

INSPECTION REPORT

Little Flowers English school

Report published in February, 2014

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Little Flowers English school

Location	Hor Al Anz
Type of school	Private
Website	www.littleflowersschool.ae
Telephone	04-2667620
Address	Plot 127-2061, Street no 127, Hor Al Anz, Deira Dubai- P.O.BOX:19771
Principal	ABDULLAKUTTY VALAPPIL
Curriculum	CBSE
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	4-12 / KG 1-Grade 6
Attendance	Acceptable
Number of students on roll	889
Largest nationality group of Students	Indian
Number of Emirati students	0 (0%)
Date of the inspection	7th October to 9th October

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The context of the school

Little Flower School is located in Hor Al Anz, Deira. Most students are of Indian and Pakistani nationality. The majority live in the community surrounding the school although a few travel from a neighboring emirate.

The school offers the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) curriculum in English to 889 students from Kindergarten to Grade 6. Almost all students enter the school unable to speak English. In response to increased student numbers, one session for Kindergarten children had recently been introduced. Systems were in place to identify the needs of the students requiring additional support. A total of 38 students had been identified as having special educational needs.

The Principal and a team of middle managers led a staff of 44 teachers and ten assistants. Twenty-six teachers had a recognised teaching qualification as well as a degree.

Overall school performance 2013-2014

Acceptable

Key strengths

- The dedication of the school to understanding and serving the needs of the children from its local community;
- The promotion of healthy lifestyles and wellbeing to students and their families;
- The commitment to provide regular professional development opportunities for all staff members;
- The level of involvement of parents in their children's learning.

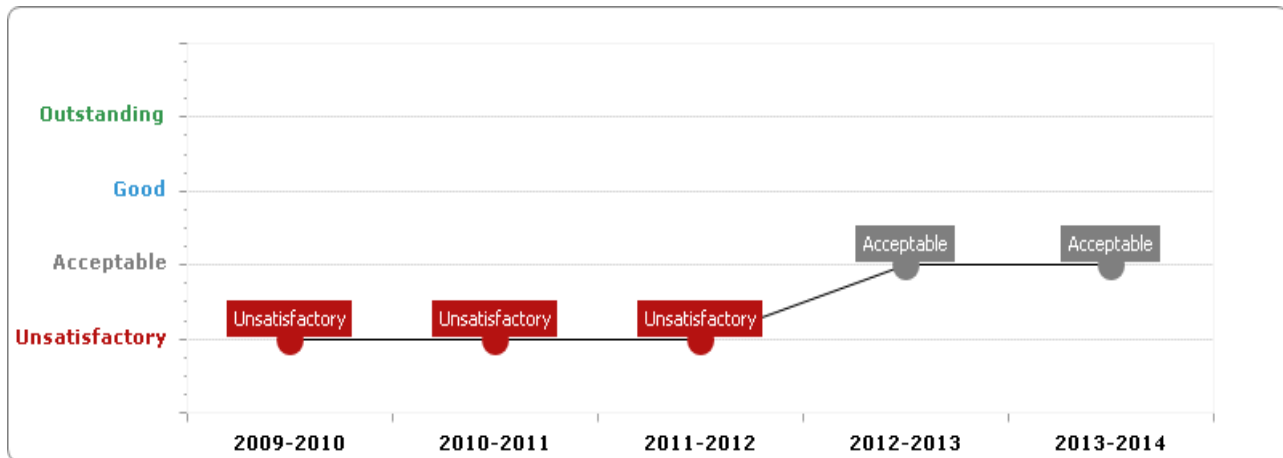
Recommendations

- Focus on the development of communication skills across the school to enable all students to listen, express their ideas and write at length;
- Align the professional development programme to the acquisition of effective English language communication skills by adults and children;
- Gather and use more assessment data to provide more effective feedback on students' oral and written work, so that questioning in lessons ensures teachers know and students understand their next steps in learning;
- Ensure that Individual Education Plans are used by all teachers to plan and deliver lessons for students with special educational needs;
- Develop systems to assess risks to students' health and safety and to monitor that safety procedures are continually updated and followed.

