

Third
Follow-Through Inspection Report
on
Buds Public School

Kindergarten to Grade 12
Girls and Boys

Report published June 2011

Basic information

Buds Public School was inspected 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 its most recent full inspection, the overall performance of the school was judged to be unsatisfactory and inspectors identified a number of recommendations which the school was required to address.

As a result of the overall performance of the school being judged unsatisfactory, Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) has conducted subsequent Follow-Through Inspections. The purpose of the third Follow-Through Inspection in May 2011 was to evaluate the progress made by the school in achieving improvements based on the recommendations set out in the full inspection report.

Progress

Inspectors judged that Buds Public School had still not satisfactorily addressed the recommendations made by DSIB at the full inspection and subsequent Follow-Through Inspections. Inspectors will continue to undertake Follow-Through Inspections at regular intervals until the recommendations made by inspectors have been satisfactorily addressed.

Overview

The newly-appointed Principal was leading the school in a new direction and improvements had occurred since the previous Follow-through Inspection. The representation of stakeholders on the advisory board had been expanded and it was active in its support of improvement of the school. It provided feedback on the action plan and support in accessing training. A wider variety of activities outside regular lessons enriched students' learning experiences. Nevertheless, there had been only minimal change in teaching practice in most lessons. Students across the school were still not sufficiently engaged actively in tasks that challenged them to think critically and deepen their understanding. The performance management system had been implemented more effectively but required further revision to focus teachers' attention on learning.

Inspection Recommendations

Develop a culture of high expectations and challenge that celebrates student success rather than accepting their limitations

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

The students enjoyed a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities that provided a challenge for most and established high expectations. Most staff used praise to motivate students but few directly linked success to learning objectives. In a majority of lessons, the challenge for individual students and groups was limited because students' different needs were not met by a varied range of teaching strategies. The learning of more able children in Kindergarten was restricted by tasks lacking appropriate challenge. Throughout the age range, there were few examples of students being challenged to think independently, and to be creative. However, a minority of older students did have some opportunities to demonstrate their learning in more challenging settings.

Extend the curriculum to include more challenge and higher order thinking

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

The curriculum development team had met and agreed strategies to extend the curriculum but the impact of these strategies had yet to be seen in lessons. Students had individual portfolios of work that included task sheets from lessons. However, planning for curriculum delivery did not identify tasks for different ability groups in all subjects, particularly the higher attaining students. Open-ended questions were used by a few teachers to challenge more able students but these were not used consistently throughout the school. Examples of appropriate curriculum challenge in mathematics were demonstrated by more able students in Grade 1 when they produced number stories. Grade 11 students had good understanding of trigonometric concepts. However, the kindergarten curriculum offered limited challenge for all children and activities were too often planned without reference to specific learning outcomes. This restricted the children's opportunities for purposeful learning.

Address the needs of different students and identify clear learning outcomes in lesson planning

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

The special classes for low achievers were a positive step towards meeting the needs of some students. The school's common formats for lesson planning encouraged all teachers to identify learning objectives and share these with the students at the beginning of lessons. However, many of the learning objectives did not accurately reflect

the teachers' intentions for the lesson, or link closely with the desired outcomes for students' learning and progress. When plenary sessions did take place, they were rushed and did not provide opportunities for students to reflect on their learning. In a majority of whole class lessons, teachers did not provide different and appropriately challenging activities in their planning or delivery. As a result, a majority of students' needs were not met.

Improve the quality of teaching by using a broader range of teaching strategies

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

The school had made some progress since the last Follow-through Inspection. A number of seminars for teachers had been held to broaden their understanding about differentiation and active teaching methods. Teachers used a common format for lesson plans but only a few included details about intended outcomes and assessment to measure students' understanding and progress. In the upper section of the school, lessons were generally of acceptable quality where students were engaged more in their learning through group work and dialogue. In the lower section of the school, teaching strategies were not always suited to meet students' needs.

Develop assessment processes so that teachers are aware of students' understanding as well as their factual knowledge

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

Students' progress was assessed regularly using a variety of tests. A few teachers spoke to students about what they had learned from completing their tasks. Students worked more effectively when working in specific learning groups. They shared ideas and supported each other with the guidance of the teacher. Where teaching was acceptable, teachers spoke to all groups of students asking open-ended questions to check levels of understanding. Task sheets were used with individual portfolios to support end of topic assessments. However, all too often, tasks were not appropriate to the students' learning needs. Students' written evaluation of what they had learned from tasks and what they did not understand was limited. In a few classes the end of lesson evaluations were rushed and students did not have sufficient time to reflect on their understanding. Marking was regular but teachers did not frequently refer to the next steps in learning.

Introduce performance management techniques that support and ensure teachers' professional growth

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

The process of performance management had been revised at the start of the new school year and shortly before the Follow-through Inspection. Teaching was being more rigorously evaluated now through written and oral feedback. A variety of training seminars had been arranged which provided teachers with opportunities to develop their understanding of best practice and share effective strategies. Teachers were applying this practice in a few classes, most notably in the higher grades, but this was inconsistent throughout the school. The performance management process was not fully effective because it did not guide teachers to consider the impact of their planning and teaching upon the development of students' understanding and skills development.

Formalise and broaden the role of the advisory group to ensure that it has stakeholder representation, provides regular guidance and holds the leadership of the school to account

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

The membership of the advisory group had been further widened and now included members of the administration, teachers, parents and a representative from the local community. Meetings were held on a regular basis, minutes were recorded and action points were reviewed at subsequent meetings. However, there was a need for the group to hold the school accountable for specific aspects of its operation, notably the quality of teaching. The advisory group supported the school in its plan to improve the facilities and by providing access to resources and training opportunities. A parents' council also provided feedback and suggestions on the work of the school.

Develop a school development plan which sets out measurable goals and time-frames to ensure that the school makes significant progress

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

The school had made a significant effort to address issues raised in the previous report. A number of targets had been achieved within the planned timeframe. This had enhanced students' experiences through activities such as competitions, visits and greater responsibilities. However, the school development plan did not set out, sufficiently well, measures to develop greater understanding of the key features of active and challenging teaching and learning. It did not ensure that improved teaching and learning was implemented across all subjects across the age range during lessons. A revised development plan was being drafted; as yet it did not specify precise targets, timeframes or ways to measure success.

What happens next?

DSIB will continue to undertake Follow-Through Inspections of Buds Public School until the school has progressed to the stage where it is included in the usual inspection cycle for all Dubai schools. DSIB will continue to report to parents regarding the progress made by the school until all of the recommendations from the last inspection have been satisfactorily addressed.

**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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