

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Salman Al Farsi Iranian School

Report published in April 2013

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Salman Al Farsi Iranian School

Location	Al Qusais
Type of school	Private
Website	www.salman.uaeirschools.com
Telephone	04-2988173
Address	PO Box 3167, Dubai
Principal	Ali Mohammad Orangi
Curriculum	Iranian
Gender of students	Boys
Age / Grades or Year Groups	5-21 / Grade 1 to Grade 12
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	580
Largest nationality group of Students	Iranian
Number of Emirati students	0
Date of the inspection	11th to 13th November 2012

## Contents

The context of the school.....	3
Overall school performance 2012-2013 .....	3
Key strengths .....	4
Recommendations .....	4
Progress since the last inspection .....	5
Trend of overall performance.....	5
How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?.....	6
How good is the students' personal and social development? .....	7
How good are the teaching, learning and assessment? .....	7
How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students? .....	8
How well does the school protect and support students?.....	8
How good are the leadership and management of the school?.....	8
How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?.....	9
How good are the teaching, learning and assessment? .....	10
How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students? .....	11
How well does the school protect and support students?.....	11
How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?.....	12
How good are the leadership and management of the school? .....	12
What are the views of parents, teachers and students?.....	14
What happens next? .....	15
How to contact us .....	15

## The context of the school

Salman Al Farsi Iranian School for Boys is situated in the Al Qusais district of Dubai. Almost all of the students are of Iranian nationality, and their ages ranged from five to 18 years in the main school. A section of the school building housed a special educational needs unit for 26 students, both male and female, aged between seven and 21 years. In total, there were 580 students at the school.

The school follows the Iranian Ministry of Education curriculum. Students were entered for national examinations set by the Iranian government examination board. There were 11 classes in the primary phase, four in the middle phase and 14 in the secondary phases. A small minority of students had been identified by the school as having some form of special educational need. These students received learning support in withdrawal sessions in with specialist staff and also during normal lessons.

There were 40 full-time teachers, including the senior leadership team. The teachers in the school had a range of appropriate academic and teaching qualifications. The Principal was in his third year at the school, having been promoted to Principal for the current academic year. Approximately a third of the teachers had been newly appointed during 2012.

## Overall school performance 2012-2013

Acceptable

## Key strengths

- Students' attainment and progress in mathematics and science in the middle and high school;
- The students' good behaviour and attitudes;
- The quality of relationships between all students and staff.

## Recommendations

- Raise attainment and progress across the key subjects to develop students' enquiry skills and their independence in learning;
- Create more opportunities for students to work collaboratively and engage in a wider range of activities using resources beyond the textbook;
- Ensure that the curriculum for Islamic Education and Arabic as an additional language meets the UAE Ministry of Education requirements;
- Improve the systems for identifying and supporting for students with special educational needs in the main school.

## Progress since the last inspection

- Improvements in progress in middle school Arabic as an additional language.
- In the better lessons, a range of activities were planned and students were inspired to work in groups and present the outcomes of group work to the whole class.

## Trend of overall performance



## How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

## How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Primary	Middle	High
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Good
Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Community and environmental responsibility	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

## How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	Primary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Primary	Middle	High
Curriculum quality	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
Partnerships with parents and the community	Acceptable
Governance	Acceptable
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

## How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?

Attainment was mostly acceptable. It was good in middle and high school mathematics and science. In Arabic as an additional language, most students listened and responded well to simple questions. They could engage in short conversations using a reasonable range of words about their daily life. They were able to read the Arabic script at an age-appropriate level with few pronunciation mistakes. The writing skills were the weakest in all phases. English was a third language for many students. They were enthusiastic in English language classes across the school. Middle and high school students responded to questions on reading assignments at an acceptable level. Students did not write at length and rarely wrote in varied contexts for different readers. Number concepts were systematically and well developed throughout the whole school. Students applied their problem-solving skills well in the classes especially from the upper section of the primary through to higher level. In high school science, students demonstrated good understanding and effective problem-solving skills in the theoretical elements of science but their investigative skills were underdeveloped.

