

Follow-Through Inspection Report

Apple International School

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Knowledge and Human Development Authority

P.O. Box 500008, Dubai, UAE, Tel: +971-4-3640000, Fax: +971-4-3640001, info@khda.gov.ae, www.khda.gov.ae

Basic information

Apple International 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 one Guidance Visit and one Follow-Through Inspection of Apple International School since the full inspection in December 2011. This Follow-Through Inspection in May 2012 evaluated the progress of the school in meeting the recommendations.

Progress

The school had met all the recommendations to an acceptable level. Apple International School will be scheduled as part of the regular inspection cycle for a full inspection during the next academic year.

Overview

Apple International School was performing at an acceptable level of quality overall, with some good features and some areas for improvement. The school's owners and leaders had acted to improve teaching, learning and assessment across the school, with an emphasis on the Foundation Stage and the Arabic department. Teachers showed improved skills in assessing learning and planning lessons to address students' different levels of attainment. Subject leaders demonstrated better use of assessment information to identify what knowledge and skills had been attained by students, as laid out in the National Curriculum for England and Wales. There was improved oversight of lesson planning and delivery with better use of information and communication technology (ICT). The governing body had been expanded and had taken a more active role in the affairs of the school. Improvements were still needed in the consistency of teaching quality and the use of assessment information to identify overall trends in attainment across the whole school.

Inspection recommendations

Raise standards in Arabic by ensuring the development and practice of all four language skills equally

The school had met the requirements of this recommendation to an acceptable level.

The school had taken a series of actions to address this recommendation. First, the timetable was adjusted to comply with the Ministry of Education regulations for minutes of instruction each week. The school's leaders had hired a new Head of Arabic and Islamic Education, plus an additional teacher to support the teaching of Arabic as an additional language. An Education Advisor was also appointed who monitored the use of ICT in Arabic lessons. The use of ICT by students had improved. Students' attainment in Arabic had improved, especially in Arabic as an additional language as studied by most students. The improvements were mostly in listening and speaking skills, but there were also improvements in basic reading skills. A minority of students were able to decode new words independently. Writing skills remained under-developed. Overall, students were more enthusiastic learners of Arabic as an additional language and a few were confident enough to speak to their classmates. The level of challenge was too low for a few students.

Develop a full understanding of planning for differentiation and the practical aspects of using differentiated activities in class

The school had met the requirements of this recommendation to an acceptable level.

The school's leaders had changed policy on lesson plans and hired a new Head of Academics. She monitored the work of Heads of Departments, who in turn monitored the daily plans of teachers in each subject. Leaders also provided developmental experiences for teachers to give them a better understanding of best teaching practice. In all lessons teachers had plans that included different tasks for students at three levels of attainment. Tasks were linked directly to the curriculum standards of the National Curriculum for England and Wales. Students in most lessons did work that was matched to their attainment levels; this was less so in Arabic classes. Progress by students in lessons was mostly acceptable or better. In a few lessons there were too many tasks given and no plenary review of the lesson. Overall, most teachers demonstrated an acceptable or better understanding of differentiated learning and made acceptable efforts to implement strategies to meet the needs of the students.

Develop assessment procedures which can be used by teachers to inform planning, and develop teaching and learning

The school had met the requirements of this recommendation to an acceptable level.

Assessment procedures had improved across the different subjects. All subject heads used a new electronic system to collect and analyse assessment information. The newly hired Education Advisor assisted teachers and Heads with this initiative and the new Head of Academics monitored its use. Foundation Stage teachers had been trained to use appropriate assessments and did so to good effect during lessons. The most significant outcome was that most, but not all, teachers and department heads used assessment information to track students' attainment of discrete skills in the National Curriculum. Consequently, the planning and delivery of lessons was informed by assessment information. Notably, teachers' use of questions to assess learning and promote thinking in lessons had significantly improved since the most recent inspection.

Expand the curriculum at Foundation Stage to include exploration, independent learning, greater access to books and creativity

The school had met the requirements of this recommendation to an acceptable level.

Professional development had resulted in significant improvements in the Foundation Stage. Teachers, teaching assistants and leaders now had a better understanding of the curriculum. Lessons reflected an acceptable level of purposeful indoor and outdoor activities that met the needs of a majority of the children. They had ample time to explore, work independently and use learning materials in newly developed outside and indoor areas. Most activities were planned across different curricular areas and a majority of children were being challenged appropriately. While committed to developing creative skills, the majority of teachers' understanding of how to do so was limited. High attaining children still required greater challenge, presented earlier in their lessons, to ensure continual progress.

Involving governors, ensure that leaders focus appropriately on improving teaching and learning

The school had met the requirements of this recommendation to an acceptable level.

Significant changes had been made to the governing board following the last full inspection. New members had joined from a variety of professional backgrounds, giving the school the benefit of multiple perspectives on its performance. The board had immediately addressed the compliance requirement in Arabic. In addition, the board acted to hire six new staff members,

including three leaders, a human resource specialist and a teacher of remedial Arabic. Professional development was provided to teachers which had resulted in improved outcomes. The board had established an agenda for improvement, had overseen a suitable action plan and scheduled a series of meetings over the calendar year. The consistency of teaching had improved overall, but improvements were not as strong in Arabic as in other subjects.

What happens next?

The school has met all the recommendations to an acceptable level. Apple International School will be scheduled as part of the regular inspection cycle for a full inspection during the next academic year.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau
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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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