

INSPECTION REPORT

Iranian Salman Farsi Boys School

Report published in April 2014

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Iranian Salman Farsi Boys School

Location	Al Qusais
Type of school	Private
Website	www.salman.uaeirschools.com
Telephone	04-2988173
Address	Qusais Dubai-P.O.BOX:3167
Principal	Serrolhagh Gholamhussain Abedi
Curriculum	Iranian MoE
Gender of students	Boys
Age / Grades or Year Groups	5-18 / Grade 1-Grade 12
Attendance	Outstanding
Number of students on roll	530
Largest nationality group of Students	Iranian
Number of Emirati students	0
Date of the inspection	18th November to 20th November 2013

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The context of the school

Located in Al Qusais, Salman Al Farsi Iranian School is a long established private school providing education for Grade 1 to Grade 12 Iranian expatriate boys and a small number of other Asian boys. At the time of inspection there were 530 boys on the roll, aged five to 18 years in the mainstream section of the school. This was a slight decrease from the previous year. An additional section of the school housed a special educational needs unit which supported 26 male and female students, aged between seven and 21 years.

The school followed the Iranian Ministry of Education curriculum with students completing the Iranian National examinations. Approximately half of the student population was in the primary phase, with a smaller proportion in the middle and high phases. There were 11 classes in the primary phase, four in middle and 14 in high phases. Within the mainstream school a few students had been identified as having some form of special educational need. These students were given only minimal support in their learning during normal lessons.

There were 29 full time teachers, including the senior leadership team. All had appropriate academic and teaching qualifications. The Principal and a number of the management team had been appointed in the current academic year.

Overall school performance 2013-2014

Acceptable

Key strengths

- Attainment and progress in mathematics and science in middle and high school phases due to the many classroom opportunities to develop students' critical thinking and enquiry skills;
- Attitudes and behaviour in middle and high school phases;
- Accurate identification of students' needs in the special educational needs unit.

Recommendations

- Ensure that management promptly addresses the poor attitudes and behaviours of some primary phase students while in class and around the school as well as the lack of punctuality to lessons across all phases;
- Improve attainment and progress in all key subjects in the primary phase;
- Develop assessment processes to improve teachers' awareness of each student's level of understanding and use this information better in planning to meet the learning needs of all students;
- Improve students' learning skills by developing their abilities to investigate, think critically and work independently;
- Ensure that the curriculum for Islamic Education and Arabic as an additional language meets MoE in the United Arab Emirates requirements.

Progress since the last inspection

- There had been improvement in provision in science and mathematics in middle and high schools;
- The Special Needs Unit had improved and provided sound overall support for the students referred to it.
- The new Principal and leadership team were beginning to develop strategies to improve the operation of the school.

Trend of overall performance



How good are the students' attainment progress and learning skills?

	Primary	Middle	High
Islamic Education			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as a first language			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as an additional language			
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Farsi			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
English			
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mathematics			
Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Good
Progress	Acceptable	Good	Good
Science			
Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Good
Progress	Acceptable	Good	Good

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	Primary	Middle	High
Quality of students' learning skills	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Primary	Middle	High
Personal responsibility	Acceptable	Good	Good
Students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Community and environmental responsibility	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

	Primary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?

	Primary	Middle	High
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Primary	Middle	High
Health and Safety	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of Support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	Whole school
Quality of leadership	Acceptable
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
Parents and the community	Acceptable
Governance	Acceptable
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Unsatisfactory

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How good are the students' attainment and progress?