Progress since the last inspection

- The school had expanded and new teachers had been recruited successfully.
- There had been a strengthened commitment to professional development, with all teachers expected to attend professional development once every month on a Saturday.
- The school had responded to parental concerns about the bus service by purchasing an additional bus.

Trend of overall performance



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

	KG	Primary	Middle
Islamic Education			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
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	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
English			
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mathematics			
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Science			
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

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

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How good is the students' personal and social development?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	KG	Primary	Middle
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?

	KG	Primary	Middle
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	Good
Governance	Acceptable
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the students' attainment and progress?

Attainment in the key subjects was acceptable throughout the school. Memorisation and recitation of prescribed Quran verses and the application of recitation rules were strengths in Islamic education. Most students could explain their general meaning although the ability of the students to apply their learning to real life situations was limited. In Arabic most students in the lower grades were able to use an appropriate range of Arabic vocabulary. Older students had difficulty in using Arabic in longer conversations or dialogues. Independent writing was limited. Almost all students had no English language skills on admission. By grade 5 most were able to read and comprehend a simple text and apply the knowledge, skills and understanding to different contexts. Although students had a sound understanding of mathematical facts, their skills in investigation were weak. They had difficulty in making connections to apply their learning. Most students were unable to explain their answers or discuss their ideas. In Kindergarten, children were developing their understanding of the world around them. Most students in Grades 4 to 6 performed well in science and were developing some scientific enquiry skills.

Most students entered school with limited knowledge or preparation for learning. Very few had any prior experience or knowledge of the English language. As this was the school's language of instruction, it slowed progress for students in all subject areas. In Islamic Education, students showed significant improvement in memorisation and the application of recitation rules. At the start of the primary phase, almost all were beginners in Arabic and made steady progress in speaking, although progress in the development of writing skills was slower. Progress in mathematics was better when students were able to recall and build on previous learning. However less progress was made when teachers planned lessons around completing tasks with insufficient focus on students' next steps in learning. In science, children in Kindergarten were keen observers and by Grade 6, most students performed in line with age-related expectations. Although they demonstrated appropriate scientific knowledge, their investigative skills were less strong. Across the school most students made acceptable progress in lessons and over time. The teachers did not challenge students sufficiently and this inhibited the progress they made.

Students with special educational needs made acceptable progress. They made better progress when they were given support by buddies, given differentiated work, and practical activities. Few teachers were skilled at planning work to meet the needs of individual students or groups.

[View judgements](#)

Quality of students' learning skills

Students' learning skills were acceptable throughout the school. Most students settled well to work and were keen to learn, particularly those in Kindergarten and at the higher primary and middle grades. In the lower primary, little meaningful learning took place especially for boys or those who found it hard to concentrate. These students lacked the skills to sit attentively, observe and listen patiently. Students' language and communication skills often restricted their understanding of concepts and their ability to respond to or ask questions, read and carry out instructions. Young students did not have teachers who understood their needs sufficiently. They experienced a number of different subject teachers so their learning was fragmented and there was little consistency in behavioural expectations. This organisation was a significant barrier to learning. Teachers had however, made attempts to engage students more actively in their learning but they nevertheless lacked higher order thinking skills, independent learning and information technology skills.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Children in Kindergarten showed self-discipline and developing social skills; while a minority of boys in primary demonstrated a lack of responsibility towards their peers and adults. Older students were mature and courteous to one another and to adults. The doctor and nurse led the promotion of healthy life styles, the success of which was reflected in the healthy eating choices made by children. Attendance in the last term was acceptable. Students had clear understanding of Islamic values and their impact on life in Dubai. They developed effective knowledge of local heritage and global culture through assemblies, extracurricular activities, visits and displays in school. Almost all students proudly described their own cultures, providing details and examples, and had a basic knowledge about other cultures. Students appreciated living in the multi-cultural society of Dubai. Many students of all ages had the opportunity to hold responsibilities in the school community. They participated in projects such as a 'Literacy Programme' and 'The Power of One' which benefited the local community. Students participated actively but rarely took the lead in projects. Students showed understanding of some environmental issues such as global warming, caring for the school environment and supported projects aimed at conservation through recycling and tree planting.

