

# Follow-Through Inspection Report

## New Academy School

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Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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### Basic information

New Academy School was inspected during the 2011-2012 academic year as part of the full inspection cycle across all schools in Dubai. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated students' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning and the school's processes for self-evaluation and capacity for improvement. During this inspection, the overall performance of the school was judged to be unsatisfactory and school inspectors identified a number of recommendations which the school was required to address.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) has conducted 2 Guidance Visits and 2 Follow-Through Inspections in New Academy School since the full inspection. This Third Follow-Through Inspection evaluated the progress of the school in meeting the recommendations.

### Progress

The school had not met all of the recommendations to an acceptable level. New Academy School will continue to be inspected by DSIB at regular intervals in accordance with the Follow-Through Inspection cycle.

### Overview

New Academy School had not met the recommendations of the inspection report of December 2012 to an acceptable level. School leaders had discussed a number of priorities for the school and had written an improvement plan. This had been shared with Heads of Departments. However, the development plan was not based on a comprehensive self-evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and was not clearly communicated by school leaders. There was still a need to identify and implement the necessary changes in key aspects of the school's work. School leaders had not developed effective strategies to ensure the implementation of continuous improvement. Kindergarten still required immediate improvements to the quality of teaching and learning and teachers' understanding of how young children learn. Three different US curricula had been introduced in English, science and mathematics but teacher training in understanding the effective delivery of the curriculum was poor. The role of governors was clearer but they had not held the school accountable for improvements in the quality of education provided.

## Inspection recommendations

**Improve the quality of teaching and learning to meet the needs of all students, especially in Kindergarten, by ensuring that teachers: - plan lessons focused on what students will know and understand; - question students to develop critical thinking and enquiry skills; - make connections to previous learning and real-life situations.**

The school had not met the requirements of this recommendation to an acceptable level.

The quality of teaching and learning across the school had shown some minor improvements but remained inconsistent. Teaching in the Kindergarten was still unsatisfactory. A few examples of better teaching, focusing on more informed subject knowledge and appropriate levels of challenge were observed in the other phases. There was still great inconsistency in teaching and learning. Teachers did not consistently set tasks for the differing learning needs of students or plan with clear learning objectives. Teacher-talk still dominated too many lessons, with too few opportunities for independent student work or opportunities for the students to develop enquiry and to think critically. There had been improvements in incorporating real-world learning examples into lessons.

**Establish consistent and effective assessments in order to have a clearer understanding of students' progress**

The school had not met the requirements of this recommendation to an acceptable level.

The Basic Skills Assessment was introduced at the beginning of the academic year but had not been fully implemented and analysed to accurately check student performance. A different assessment had been introduced for each subject in line with the different US curricula. This was managed by the Head of Department. Marking was supposed to be benchmarked against US standards but this had yet to happen. Analysis of the assessment data collected was slow and laborious. This restricted any detailed analysis of test results. Other on-going assessments had been introduced but these were still too limited and too variable in quality throughout the school.

**Develop the curriculum in all phases, with a clear rationale to enable the school to move away from the over-reliance on textbooks**

The school had not met the requirements of this recommendation to an acceptable level.

The school had not fully developed a clear rationale for its curriculum. Following a whole school curriculum review, the US Common Core Standards had been introduced in English, the Colorado State standards were used in mathematics and the Virginia State standards in science. Teachers relied far less on textbooks. However, too many teachers still relied on a prescribed subject syllabus in lessons, which took precedence over the learning needs of students. There was a subsequent lack of challenge and narrowness in curriculum provision and, in a few cases, examples of unnecessary repetition across different grades. The curriculum frameworks were not supplemented by enrichment to ensure breadth and balance across phases. The Kindergarten curriculum remained weak. It did not support skills acquisition, knowledge and understanding. The school had identified the need for further curriculum leadership but this had not been addressed.

**Ensure that there are arrangements in place to track and support academic progress over time**

The school had not met the requirements of this recommendation to an acceptable level.

A unified assessment policy had not yet been developed to track and support student progress. The school had identified a range of US standardised tests including IOWA, SAT and TOEFL to benchmark student performance against US standards. These or other standardised tests had not yet been introduced into the school. The school continued with its own internal assessments. Tracking of student performance without reference to US standards, alongside the various US curricula implemented, remained a significant weakness. The school still had not accurately identified students' needs, including those with special educational needs. The lack of identification of learning needs and the lack of tracking of progress meant students' learning needs were not well met in lessons. Teachers did not routinely give individual feedback in lessons to help students gauge their own progress.

**Improve the quality of leadership by: - providing a clear sense of direction for the school, involving all staff; - developing an effective system of self-evaluation that clearly identifies strengths and weaknesses; - establishing a governing body to provide guidance and accountability for the school**

The school had not met the requirements of this recommendation to an acceptable level.

A clear sense of direction for the school had not been established involving all staff. There had not been a thorough, comprehensive self-evaluation process involving all stakeholders. One survey of teachers had sought their views of their strengths and weaknesses. This had not established a clear direction for teacher training or a performance management system to measure improved teacher performance and improvements for learners. Heads of Departments had a little knowledge of teachers' strengths and weaknesses but not sufficient to identify needs accurately as part of their leadership role. The governing board had provided guidance and support for some physical improvements to the school and long-term development, but had not held the school accountable for improvements in teaching and learning, especially in Kindergarten, and in curriculum and assessment.

## What happens next?

The school has not met all of the recommendations to an acceptable level. New Academy School will continue to be inspected by DSIB at regular intervals in accordance with the Follow-Through Inspection schedule.

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) .

More information about Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau can be found at [www.khda.gov.ae](http://www.khda.gov.ae)

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