

Fourth
Follow-Through Inspection Report
on
Grammar School

Report published May 2011

Basic information

The Grammar School was inspected during the 2008-9 academic year as part of the initial quality 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 March 2009, a second Follow-Through Inspection in November 2009, a third in April 2010 and a fourth in November 2010. The purpose of the fourth Follow-Through Inspection was to evaluate the progress made by the school in achieving improvements based on the recommendations set out in the first inspection report, and the subsequent Follow-Through reports.

Progress

Inspectors judged that The Grammar School had still not addressed the recommendations made by DSIB at the Initial Quality Inspection. Inspectors will continue to undertake Follow-Through Inspections at three-monthly intervals until the recommendations made by inspectors have been satisfactorily addressed.

Overview

The Grammar School had made some progress towards meeting the recommendations of the initial quality inspection report, particularly in regard to transport arrangements, behaviour and attitudes of students, commitment of staff to improving teaching and learning, and raising student attainment. This had mostly been achieved through school leadership changes with the appointment of a new Principal and Director, and their appointment of curriculum leaders to help improve outcomes. However, the school leaders were hampered by two different school timings that meant approximately half the students arrived a full hour after the start of the school day. This had serious implications for adequate curriculum provision.

Initial Quality Inspection Recommendations

Urgently improve the pattern of the school day and the transport arrangements so that buses are not dangerously overcrowded and students arrive and leave school at reasonable times.

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

Observations of the arrival and departure of buses showed that there was no overcrowding on buses. Bus times, and their on-time arrival, were improved. Students said that they felt safe on the buses. There were seat belts in all the buses and students were supervised to wear them. Buses stopped directly next to the footpath and so the students' entry to the school was safe. Students were well supervised on the buses, as they walked between the buses and into the school building.

Ensure that no adult uses physical punishment against students.

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

The school leaders had ensured students were not subjected to physical punishment. A more caring approach by the school leadership team had a significant impact on teachers' and students' behaviour and attitudes. They had replaced physical punishment with a positive behaviour code of conduct. Staff members reinforced good behaviour using a colour-code, starting with green and moving up to the gold zone, with poor behaviour indicated by a red zone. Parents were contacted regarding their child's poor behaviour. Students felt more cared for and safer in the school. They felt confident that they would not be punished physically.

Raise students' attainment in all subjects and ensure that all students leave the school with a recognized qualification.

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

Students' attainment in all key subjects was found to be acceptable within the relevant curriculum requirements. Attainment in Islamic Education and Arabic was broadly in line with the UAE Ministry of Education expectations and for the other key subjects attainment was in line with the National Curriculum. This attainment was mainly knowledge-based. In observed lessons there were many missed opportunities for students to apply their learning in practical situations to reinforce understanding. All

Grade 11 students sat for the internationally recognized IGCSE examinations; students' attainment on these tests was unsatisfactory during the last academic year, as a sizable minority of students failed to attain A* to C level results in key subjects.

Improve students' progress by developing a curriculum which addresses the learning needs of children of all abilities

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

Steps had been taken by the Principal and the Director to review the breadth and balance of the curriculum. The process was in the early stages of development and monitoring. Part of this review would address the lack of compliance with Ministry of Education requirements for Arabic as a first language in the primary school and curriculum time for Islamic Education in the high school. Adjustments to the timetable and timings of the school day for both boys and girls were a key factor in supporting a broad and balanced curriculum and in addressing the educational needs of all students.

Require teachers to plan effectively and use a wider range of teaching and learning styles

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

Significant time and effort had been invested in professional development sessions for teachers before the start of term and on a weekly basis since then. Topics had focused on collective and relevant planning systems and developing a wider range of teaching styles. Teachers displayed strong commitment and consistency in their use of the new planning templates, which were of an acceptable standard. There had been less success in ensuring that teaching styles consistently addressed the learning styles and needs of all students. While a minority of teachers offered interesting, relevant and ability-appropriate lessons, a majority of teachers did not create learning opportunities that accurately addressed students' needs.

Encourage the development of students' understanding, creativity and capacity to learn independently.

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

A programme of staff development encouraged more opportunities for students of all ages to develop their creativity and independent learning in the school. But observations indicated that these were only apparent in science classes. Group work and more student-led learning were key features of the school's action plan, but again these were not part of usual classroom practices. Testing on entry to Year 10 and diagnostic testing

of students in Kindergarten enabled the school to identify strengths and weaknesses and to plan for these students more effectively.

Appoint a strong and purposeful leadership and management team with responsibilities and accountability at all levels.

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

The school had benefited from the strategic appointments of a new principal and director, who had subsequently appointed curriculum heads to support the section heads. Implementation of a behaviour policy led to positive student response to its expectations and improved discipline. Monitoring of student progress had become a priority for school leaders and this had filtered down through the management team; teachers ensured that processes and procedures were clear and implemented by everyone. School leaders monitored teaching and learning to identify teaching weaknesses and made these priorities for teacher training. However, monitoring was at an early stage given the new leadership and curriculum appointments. Time was needed for processes to embed and positively affect teaching, learning and student outcomes. Monitoring and documentation of student progress data was analysed to inform staff development, training and teaching practices. Many classrooms were too small and there were not enough specialist teachers.

What happens next?

DSIB will continue to undertake Follow-Through Inspections of Grammar 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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