Progress was acceptable, except in mathematics and in middle and high school science where it was good. Students' progress in middle school Arabic as an additional language had improved. Most students developed a reasonable vocabulary in the familiar topics. There was weaker progress in reading skills and understanding the meaning of texts. An over-reliance on textbooks and worksheets restricted students' progress in English. They progressed better in situations where dialogue was actively promoted. Students' good progress mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding was because they were actively involved in their studies and asked relevant questions to enable them move forward. In science, students worked well in groups to support each other although the limited opportunities for independent learning hindered better progress for a majority of students.

[View judgements](#)

## How good is the students' personal and social development?

The attitudes and behaviour of all students were good. Students had positive relationships with teachers and each other. Most students behaved well in classes and moved around the school in a responsible manner. At the primary phase, a minority of students behaved much better when adults were present. When given the opportunity, students worked well in groups. Students understood the reasons to make healthy food choices and were keen to practise staying healthy and being fit. Most students arrived at school and started lessons on time. Across the whole school, the students demonstrated an acceptable level of understanding of the Islamic values that influence life in Dubai.

They had a strong understanding and appreciation of their own culture and its impact on their life, and a basic knowledge about the local traditions and cultural heritage of UAE. Their understanding of the other cultures from around the world was underdeveloped. The students' community and environmental responsibility was acceptable in all phases. They were happy to be involved in activities even though they rarely took the lead. They were aware of their duties within the school community and kept it clean and tidy. The students enjoyed work and they understood some of the environmental issues, such as air pollution. However, their participation in the community environmental activities outside the school required further development.

[View judgements](#)

## How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

Teaching for effective learning was acceptable. Most teachers had good knowledge of their subjects and an acceptable understanding of how to teach them. They explained topics and used time well. The majority had an understanding of how children learn. Planning was often heavily based on the relevant textbook. In many lessons, these were the only resource; teachers used too few other resources to enrich students' learning. Interaction between students and teachers was almost always good. Teachers questioned well and involved students in discussion to check and to develop understanding. In science and mathematics, effective questioning challenged students to solve problems. In a minority of lessons, teachers included a range of activities and inspired students to work hard and successfully, enabling them to present the outcomes of group work to the whole class. However, in the majority of lessons, there was insufficient time or opportunity for individual students to be actively involved in their own learning, to practise skills or to fully develop their understanding. Most teachers helped students who experienced difficulties in their learning, but only a minority of teachers produced special resources for these students. There was little extension work to challenge high achieving students.

Learning was acceptable. Almost all students were enthusiastic and contributed eagerly to lessons, answering and asking questions and volunteering to demonstrate their learning. When given the opportunity, students demonstrated their ability to be reflective, analytical and critical. In group work, they worked collaboratively to support and challenge each other to achieve set goals. However, opportunities to further develop these skills through individual or extended independent learning were infrequent.

Assessment was acceptable. Most teachers assessed students' progress during lessons by questioning and gave feedback which helped students improve their work. Most marking of students' work did not provide clear written advice on what they needed to do to improve. Although much information was gathered on students' attainment and progress, teachers did not use it well enough to either involve students in setting their own learning goals or to plan learning activities to improve students' progress. After school classes were available for those students who were identified as needing extra support.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum was acceptable in all phases. There was a clear rationale which provided breadth and balance in response to the Iranian Ministry of Education requirements but with a few enhanced features, such as extra sport. Curriculum reviews within subject areas had been undertaken and, as a result, teachers were developing curriculum plans of work for each grade for the academic year. These plans helped to ensure consistency, continuity and progression in learning across the school. Cross-curricular and community links were underdeveloped throughout the school. The school offered a limited range of extra-curricular enrichment activities with few inter-school competitions. Students were developing skills information and communication technology (ICT) although there were insufficient opportunities to use ICT across the curriculum. The school made appropriate arrangements to support students when they transferred between grades and, if necessary, different schools.

[View judgements](#)

## How well does the school protect and support students?

Arrangements for students' health and safety were acceptable. Effective security measures were in place to ensure that students were safe in all areas of the school and its environs. Appropriate records were maintained regarding fire drills and concerning the administration of medicines. The school building and its surrounds were maintained to an acceptable standard and toilets, classrooms and corridors were regularly cleaned. The school canteens sold a range of mostly healthy foods but also stocked a range of less healthy options. All members of staff were aware of the school's child protection policy and all had a responsibility of reporting issues to a senior designated person.

