoor play area. The school has ensured that security is good. It meets the safety requirements in the recommended areas, although the supervision of the buses for dropping off and picking up students is not rigorous enough. The school recognises this and is looking into this matter. There is now a clear infrastructure in place to address further improvement. Considering the improvements made over the past two years, the school is judged to have satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Standards and progress have improved and are now in line with schools following the CBSE curriculum. Progress accelerates in Grades 9 to 12 leading to continuing improvement in exam results in CBSE subjects. As a result, the pass rate for examination is above the CBSE national average by the end of Grade 12.

In KG, standards are below the expected level and children make unsatisfactory progress as teachers have limited understanding of how children learn through imaginative and child initiated play. Many children are developing some phonic skills and can write their names correctly in legible handwriting. Standards are

also weak in Grades 1 and 2. There are too few opportunities to learn through practical and creative activities which are matched to individual needs and this hinders progress.

In Arabic, Islamic Studies and social studies, standards and progress are in line with the Ministry of Education (MOE) standards. Students make satisfactory progress in reading and writing and in their use of spoken Arabic. In Islamic studies, students gain a clear understanding of Islamic values and learn how to behave as a Muslim. In social studies, they make good progress in knowledge and understanding of the UAE heritage and its cultural diversity.

Standards and progress in English are good. Students speak, read and write with increasing fluency and confidence. Students in higher grades, particularly in Grades 9 to 12, develop good debating and research skills and present their work confidently in an articulate manner. In mathematics, students have a good grasp of number and calculation. This supports progress in other subjects, particularly in older grades, when they do accountancy and business studies. In science, students in lower grades make sound gains in knowledge and understanding of scientific facts but their progress in investigative work is weaker. Students make accelerated progress in Grades 11 and 12 and develop good investigative and logical thinking skills. Many students develop satisfactory Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills. They are limited by having little opportunity to apply these skills to enhance their learning in other subjects. Progress in physical education (PE) is unsatisfactory.

Students' personal development is good. Their very positive attitudes to learning contribute considerably to their achievement and to the school's highly inclusive ethos. The majority of parents say that students display a very good standard of behaviour and their children feel safe at school. Students say that bullying of any kind is rare and that they enjoy coming to school. They are aware of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and eat healthily during the break. They are proud of their own culture and appreciate and respect the values and culture of the UAE. Students take on roles of responsibility through their School Parliament work and organise activities for the ECO and environmental quiz clubs. There are limited opportunities for students to join in appropriate creative and sporting activities.

The school has made a consistent effort to improve the quality of teaching over the past year. As a result, teaching has improved, although, it is still judged to be unsatisfactory overall. There are pockets of good practice throughout the school where teaching is good or better. Teaching is stronger in the higher grades while it remains weakest in KG and Grades 1 to 5. Many teachers are well qualified and have a secure subject knowledge. Where teaching is satisfactory or better,

teachers have high expectations of all students and adapt their teaching methods to match the needs of students, challenging them appropriately. In these lessons, students are encouraged to engage in their learning through appropriate questioning by the teacher. As a result, they develop satisfactory, and at times good, independent learning skills through activities such as debates and their project work presentations. Teaching is better in English than in other subjects. This is because teachers use appropriate questioning skills in this subject to engage students in their own learning and share ideas in group work. Where teaching is weak, teachers' understanding of how to plan differentiated tasks to extend students' knowledge and skills is insufficiently developed. Consequently, the learning needs of students of differing abilities are not met successfully. Special needs students do not make sufficient progress in systematically acquiring knowledge and skills. In the weak lessons, gifted students are not challenged to develop their higher order thinking and independent learning skills. Students have limited opportunities to learn through discussing and assessing their own work. A common format for planning is used to for all lessons. This has a clear focus on learning objectives, resources and tasks, but the quality of teachers' planning still varies across the school.

The school has started to provide appropriate training sessions for staff. These sessions are beginning to improve the quality of teaching. They are beginning to create an increasing understanding of what differentiation entails and how to challenge and support all groups of students. It is too early to accurately judge the full impact of the training provision.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. The programmes are appropriately focused on equipping students with knowledge, understanding and skills as they follow the required CBSE and MOE courses. In addition to core subjects, it provides Hindi, French, ICT, art, music and physical education. It is less successful in ensuring that students receive a breadth of learning experiences. For example, opportunities for sports are very limited. Music is offered only in Grades 1 to 5. ICT skills are not developed effectively enough through cross-curricular work or by developing research skills. Students have some opportunities to compete in inter school sports and quiz competitions. Visits to places of interest are beginning to enhance students' learning experiences.

The school provides good care for all students. It is an orderly community where students behave responsibly and care for each other. Staff show genuine interest in students' academic progress and well-being and provide appropriate support and guidance. Students are satisfactorily prepared to make appropriate subject and career choices through discussion with staff and visits from some universities. The school has a clear child protection policy and staff have been trained on how

to detect abuse and how to deal with it. There are effective procedures for monitoring students' attendance ensuring a high rate of attendance.

The school buildings are clean, safe and maintained in a good condition. Most classrooms and the science laboratories are of adequate size. There are no gyms. Sports and PE classes are held in the playground which is unsafe for sporting and PE activities. Arrangement for dropping off and picking up of students by buses are not adequately supervised which compromises students' safety. All other safety checks are carried out appropriately.

The level of resources has been improved, but more are needed. All classes have electronic whiteboards and there are sufficient computers in the computer room and Internet access is available. The computers in the classrooms are old and not used effectively enough to enhance learning. The library is inadequately resourced. Books are outdated and insufficient in quantity and quality to enhance learning in different subjects and to promote research work.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal, supported by her new leadership team and the governors, provide clear strategic direction. The leaders work well as a team in supporting and motivating staff and students. They are deeply committed to the school and strive for further improvement. They are fully involved in evaluating the performance of the school in consultation with staff through the school improvement plan. This has enabled them to ensure that some improvements have been made in all areas since the last inspection. A clear system is in place to regularly monitor the quality of teaching. The school leaders and the director of learning are supporting teachers through a programme for professional development. This is beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching.

Students are very supportive of leaders and teachers. The school enjoys good level of support and appreciation from parents who are particularly positive about the leadership of the school and the commitment of the teachers. Fee levels are appropriate and in line with ADEC guidelines. The school provides unsatisfactory value for money due to elements of unsatisfactory teaching and a lack of resources in key areas, particularly facilities for sports, the library and outdoor area for KG. The governors have good understanding of their roles. They provide an objective and supportive view of the school's work and enable the leadership team to function effectively.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - i. continuing to train teachers to gain a clearer understanding of how to plan lessons that differentiate their teaching to meet the needs of students of all abilities and ages, especially when teaching the lower grades;
 - ii. developing KG teachers' knowledge and understanding of how young children learn through creative and imaginative play; and
 - iii. sharing and embedding the existing good practice within the school amongst all teachers.
2. Broaden the curriculum opportunities for students by:
 - i. increasing the range of sports and creative activities, including art and music; and
 - ii. providing opportunities for students across the school to develop higher order thinking and independent learning skills using ICT across the curriculum.
3. Improve leadership and management by:
 - i. continuing to significantly enhance the level of resources to meet the needs of the curriculum especially in PE, the library, KG outdoor play and classroom resources for ICT; and
 - ii. ensuring that the arrangements for dropping off and picking up students from school by buses are monitored rigorously to ensure the safety of the students at all times.