

Follow-Through Inspection Report

The Grammar School

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Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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Basic information

The Grammar School was inspected during the 2011-12 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 in The Grammar School since the full inspection. This 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. The Grammar School will continue to be inspected by DSIB at regular intervals in accordance with the Follow-Through Inspection cycle.

Overview

The Grammar School had not yet met the recommendations of the previous inspection report. The senior leaders were committed to its vision for improvement and had started to more effectively share leadership functions with a wider range of middle managers. However, there was still a need to include a wider range of stakeholders in making decisions and implementing actions that would bring about change. The quality of teaching and learning demonstrated some improvement but was inconsistent through the school with the majority of weaker provision being in Kindergarten and in the primary classes. Teachers were highly dependent upon direction from leaders or consultants. This prevented the development of teachers' skills in making key decisions about the teaching and assessment strategies they should use.

Inspection recommendations

Improve attainment and progress in all subjects and phases

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

In a few subjects the data collected by subject leaders demonstrated overall improving attainment against National Curriculum expectations. Nevertheless, the attainment of a significant proportion of students observed in lessons was not at the expected levels. Most students made slow progress during lessons often because their English language skills did not allow them to understand the content of lessons. A significant number of students also did not make the progress of which they were capable because the lesson objectives and activities did not offer sufficient challenge matched to their abilities. This was particularly a feature of mathematics lessons.

Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that tasks are sufficiently challenging for students of all abilities

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

Progress had been made in developing a common system of daily planning monitored by subject co-ordinators. This had led to some improvement in teaching and learning strategies to meet the different needs of students. Teaching and learning were acceptable in a majority of lessons, but more frequently in the secondary phase. However, a significant number of the lessons observed were unsatisfactory due to teachers' weak understanding of how students learn or what they could be expected to achieve. Too many lessons were dominated by the teacher talking at length or by unnecessary repetition of content. Activities were not well matched to students' different learning needs or interests and did not engage them. Teachers' understanding of students' different ability levels needed to be more accurate and realistic so that they could provide better focused support and sufficient challenge.

Develop a whole-school assessment system that accurately measures learning outcomes and informs teaching objectives

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

The school had made limited progress towards creating a whole-school assessment system. Heads of department were responsible the collation and analysis of student attainment data for their subjects throughout the school. However, this data was not analysed effectively to enable

the school to have an accurate overview of students' attainment and progress. The limited precision with which teachers were able to assess student work against standards also undermined the accuracy of this data. The use of questioning as an assessment strategy during lessons mostly involved only the use of closed questions. Self-evaluation by students was not used as a part of the assessment process. In the primary and secondary phases, lessons were planned without reference to assessment information and therefore without regard to what students already knew. Across the phases, teachers increasingly gave students feedback on their progress; however information concerning how to improve their learning was not provided.

Ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all students

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

A review of the curriculum had identified the need to place greater consideration on the needs of students who were developing English language skills and to provide more opportunities for active learning. The provision of additional courses in English and reading support was in place. The use of a more active and investigative approach to the curriculum was beginning to take effect in a few classes, as was some limited adaptation of learning objectives. Understanding of how to use the curriculum to meet the needs of all students of varying abilities was still underdeveloped across all subjects and in most phases of the school. Teachers in the Kindergarten did not plan and deliver the curriculum effectively to allow young children opportunities to develop their communication skills or engage in social and exploratory activities.

Revise the timings of the school day so that all students arrive before registration, begin lessons simultaneously and depart from school together

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

The school had issued a new timetable which would come into effect from September 2012. All students have been planned to arrive at school at the same time and have lessons throughout the day. The 'zero' period has been removed from the timetable for students at all grade levels. Parents had been informed in writing of the new arrangements for the next school term.

Ensure compliance with Ministry of Education time allocation requirements for Islamic Education and Arabic

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

The timetable for all classes had been revised to comply with the Ministry of Education time allocation requirements for Islamic Education and Arabic. All grades and sections of the school received the correct allocation of time for these subjects.

Identify students with special educational needs accurately, modify their curricula, monitor their progress and ensure that appropriate support is provided in lessons

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

The school had used a review of test results to begin an identification process of students who struggled to learn. A referral process had been put in place but processes to accurately identify the nature of students' difficulties were not yet adequately developed. The school had recognised the need to appoint a special educational needs co-ordinator. However, this had not yet taken place. A group had been established to support English language learners and students who made slow progress in learning to read. Students with other learning needs did not receive support and their teachers had not been advised of how to modify teaching to meet their needs. Individual education plans had not been developed for all identified students. Most students with special educational needs did not receive appropriate support or challenge in lessons, nor was their progress monitored closely.

Improve leadership at all levels by ensuring that leaders clearly understand best educational practice and are equipped with the skills to implement and manage change

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

The school had committed itself to broadening the leadership responsibilities in the school. However the proposed appointments of Kindergarten, learning and special educational needs leaders had not yet been made. Subject co-ordinators had begun to evaluate attainment and progress in their subjects across the school. They supported their colleagues in curriculum planning and development of teaching practice. However, their skills in co-ordinating and analysing the quality of teaching, learning, attainment and progress were at an early stage of development. The effectiveness of leadership was in need of further development as co-

ordinators had insufficient time to both teach and carry out their many responsibilities throughout the school. While leaders held a clearer vision about the direction of the school, all stakeholders, and particularly teachers, needed to be better informed about plans for the school's future direction and the part they were expected to play in school improvement.

Provide more practical resources in lessons, especially information and communication technology (ICT), to facilitate better learning

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

Limited learning resources were used by teachers and students to enhance teaching or develop learning in the classrooms. New materials, including computer technology, had been purchased but were not yet in use by teachers or students. Information and communications technology resources were rarely used to enrich students' learning experiences in lessons. Access to the library was limited so its resources were not freely available to students. New resources such as books, puzzles, toys, flash cards were available in most Kindergarten classes but these materials were not used effectively to promote more active and independent learning in all classes.

What happens next?

The school has not met all of the recommendations to an acceptable level. The Grammar 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:
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