

Follow-Through Inspection Report on Al Maaref Private School

Report issued June 2009

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. 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 satisfactory progress towards addressing the recommendations from the Initial Quality Inspection. Nevertheless, at the time of the Follow-Through visit, it was not possible to observe lessons and judge the impact of certain initiatives. As a result, the school will require a further Follow-Through Inspection.

At the time of the next full inspection the school will have an opportunity to alter the unsatisfactory grading achieved in the Initial Quality Inspection.

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

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.

Students had participated in the PISA test, and were scheduled to participate in SATs. As part of the consultation process with an external provider, the school was considering different options for benchmarking student progress in all grades and key subjects against international standards. The school was conducting ICT training for teachers, including ICDL courses to learn how to effectively analyse data from benchmarking, and thus enhance teaching and learning.

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.

Although lessons were not observed during the Follow-Through Inspection, there was sufficient evidence of progress in the form of intensive teacher training and students' answers to questions about the quality of their lessons since February. Improvement was evident across a majority of subjects. Since this aspect of the school's work is of central importance, the full impact of the school's initiatives will be seen during a subsequent inspection.

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 was consulting with an external provider to review and update the curriculum. All teachers will receive training on effective teaching and learning, avoiding over-reliance on the textbooks. The school had approval to appoint two curriculum coordinators; one for subjects taught in Arabic and another for those taught in English. These staff will work in collaboration with the external provider and teachers to review and update the curriculum. The school had plans to increase provision of extra-curricular activity, and to give students more options in choosing the subjects they want to study. A

number of new teacher's assistant positions were approved, to help teachers meet students' individual learning differences.

Comply with transport regulations

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

Bus monitors had been appointed, and teachers also supervised students when they were leaving and boarding buses. Students reported that they felt safer on the buses, and stated that they knew their drivers' mobile telephone number. The school had begun the process to ensuring that buses were compliant with regulations regarding seat belt provision. The school planned further communication with parents regarding bus safety through surveys. Drivers and assistants were to receive training on safety matters.

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.

Plans were in place to collect assessment and personal data on students into a database that would be updated continually and available to parents and teachers. There were check lists and questionnaires for teachers, students, parents, and heads of departments, which were to be used to obtain information about the school's performance at all levels. Action has been taken through the provision of workshops for teachers' professional development, and a consultant has been retained to work with the school for a full year on curriculum development. Job descriptions were being defined to ensure clarity of roles within the school.

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.

The constitution of the board had been agreed upon, and included representation from all stakeholders; senior management, parents, teachers, owners, and external educators. The board had yet to meet and agree on specific responsibilities, although this was planned for the start of next term.

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.

The library stock in both English and Arabic had been expanded. Budgetary approval had been given for the continuation of this expansion, and the school showed intent to develop the library as a multi-media learning environment. More safety equipment for the laboratories had been purchased, including a locked fridge for chemical storage. The amount of laboratory time for students to undertake practical work was to be increased for the 2009 to 2010 school year. Teachers had received training regarding the use of ICT in the classroom, and more was planned.

What happens next?

DSIB will undertake an additional Follow-Through Inspections of Al Maaref Private School to observe the impact of current initiatives upon the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms. DSIB will continue to report to parents regarding the progress made by the school.

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.

More information about Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau can be found at www.khda.gov.ae.