Attainment was acceptable across the school in all key subjects and phases except in mathematics and science in middle and high school, where it was good. In Arabic as an additional language, most students understood the meaning of familiar words and read texts adequately. Listening skills and script shaping skills were well developed. Speaking was limited to a narrow range of words and expression was dominated by frequent errors. Writing was the least developed skill across the school. In English, students in Grades 1 and 2 did not listen carefully and their written work was careless. From Grade 3 onwards students were more attentive listeners and they talked at length with increased confidence. By the end of Grade 12 a few students could read fluently with good understanding. Writing skills were not well developed across the school. In mathematics there was good continuity in the development of computational skills. The majority of students had a good understanding of the use of algebra to solve problems. Students' scientific skills and knowledge in the primary phase were built systematically. Most students in Grade 2 could observe accurately and describe the parts of plants. The majority in the middle and high phases demonstrated levels of scientific knowledge, skill and understanding that were above international standards. They had increased opportunities for enquiry and practical investigations and effectively used their strong mathematical understanding when solving problems.

Progress was acceptable across the school in all key subjects and phases except in mathematics and science in middle and high schools, where it was good. In Arabic as an additional language, most students made adequate progress with learning vocabulary and building the ability to pronounce and shape Arabic script. However, students' progress was slower, particularly in middle and high schools, in writing and speaking to express their ideas. The majority entered the school with few English skills and by Grade 12 they had made acceptable gains in speaking and listening. Most students made acceptable progress in internal assessments across the four skills. They made least progress in independent writing and reading. In mathematics, students became more proficient at problem solving and applying their skills in a variety of mathematical contexts, but rarely applied these to real-life situations. In science in the primary phase, progress in problem solving and thinking critically was a weakness. Students lacked confidence in applying their knowledge. Progress improved in the middle and high phases where students made good gains in their knowledge and understanding, particularly in Chemistry and Physics.

[View judgements](#)

Quality of students' learning skills

The quality of students' learning skills was acceptable across all phases of the school. Most students in the primary phase were positive and engaged in their learning. However a majority in lower primary could not, or did not, engage in lessons and were unable to explain what they were doing. Many lacked appropriate social skills and were disruptive when shouting out answers. In middle and high school phases most students actively participated and had positive attitudes towards their learning. Overall there were acceptable relationships between students. They helped each other in classwork and presentations. Students studying English in the middle and high phases worked independently to develop a good grasp of grammar. In Arabic and science in these phases, students worked collaboratively and effectively in groups. Application of learning to the real world was insufficiently developed in most lessons, and enquiry skills in primary and middle phases were limited. In high school science, the enquiry approach used by teachers provided opportunities for most students to think critically and challenge their own views.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' personal responsibility was acceptable in the primary phase and good in the middle and high phases. In most lessons in the middle and high phases, students were respectful of their peers and teachers. Most students behaved well but there were some examples of unsatisfactory behaviour in primary phase lessons and in some unsupervised corridors and external areas. Students understood the need to be fit and active and could describe types of unhealthy food. Attendance in all phases was outstanding but too many students arrived late for lessons throughout the inspection.

Students' understanding and appreciation of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness were acceptable across the school. Students demonstrated adequate understanding of Islamic features in Dubai, with stronger development in the middle and high school phases. They were aware of the UAE National Day as a major celebration. Almost all knew and understood the main features of Emirati culture and appreciated living in the UAE and Dubai. They showed good understanding of their own culture but had limited knowledge of broader world cultures.

Community and environmental responsibility was acceptable in all phases. Most students understood the importance being part of a community and having personal responsibilities toward it. Most understood the important role of the student council, but only a few could give examples of its achievements. Their involvement with the wider community was irregular, but was in the process of being developed. The students took pride in their personal sporting and academic achievements and described how hard they

worked. Most were aware of environmental issues in the school and local community such as the need to conserve water and electricity.

[View judgements](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

Teaching for effective learning was acceptable across all phases. Most teachers knew their subjects well but some in the primary phase lacked an understanding of how young children learned. Whilst most lessons were planned according to the school's generic framework, in too many lessons expectations were not sufficiently high and were dominated by teachers talking too much. There were insufficient opportunities for students to think critically and independently, and this limited their progress. Although the majority of teachers provided tasks suited for relevant grade levels, the level of challenge for more able learners and support for those who needed additional help, was not consistently appropriate. A few teachers supplemented textbooks with a range of practical activities and worksheets but, too often, tasks were not related to real life contexts. There were examples of good questioning skills in the high school phase and, in English, science and mathematics, there were a few activities to stimulate learning. Only a few teachers were using the limited resources, including information and communication technology (ICT), and collaborating to enhance learning.