The school provided acceptable care and support for all students. The staff knew the students' personal needs well. Across the school, teachers had positive and supportive relationships with students and encouraged them to do their best. There were opportunities for students or their parents to speak with teachers if they had any concerns. The monitoring of students' progress was acceptable and students went to extra lessons if they needed to ensure reaching curriculum expectations. Advice and support for students were given when students were moving between the different sections of the school and when they were preparing for university. Appropriate systems were in place to manage attendance and punctuality.

[View judgements](#)

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

Students with a wide range of special education needs were enrolled in a unit attached to the school. In this unit, the dedicated members of staff were committed to enabling students acquire appropriate life skills. Progress by these students against their starting points was acceptable, taking into account their levels of ability. The support for students in the main school was weak. The school had not used the framework document to identify students with special educational needs. There were no records available of students with special educational needs. The school stated that students who were underperforming were identified through the range of regular tests and examinations that were carried out.

## How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The leadership of the school was acceptable. Senior staff, including phase and subject leaders, demonstrated an acceptable capacity to improve the school over time. Roles and responsibilities were becoming clearer and teams contributed to ongoing school curriculum review and improvement. The school was well managed and effective organisational systems meant that communication was acceptable across the school and its close community. Subject leaders led initiatives and most managed effectively. However, they did not always have a sufficiently detailed or accurate view of international standards.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable. Senior staff and Iranian Ministry of Education advisors and specialists carried out lesson observations to evaluate and help improve teaching.

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They recognised the need to develop the teachers' skills but this was not adequately linked to improving students' outcomes. For example, reviews of lessons and work scrutiny did not always focus on attainment or progress of students. The school had made acceptable progress in addressing some of the recommendations from the previous inspection report.

Partnerships with parents and the community were acceptable. There were effective communication systems with parents, including monthly reports. Parents were also kept informed through both formally arranged and informal meetings with the Principal and the teaching staff. Parents valued these meetings as a positive means of communication. Links with the school's close community and other members of their national community were well established. The Parents' Council provided a formal communication channel to the school leaders and Iranian Ministry of Education officials, and parents valued the welcoming, 'open-door' approach of the school.

Governance of the school was acceptable, with the Iranian local Ministry of Education representatives adopting a supportive and monitoring role. Representatives visited regularly and the Principal ensured the education office was fully informed about the school's functioning. The school was fully held to account for its performance. The Principal, as with that of other teaching members of staff, was frequently monitored by external specialists and observations, and evaluations were made against established Iranian Ministry of Education criteria. There was limited parental involvement in decision-making at the school, although opportunities existed for Parents' Council representatives to discuss issues directly with the Ministry representatives.

The quality of staffing, facilities and resources was acceptable. The administration and day-to-day organisation were efficient. There were sufficient qualified staff in the school, and their deployment was adequate. The school premises were clean and well maintained, and access was monitored throughout the day. ICT resources were limited in classrooms. Students had to rely on the ICT laboratories, which limited their opportunities to access additional quality information. Educational resources, when available, were not always put to the best use. The centrally located library had a relevant range of suitable reading materials.

[View judgements](#)

## What are the views of parents, teachers and students?

Before the inspection, the views of parents, teachers and senior secondary 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	33	11%
	Last year	13	4%
Teachers	11		42%
Students	17		21%

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

Parents, students and teachers believed that the behaviour at the school was good and that the school informed the students how to improve in their academic work. Almost all parents thought that the quality of teaching and learning was good and that students enjoyed their lessons. A majority of parents, students and teachers felt that technology tools were used well to support learning. Almost all students and most parents were satisfied with the quality of education provided and thought that the school was well led. Most parents thought that the school kept their child safe and a majority agreed that it kept them well informed about academic progress. The majority of teachers and most parents felt the school was good at guiding the students in future educational choices and career pathways. Most teachers believed that school leaders listened to their opinions about the school.

## 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](mailto:inspection@khda.gov.ae)

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