

Follow-Through Inspection Report

Buds Public School

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Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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Basic information

Buds Public School was inspected during the 2009-2010 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 four Follow-Through Inspections in Buds Public School since the full inspection. This fifth Follow-Through Inspection evaluated the progress of the school in meeting the recommendations.

Progress

Inspectors judged the performance of Buds Public School to be unsatisfactory for a period of three academic years. Buds Public School will now be scheduled as part of the regular inspection cycle for a full inspection during the next academic year.

Overview

There had been improvements to the infrastructure and to resources in the school including the play areas and sports grounds. There were additional resources provided in Kindergarten, including improved information and communications technology (ICT) and new projectors in a number of classrooms. There was a new science laboratory. However, other than a few subjects in senior secondary lessons, the quality of students' learning was still unsatisfactory because teachers did not provide sufficient challenge in lessons. Assessment data was not used effectively to provide appropriate activities to meet student needs. A significant minority of lessons were textbook driven and did not offer sufficient variety or challenge for students. School leaders lacked understanding of how to develop good teaching practice. The impact of teacher training workshops had not been measured in terms of improved practice. Self-evaluation processes were not sufficiently robust to provide an accurate picture of teaching standards in the school. There had been insufficient improvement in lessons since the previous Follow-Through Inspection.

Inspection recommendations

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

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

Teachers' expectations of students' learning were acceptable overall but better in senior classes particularly in the subjects of mathematics and science. For students in these lessons and subjects, there were higher expectations and greater challenge for all learners in the class. A significant minority of teachers still provided tasks with limited challenge and too many lessons were designed according to the tasks in the textbook. In a significant minority of classes teachers did not adapt the text book content to meet the identified needs of the students in each class.

Extend the curriculum to include more challenge and higher order thinking

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

The school was aware of the importance of providing more challenge for all student groups. This had resulted in a few more teachers developing more opportunities to link learning to real-life through independent projects and educational field-trips. For example, students designed electrical circuits in physics. Independent learning had been introduced through these projects; however in Kindergarten active learning that was not teacher-dominated still needed much greater improvement. Students occasionally gave their opinions and were more often challenged. Extra support given to low achievers had provided them with further challenge. Practical activities in some lessons allowed students to be actively engaged in their own learning. However, extra support and practical activities were not consistently applied.

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 school used a straightforward and consistent format for lesson planning across the school. Planning processes stated learning objectives but these were not always made clear to students. The objectives were more focused on subject matter than on expected skills development, but were usually helpful for learning. Teachers, in their lesson plans, highlighted the different ability groups of students and the differences in their expected learning. However, lesson activities were, for the most part, usually exactly the same for all students and linked to age-appropriate expectations. In a significant minority of lessons, lesson objectives were topics and not skills-based. There was no checking for understanding throughout the lesson or discussion of learning at the end of lessons. Less able students struggled and more able students underachieved. Few teachers understood how to allow students to work at their individual levels, although teaching was more consistently effective for senior students.

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

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

Teachers continued to broaden their approaches in lessons. The majority of teachers were aware of the need to vary their methods of teaching, and of the need for students to learn for themselves. However a significant minority of teachers still dominated the learning process, limiting the amount of student-initiated learning. In better lessons students learned through discussions, group work, research and their own presentations. This was especially true in the senior classes. In a significant minority of lessons, teachers provided too little initial information for students, with the result that they struggled to understand what was required of them. Behaviour management strategies were weak among new teachers, and inhibited learning. Nevertheless, the majority of lessons provided a variety of activities to address the different ways in which students learn and encourage them to be responsible for their own learning.

Develop assessment process so that teachers are aware of children's understanding as well as their factual knowledge

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

The school assessed students' progress using a range of examinations and tests. It had also developed a system for recording data about students' progress. Assessment information was circulated amongst staff and a minority of teachers identified their students' strengths and weaknesses. In lessons students had been grouped according to this information. However, assessment data was not being used effectively to improve teaching and learning. Students could not explain their strengths and weaknesses and did not know their next steps in learning for improvement. Formative feedback remained limited and was most often teacher comments on whether the answer was right or wrong. Assessment did not yet measure the level of skills.

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.

There were regular after-school and Saturday workshops targeting improved teaching practice. Some peer support from other schools was available. Teachers were guided about how to improve their practice but the impact on students' learning was not closely monitored. There was minimal high quality teaching and learning in any subject or phase for good practice to be shared. Teaching and learning were better in a few subjects and in one phase but overall there remained important weaknesses. There had been a few acceptable lessons observed in Arabic as an additional language; however overall attainment and progress for Arabic as additional language learners was unsatisfactory. Lessons were observed by a few members of the school leadership team. However, their understanding of good teaching practice was limited. Lesson observation records were mostly a check-list of what teachers did or did not do rather than a qualitative evaluation of the impact of their teaching methodology on learners.

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 advisory board had a broad representation of parents, teachers, school leaders and members of the business community. The group met regularly to discuss issues related to school improvement. The board provided guidance and support for school improvement. Improvements had been made to infrastructure and resourcing. The advisory board did not hold the school sufficiently to account regarding the quality of teaching in the school. Also, the board had not yet held the school accountable regarding the quality of assessment arrangements or professional development available for teachers.

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

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

The school had produced a thorough and comprehensive document outlining improvements for the school. It included responses to DSIB recommendations. It also included findings from its own self-evaluation. The development plan included much needed improvements to external spaces in the school, sports' areas, playground, shaded areas for children. A number of projects had been successfully completed. However, the development plan and subsequent action required by school leadership and teachers did not have sufficient focus on outcomes for learners. Timeframes for completion were not always sufficiently clear or precise.

What happens next?

The school has been unsatisfactory for a period of three academic years. Buds Public School will now 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:
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