[View judgements](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

The quality of teaching was acceptable in all phases. Lessons were planned using a common and uniform approach. However, these plans were not regularly implemented. Differentiation was not consistently delivered, higher order thinking skills were frequently overlooked and plenaries were either rushed or ineffective. Most teachers had a good knowledge of their subject but not always of how young children develop their learning skills. Learning objectives were shared with students but skills development was often neglected with too strong a focus on the acquisition of knowledge. There were some weaknesses in classroom organisation, time management and the use of information technology to support teaching and learning. Teachers' questioning to elicit and extend students' learning was weak and too often demanded simple, whole class, choral responses. Teaching in science was good, but there was insufficient attention given to the systematic development of students' in physical education and the arts.

Across the school, arrangements for assessment were acceptable. The school gathered a significant amount of assessment data. In lessons, formative assessment was not used effectively to provide immediate and regular feedback to teachers and students. Teachers observed students, corrected their written work and used homework, projects and formal, termly tests to measure students' progress. Whilst data was analysed, findings and corrections did not impact sufficiently on changing lesson plans or inform students about what they needed to do next to improve their performance. In lessons, oral feedback to students was inconsistent and often failed to give students important messages about their next steps in learning. Across the curriculum, student self- and peer-assessment was in the early stages of development as many lacked the necessary skills to use these processes to good effect.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum was acceptable in all three phases. It had an appropriate rationale, breadth and balance and included music, dance, art, yoga and PE. The curriculum was reviewed and modifications made to include a good range of appropriate topics to develop students' knowledge; but there was less emphasis on skill development. Planning included activity based learning but with limited opportunities for developing independent learning and critical thinking. Enrichment programmes were developed through the English, mathematics and science clubs. The school prepared students for continuing their education in schools offering the Indian CBSE curriculum. Progression was planned for students who moved from KG to primary through transition meetings between KG and primary teachers. The school had developed links with parents and the community through a literacy programme for parents and support staff. Links had also been forged with the American School of Dubai. Students were offered some choice in subjects and

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could choose from Hindi, Malayalam, Urdu and Bengali. The development of language skills and the consistent application of scientific enquiry skills were insufficiently focused. The school was at an early stage of adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of its students with special needs but the school did identify these students and provided them with individual education plans (IEPs).

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

School leaders reacted quickly to issues concerning transport and safety which were drawn to their attention during the inspection. However, effective systems to ensure that the school systematically recognised and minimised potential hazards were not in place. Clinic staff were effective in promoting healthy lifestyles. They organised a health & hygiene week, ran a lifestyle club and involved parents in improving the health of their children. Good systems were in place for monitoring and recording students' health and the canteen provided wholesome food. Effective child protection procedures were in place. Staff and students were aware of what to do if they had concerns. Parents were also made aware of the procedures.

Relationships between students and staff were courteous, however teachers did not always manage behaviour consistently well. For example, most teachers allowed students to shout out in the classroom, whilst others expected students to raise their hands to answer. The school promoted regular attendance and punctuality and worked closely with parents to deter extended absences. Staff, and in particular the special needs educator and the nurse, gave students and their families valuable support when they were in need of advice and guidance. Students with special educational needs were welcomed into school and there were good systems in place to quickly identify their needs. The support provided for these students was however inconsistent. Small group work helped students make progress in both their academic and personal development but teachers were not making full use of IEPs to ensure that activities in lessons met the needs of those students with learning difficulties or those who were gifted and talented.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

Leadership was acceptable. Leaders were trusted by staff and the school community. They were an effective team committed to the improvement of the school. Leaders were keen to develop their skills further, regardless of their length of service. Student leaders held responsible positions in classes and the Student Council. All staff members benefitted from regular professional development. However training lacked a single sustained focus with planned monitoring of the impact on student learning.

