

Follow-Through Inspection Report
on
Apple International School
Kindergarten to Grade 8

Report Published June 2010

Basic information

Apple International School was inspected during the 2009-10 academic year as part of the regular 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) conducted a Follow-Through Inspection in May 2010. The purpose of this Follow-Through Inspection was to evaluate the progress made by the school in achieving improvements based on the recommendations set out in the previous inspection report.

Progress

Inspectors judged that Apple International School had satisfactorily addressed the recommendations made by DSIB at the previous inspection. Inspectors will inspect the school as part of the regular school inspection cycle during the coming academic year.

Overview of progress achieved

Since the previous inspection the school had successfully raised levels of attainment across the whole school and particularly in science. The Principal had led an initiative to improve teaching methods. The most significant improvement had taken place in science. During one period each day, students followed a science and enquiry programme. Content was agreed between staff and students and a science exhibition concluded the programme. This work had a positive impact on students' learning in other areas of the curriculum. Lessons were more engaging for students. Teachers regularly assessed students' work and feedback informed the next stage of learning. Students collaborated more successfully. Professional development sessions had resulted in better questioning techniques and teachers had introduced worksheets that promoted students' skills of prediction and analysis. The Principal had engaged the students more actively in relevant school issues and had empowered middle managers to be more accountable. There was a shared sense of purpose and capacity to continue to improve all aspects of the school.

Inspection Recommendations

Raise attainment in Islamic Education, Arabic and science.

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

Results showed that students' levels of attainment had improved in all subjects. Good leadership had led to improvements in better recitation skills in Islamic Education and reading and writing skills in Arabic. There had been significant improvement also in students' application and synthesis of knowledge in science. They demonstrated the depth of their understanding by answering probing questions about the real life application of these topics.

Improve the quality of learning and teaching, in particular, how teachers:

- plan lessons which engage students in active learning;
- use continuous assessment of students' skills and knowledge to plan lessons which teach them the next steps in their learning;
- give students opportunities to work with others and find out for themselves by exploring and experimenting;
- ask questions in ways that make students think, give extended answers and ask questions themselves.

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

Most lessons observed were of acceptable or better quality, although there remained some unsatisfactory features in a few lessons, especially in Islamic Education and Arabic. Improved planning had led to lessons where students were active and worked collaboratively. Most teachers had adjusted their teaching in response to continuous assessment, although there was room for further improvement in the quality of marking and feedback to students. With the exception of Arabic, students co-operated well in their lessons. The new science initiative had facilitated significant levels of investigation and exploration. Teachers' questioning techniques were significantly improved in most lessons, allowing students time and opportunities to form good quality answers.

Improve the breadth of the curriculum by planning progressive courses and programmes in the key subjects.

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

The management team had a clear understanding of what was needed to improve the curriculum. The school had made a noticeable improvement, particularly in Kindergarten, through better resourcing, outdoor activities and school trips. However, in Grades 1 to 8, the improvement was less evident, especially in Islamic Education and Arabic. This was due to an over-reliance on the textbook and too little attention to the needs of individual students.

Elsewhere, almost all classes had basic resources to support the delivery of the curriculum and cater for varying learning needs. Flexible timetabling arrangements and the improved use of information and communication technology successfully supported students' research and enquiry work.

Give students more opportunities to exercise personal responsibility and choice in their learning.

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

Students had readily grasped the opportunity to take on more responsibility in the school. They were fundamental to the success of the science and enquiry sessions because of their enthusiastic response to suggestions for projects. In Kindergarten there was a wider choice of activities and learning opportunities and children were learning to choose wisely. The student councillors, prefects and captains felt confident in asking the Principal about improvements to school life. In 'Celebration of Earth' Week, the senior students had approached the Regional Transport Authority and successfully negotiated the use of land adjacent to the school for their environmental work. The school counsellor had prepared programmes for subject and career choice in readiness for when students reach Grade 9.

Change the approach to learning at Kindergarten to reflect how young children learn and develop.

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

A plan to change the Kindergarten environment to suit the children's needs was in place. The school had adopted a new curriculum to include more activity-based opportunities. Children displayed high levels of involvement in self-chosen activities. Most Kindergarten 2 children worked on age-appropriate activities. They had developed acceptable listening, speaking, and reading skills. Most could count up to 20 and solved simple addition problems. The school provided appropriate resources and made good use of the facilities. Although the school had started a new tracking and assessment system, there was still a need to provide more detailed statements for each skill the children needed to learn.

Develop the leadership and management skills of middle managers. Delegate responsibility for improvement and closely monitor progress.

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

The Principal had demonstrated confidence in the subject co-ordinators and supervisors by delegating greater responsibilities for monitoring the work of their area. She had supported this with training in lesson observation, analysis of students' work and activities to improve the quality of teaching and learning. This had been complemented by attendance at external courses. These measures had successfully developed the capacity of middle leadership. All leaders were focused on school improvement and there was a strong capacity to sustain improvement.

What happens next?

Apple International School was judged to have made sufficient progress to be included in the regular inspection process in common with all other Dubai schools. The school will be inspected by DSIB during the next inspection cycle and the Bureau will report to parents on the quality of education provided and the standards achieved.

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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