

Follow-Through Inspection Report

Al Arqm Private School

Report published April 2014

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

P.O. Box 500008, UAE, Tel: +971-4-3640000, Fax: +971-4-3640001, info@khda.gov.ae, www.khda.gov.ae

Basic information

Al Arqm Private School was inspected during the 2012-2013 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 1 Follow-Through Inspection in Al Arqm Private School since the full inspection. This First 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. Al Arqam Private School will continue to be inspected by DSIB at regular intervals in accordance with the Follow-Through Inspection cycle.

Overview

This follow-through inspection was the school's first after being judged as unsatisfactory in the previous full inspection. The school had shown a limited response to inspection recommendations and students' outcomes had not progressed in almost all key subjects, particularly English, mathematics and science. The school had appointed two new school leaders for the boys' and the girls' sections. With the help of the principal, these leaders had organized some professional development for teaching staff. However, there had been a minimal impact on the improvement of teaching practices across the subjects and cycles of the school, particularly in Kindergarten and Cycle 1. A majority of lessons observed were unsatisfactory, were excessively controlled by the teachers and lacked clear learning points and active student engagement. The assessment results of students were analysed and compared to previous results, but the analysis of information was not well used to inform modification of teaching and curriculum. The governing board and the school leaders had taken some measures to eliminate hazards on the school premises; however, monitoring systems were not efficient enough and implementation measures were slow. The school did not have an established system for the identification and support of students with special educational needs. Consequently few students were identified. There was a clear lack of individual educational plans for these students who made little progress due to a lack of appropriate support. The governing board had not successfully improved the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. These lacked rigour and reflected the school leaders' limited effectiveness in identifying the school's priorities and ensuring consistent improvement.

Inspection recommendations

Improve teaching, learning and assessment across all phases to improve the attainment and progress made by the students;

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

Teaching remained unsatisfactory predominantly in Kindergarten and Cycle 1. Much of the teaching seen elsewhere in the school was acceptable. The school had appointed new staff, including subject leaders, and had carried out a range of teacher training. Increased professional dialogue between the girls' and boys' sections was promoting issues, such as curriculum enrichment. For the older students, most teachers had appropriate subject knowledge and motivated students. A few teachers tried to relate learning to real life. However, where teaching was unsatisfactory it lacked sufficient challenge, was uninspiring and did not engage all students sufficiently. Many teachers had a limited understanding of how students learn best. The pace of learning was often slow and the use of resources to guide or reinforce learning was limited. Frequently, teachers dominated lessons, giving too little opportunity for students to learn in a manner suitable to their learning style and needs. Students were mostly passive learners who responded well if lessons were interesting but showed little curiosity and interest in learning. Classroom management was poor in a number of Kindergarten and lower Cycle 1 classes. This inevitably undermined learning. The school had relevant assessment systems but teachers did not use the assessment information effectively

Ensure the well-being of all students through more effective and rigorous health and safety provision;

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

The school had formed a committee to supervise the health and safety issues. It had contracted a company to perform maintenance for the school buildings and another to check the alarm system and the fire extinguishers. The school had recently conducted a fire drill. However, no records to register fire drills dates and timing were kept. There were no fire-exit plans in the school's classrooms and halls. Food provided in the canteen was healthy. Bus supervisors did not have an updated list of students in their correct groups to conduct daily attendance checks. Some parts of the school grounds required immediate maintenance. Supervision of children in Kindergarten was poor. Staff awareness of the child protection procedures was inconsistent. Chemicals in the boy's laboratory were not stored appropriately.

Identify special needs students accurately and ensure that they are supported in lessons to make good progress;

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

The school had developed an action plan to support the provision for students with a special educational need. It included strategies for improvement but across the school there remained too many examples of students with a special educational need who were not accurately identified or classified, did not have an Individual Educational Plan and whose progress was not sufficiently well monitored or reviewed. Teachers had not received sufficient training to ensure that SEN students were adequately supported in lessons. A few teachers used a modified curriculum or a range of teaching strategies to meet the individual needs of these students; however this was to a limited effect.

Involve the Board of Governors in making self-evaluation more accurate, so that improvement plans lead to better provision for students.

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

The governing board showed limited knowledge and understanding of the school's priorities and its major challenges. The board's role in improving the school's self-evaluation processes and procedures was not evident. In its progress reports, the school was not able to support any improvement with clear evidence. The governing board was not effective in supporting the school to produce and implement an improvement plan that would focus on improving the quality of provision and educational outcomes. The set plans lacked measureable outcomes and clear procedures. The responsibility of the governing board in holding the school leadership accountable for its performance and outcomes was not well fulfilled. The leadership team still demonstrated lack of capacity to improve the school to the next level.

What happens next?

The school has not met all of the recommendations to an acceptable level. Al Arqm Private School will continue to be inspected by DSIB at regular intervals in accordance with the Follow-Through Inspection schedule

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:
inspection@khda.gov.ae.

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