Although the school's self-evaluation was over optimistic, leaders were eager to understand the process better. The collection and successful analysis of data on for example, the difference in outcomes of boys and girls, had been carried out. However, leaders had insufficient understanding of how data could be analysed. Evaluation of teaching was systematic and frequent; responsibilities were shared by a number of people. Feedback to teachers was not always specific or detailed enough to help improve their teaching practice.

Parents were supportive and trusted the school. School personnel were accessible, helpful and provided good communication. The school had been successful in engaging a wider group of parents and dedicated conferences helped them to recognise how to support their children's learning. The Parent Council had been expanded and was active as a channel of communication and consultation for the wider parent body. Parent volunteers acted as assistants in KG classes.

The owner and governors were knowledgeable about the working of the school and understood well the community the school serves. Working relationships between the school leaders were good. Governors responded constructively to suggestions from school personnel and parents. Board members had an active presence in the school and closely monitored progress against DSIB recommendations. The Board both planned for the next stage of the school's development and provided on-going support to the school. However more vigilance was needed in monitoring all aspects affecting health and safety and compliance with regulations for the teaching of Arabic.

The management of the school's daily routine was adequate. Sufficient, appropriately qualified teaching staff were deployed. The building had an adequate number of classrooms although a few were overcrowded and did not allow for active learning. Space for library, sport and play was limited. Staff training occurred regularly although it did not always focus on the key priorities of the school. Toilet facilities were clean but inadequate in number. Although teachers were resourceful in creating classroom resources, there remained shortages to support students to investigate and work independently.

[View judgements](#)

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

Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) made acceptable gains in learning through the visual and auditory prompts during whole class introductions. Students who were gifted and talented (G&T) made acceptable progress but in the majority of lessons they were not given any extra challenges. The special educator was skilled at identifying need. She tracked the test results of students, but was at an early stage in tracking progress. She had a good understanding of the different needs and used in-house diagnostic tests well. The special educator was skilled at writing IEPs but had not yet systematically monitored and evaluated the effectiveness of the support. The school successfully reached out to parents who received information about the test results and had frequent meetings with staff. They received a copy of their child's IEP and were informed well of any issues and successes. They were encouraged to attend workshops and support their children at home. The special educator used the KHDA categories and had recently completed the register of G&T students. .

The special educator took small groups of students and worked both on academic learning and developing student's confidence but there was little flexibility in the curriculum to accommodate the needs of SEN students and teachers were not using the information in the IEPs to plan activities to meet their needs. The school was inclusive and welcomed students with SEN. The SEN policy did not contain information about the KHDA categories, including gifted and talented students but the school's practice was better than its written policy. This inclusive school was serving its local community and welcomed students with special educational needs. Teaching and learning resources were barely adequate to meet the needs of all students with SEN.

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 judgments. 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	315	51%
	Last year	229	40%
Teachers	37		82%
Students	There are no upper secondary-aged students in the school		

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

The following statements were based on the survey response at the time of the inspection. The above response figures are the most up-to-date and accurate available prior to publication.

Almost all parents who responded prior to the inspection were satisfied with the quality of education available in the school and several commented on improvements they had observed. They stated that inspection reports helped them understand the quality of education their children were receiving. The majority of parents believed that the level of teacher salaries impacted on the quality of education in the school, and most reported that fee increases were communicated in a timely and transparent manner. However fewer related these increases to improvements in their child's learning experience. All the teachers who responded had a very positive view of education in Dubai, the quality of education in their school and the role of KHDA in the improvement of education.

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.

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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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