Whilst assessment overall was acceptable, it was less effective in the primary phase. In most lessons across the school, teachers knew their students' strengths and weaknesses adequately and provided oral feedback on their progress. They regularly tested their students and collected information on their performance. However, the information from assessments was not sufficiently analysed or used to identify the needs of different individuals or groups of students. Assessment information did not support precise tracking of students' progress, nor set individual and group targets to help raise standards. Marking was inconsistent and often lacked specific guidance for students on how to improve. Students were not sufficiently involved in the evaluation of their own work or that of others.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?

The quality of the curriculum was acceptable across all phases. It followed the Iranian Ministry of Education (MoE) requirements and had been extended with a range of additional subjects. It was broad and balanced and allowed for adequate progression as students moved up the school. There were insufficient open-ended and practical experiences across all subjects within the primary department to engage students and promote their creativity and independence. In mathematics and science students in the middle and high phases benefited from more challenge and sufficient cross-curricular links. However, these links were not a feature of other subjects. Insufficient ICT equipment throughout the school restricted opportunities for students to develop their independent research skills. Provision for curriculum enrichment was limited and extra-curricular and community activities were at an early stage of development. The curriculum for Islamic Education and for Arabic as an additional language in Grades 1 to 6 did not meet KHDA requirements.

The design of the curriculum to meet the individual needs of students was acceptable in all phases. The curriculum in the special educational needs unit was appropriately modified to ensure that students made the expected progress. In the mainstream school the curriculum was not as well adapted; there was too little differentiation. Too often those who were gifted and talented were left unchallenged. While there was some curricular choice available for the oldest students this was not the case with the younger students and the opportunities to develop their individual skills and talents were restricted.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Arrangements for students' health and safety were acceptable in all phases. There were appropriate processes and record-keeping arrangements to safeguard the health and well-being of students but unsupervised students, especially during breaks, presented a safety risk. Transport arrangements were organised efficiently and safely. There were good procedures for dealing with illnesses and for safely distributing medicines. School buildings, including the areas for those students with special educational needs, were maintained to an acceptable standard and were regularly cleaned and maintained. The school had identified the need to make more healthy food available to students but still provided a number of unhealthy options. Students were aware of sources of support, and staff had a confident knowledge of the school's child protection policy and the relevant procedures.

The quality of support was acceptable in all phases. Positive and respectful relationships existed between students and staff in the upper grades but less so in the lower grades, where a number of examples of disrespectful behaviour in the lower primary phase were observed. Attendance was well managed and

appropriate policies and procedures were in place. The identification of students with SEN in the special educational needs unit was secure and their needs were met well. In the mainstream school the identification process was less secure and relied on staff observation and limited testing. Minimal support was in place for this group of students. Some guidance was provided by teachers and a member of the administrative team. Career and university counselling was available to all senior school students.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership was acceptable. The newly appointed Principal and senior leaders had formulated a vision for the school, while developing a stronger understanding of the school's short and long term needs. They advocated a caring, nurturing and educationally challenging school but had not yet implemented appropriate actions to ensure their vision was achieved. They had not responded to the negative attitudes and behaviours of the students in the lower primary school. Leaders shared responsibilities for monitoring the schools operations including lessons, with the Iranian Ministry of Education. They collectively determined strengths and strategies for further development, including additional professional development for staff. These arrangements were becoming more embedded in the school's annual evaluative cycle. Distributive leadership was a developing feature within the school as roles and responsibilities were clarified. Relationships and communication were strengthening. Commitment and capacity to improve the school were developing.

