

Second Follow-Through Inspection Report on Al Maaref Private School

Report published May 2010

Basic information

Al Maaref Private School was inspected in February 2009 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, school inspectors identified a number of recommendations which the school was required to address.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) conducted a Follow-Through Inspection during May 2009 and a second Follow-Through Inspection during December 2009. The purpose of this 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.

Progress

Inspectors judged that Al Maaref Private School had made acceptable progress towards addressing the recommendations from the Initial Quality Inspection and, as a result, will not require further Follow-Through Inspections. The school will now enter the cycle of regular inspections during 2009 - 2010.

Initial Quality Inspection Recommendations

- Improve the standard of teaching and learning, particularly the level of challenge for all students;
- Develop a common framework for curriculum design and lesson planning and expand the curriculum to include music, art, drama and PE for both boys and girls;
- Use external benchmarks and assessments so that attainment can be compared with international standards;
- Comply with transport regulations;
- Build on the outcomes of staff review and students' assessment data to identify school improvement priorities, in particular in teaching, learning and formative assessment;
- Develop governance roles through the creation of a Board of Governors in order to hold the school to account and to review the vision and strategic direction of the school;
- Review and upgrade the use of resources and facilities, especially in information and communication technology, art, the library, science facilities and use of the theatre.

Overview of progress achieved

Improve the standard of teaching and learning, particularly the level of challenge for all students.

The school had made satisfactory progress towards addressing the inspection recommendations.

Seventeen lessons were observed during the Follow-Through Inspection with the standard of teaching and learning judged as mostly acceptable or better. Almost half of the lesson observations resulted in good judgements with a few unsatisfactory lessons. The level of challenge was at least acceptable in the majority of lessons and students mostly had opportunities for hands-on learning and cooperative activities. Students were able to use a variety of media to demonstrate learning, for example, written, oral and drawing. Model classrooms and model lessons had been used as a form of professional development. Inter-grade competitions had been introduced in sports and some students were undertaking exchange visits with another private school.

Develop a common framework for curriculum design and lesson planning and expand the curriculum to include music, art, drama and PE for both boys and girls.

The school made satisfactory progress towards addressing the inspection recommendation to improve the quality of the curriculum.

The school had reviewed and updated the curriculum. All teachers had received training on effective teaching and learning and avoiding over-reliance on the textbooks. The school had appointed two curriculum coordinators; one for subjects taught in Arabic and another for those taught in English. These staff worked in collaboration with external consultants and teachers to review and update the curriculum. The school not yet significantly increased provision of extra-curricular activity but the curriculum had been expanded to include business studies in senior grades, music up to Grade 9 and art and physical education to Grade 12 (boys and girls). The school was now taking a more active role in local and national sporting events and academic competitions.

Use external benchmarks and assessments so that attainment can be compared with international standards.

The school had made satisfactory progress towards addressing the inspection recommendations to raise students' attainment.

Various options for benchmarking student progress in all grades and key subjects against international standards had been developed. For example, staff had introduced TOEFL for Grade 12 and Californian tests in English and mathematics, across the school. Inspectors were able to review the results of initial testing and see how the results had been used as a basis for school improvement planning. A few teachers and coordinators were able to discuss this in detail. Students who were to take SATs were able to take part in practice SATs on weekends. The school had begun ICT training for teachers, including ICDL courses to learn how to effectively analyse data from benchmarking, and thus enhance teaching and learning.

Comply with transport regulations.

The school had made satisfactory progress regarding compliance with transport regulations.

The school had continued to implement bus reforms and this was observed during the Follow-Through Inspection. Bus monitors and teachers supervised students when they were leaving and boarding buses. Students reported that there was no overcrowding on the buses.

Build on the outcomes of staff review and students' assessment data to identify school improvement priorities, in particular in teaching, learning and formative assessment.

The school had made satisfactory progress in refining and formalising methods of data collection and analysis.

Assessment and personal data on students had been collected and was maintained centrally as well as in individual student portfolios. There were check-lists and questionnaires for teachers, students, parents, and heads of departments, which were used to obtain information about the school's performance at all levels. Workshops to develop teachers' professional development had been provided by consultants. School improvement planning, the development of action plans and coordinators roles had commenced and was beginning to inform teaching and learning. A set of school-produced support materials to improve the transition between Grades 6 to 7 and Grades 7 to 8 had been developed in response to weaknesses identified by new student assessment. Issues related to students learning English as a language had been identified in Kindergarten and a more holistic approach to teaching English was being developed as a result.

Develop governance roles through the creation of a Board of Governors in order to hold the school to account and to review the vision and strategic direction of the school.

The school had made satisfactory progress by creating a governing board.

A School Improvement Planning Committee had been established to perform as a governing body and included representation from all stakeholders; senior management, parents, teachers and owners. The board met and agreed on specific responsibilities, particularly in regard to school improvement planning.

Review and upgrade the use of resources and facilities, especially in information and communication technology, art, the library, science facilities and use of the theatre.

Satisfactory progress was made to improve the quality and usage of resources and facilities.

Teachers were at various stages of ICDL training in preparation for greater use of ICT resources. Additional areas of the playground had been shaded, basketball rings set up and staff and student competitions instigated, including, for example staff against student soccer matches. ICT facilities were improved but not fully exploited to enhance learning across the curriculum. Two new art rooms were established and art was provided to most students in the school. The library had a significant increase in resources, and was regularly used by classes of students. The library stock in both English and Arabic had been expanded by approximately 1,000 books. Library borrowing was now logged but the rate of borrowing was low. Science laboratory use was acceptable in December, but records for earlier months were incomplete. The theatre was used for a variety of purposes, including PE, assemblies, prayer, and leisure.

What happens next?

As a result of the progress made by Al Maaref Private School towards meeting the recommendations from the Initial Quality Inspection, DSIB will undertake no further Follow-Through Inspections in relation to the initial inspection of the school.

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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