The procedures for self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable. A shared approach had ensured that staff, students and parents were able to contribute. However the results of the evaluation of assessment data were yet to play a significant part in the self-evaluation process. School self-improvement processes were in place and had resulted in an initial action plan. It lacked detailed and precise objectives, timeframes and expected outcomes to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of actions. Regular review of curricular areas by teams to develop more balanced curriculum was in its early stages. Targeted staff professional development, had occurred in the school and in the Iranian group of schools. The school had made some attempts to address the recommendations of the previous report and had been partially successful with two of them.

Partnerships with parents and the community were acceptable. Parents were strongly supportive of the school and the quality of its educational provision. There was an active Parents' Teachers' Council which met monthly. It provided a link between the parents' body, the school and its governing board. Strengthening communication between school and parents was a feature. The school's web site was accessed by an increased number of parents and there were plans to use SMS texting to support communication. Informative

written reports about students' progress were provided on a monthly basis. Links with the local community and other Iranian schools had been established.

Governance of the school was acceptable. The Iranian Ministry of Education maintained a monitoring view of the school and its progress. Representatives regularly visited and were fully informed of key elements of the school's operations. They provided parents with an opportunity to share their views, through formal surveys or informal discussion. However parents had little involvement in the decision making process of the school. The governors effectively ensured that the school met its commitments to its parents but did not ensure that all statutory requirements were met. The school continued to be non-compliant in meeting MoE requirements for Islamic Education and Arabic as an additional language.

Management, including staffing, facilities and resources, was unsatisfactory. Aspects of the day to day operations of the school were ineffective. Managers had not been sufficiently responsive to the poor punctuality across the school or the inappropriate behaviour and attitudes of a minority of primary students. Overall in the primary phase there were too few well qualified and experienced staff who could deliver the curriculum in a manner that engaged all students. There were sufficient clean and well maintained teaching and specialist rooms including a computer suite and a science laboratory. Across all subjects, but particularly in English, the few available resources were not utilised well to support learning. Opportunities for research were reduced by inadequate ICT facilities and a limited range of library texts in English and Arabic.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?

The school provided an acceptable quality of education for students with SEN both in the mainstream school and in an attached special educational needs unit. Students in the attached unit were accurately identified and supported in a caring and supportive environment. The teachers adjusted the curriculum appropriately. This resulted in all making at least acceptable, and in some cases good, progress compared to their starting points. The regular communication between the parents of these students and the school also contributed to the progress they made. In the mainstream school, identification processes were not sufficiently robust. Few records of students' progress were available. The lack of curriculum modification resulted in the needs of the least and most able students not being fully met. Teachers' understanding of appropriate learning strategies for these students was limited. This resulted in more variable academic progress.

What are the views of parents, teachers and students?

Before the inspection, the views of parents, teachers and senior high students were surveyed. Key messages from each group were considered during the inspection and these helped to form judgements. A summary of the survey statistics and comments from those who responded to the survey follows:

Responses to the surveys			
Responses received	Number		Percentage
Parents	This year	27	4%
	Last year	33	11%
Teachers	14		46%
Students	42		22%

*The percentage of responses from parents is based on the number of families.

Only a few parents completed this year's survey. A minority of senior students and teachers completed their surveys. Almost all parents felt that the quality of education delivered by the school and the way the school prepares students for the next stages of education were good. Almost all thought that progress in English and science were good and their children had appropriate homework and enjoyed school. Only about a half of parents felt that their children's learning was supported by a good range of technology and that the school was well led. Less than half of students felt that their progress in Arabic as an Additional Language was good or better and only a minority felt that they had a proficient understanding of Islamic Education concepts. One fifth of parents stated that their children received private tutoring, compared with more than half of the students. All staff were positive about all aspects of the schools operations.

What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an updated action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the most recent report. This plan should address:

- Recommendations from DSIB;
- Areas identified by the school as requiring improvement;
- Other external reports or sources of information that comment on the work of the school;
- Priorities arising from the school's unique characteristics.

The next inspection will report on the progress made by the school.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

How to contact us

If you have a concern or wish to comment on any aspect of this report you should contact:

inspection@khda.gov.ae

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