

Follow-Through Inspection Report on Little Flowers English School Kindergarten to Grade 7

Report Published June 2010

Basic information

Little Flowers English School was inspected during the 2009-10 academic year as part of the initial 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 May 2010. 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 Little Flowers had not satisfactorily addressed the recommendations made by DSIB at the initial 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 school had made little progress since the last inspection. Attainment in almost all subjects had not improved and students continued to experience low challenge in lessons and activities with no clear link to their learning needs. Teaching was mainly focused on delivering textbook-led units of knowledge. Teachers did not use group work to promote the development of students' skills. While a teacher for art had been appointed, a whole-school approach to effective aesthetic development for students had not been developed. Students' physical education was still limited to occasional games of volleyball or football. Teaching capacity, particularly in Kindergarten, was poor. Teachers talked for too long and did not use relevant learning objectives. They did not create a learning environment where young children could develop their knowledge, skills and understanding appropriately. A few new posts had been appointed and a new board of governors was in place. Little progress in the provision of interesting and student-centred learning experiences had been made despite the professional development delivered to the teachers. This was due to the lack of an accountability structure where the owners could ensure that the students' needs were being met. The capacity of the school to improve was poor.

Initial Inspection Recommendations

Raise attainment in the school across all areas of learning.

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

Attainment remained weak across all the subjects in the primary section, except for Islamic Education where attainment had improved to acceptable. In the kindergarten section, attainment and progress remained unsatisfactory. Children's English language skills, numerical understanding and their awareness of the world around them were found to be well below age-related expectations. Although the whole school had started to implement a few initiatives, such as providing every classroom with a number of English dictionaries and all teachers attended training sessions, students' learning had not improved. Consequently, there was little impact on attainment across the school.

Develop teaching skills to promote active learning and to address the needs of all students.

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

The school had taken only minimal action to address this recommendation. There was some use of worksheets, for example in mathematics, and some practical equipment and models had been obtained for science. However, teaching was typically didactic and teachers talked for too long. There was insufficient emphasis on active participation by students in the learning process, other than repeating sentences and phrases in response to the teachers' prompts. Lesson plans were simple statements of intentions; there was no detail of how the lesson content might achieve the objective or how teachers might measure progress.

Design a broad, balanced curriculum to provide opportunities for sport and creative subjects.

The school has not met the requirements of this recommendation to an acceptable level. In Physical Education lessons students did not learn sports skills and there was no sports teacher in the school. The art classes observed did not effectively support students' creative development. Lessons did not encourage students' creativity and there was no promotion of art appreciation. The wider curriculum in the school was too knowledge-focused. Students did not experience opportunities to write imaginatively, work independently on their own hypotheses or lead learning in response to appropriate stimuli.

Introduce more active teaching methods and an activity based curriculum in the KG.

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

The school had improved the appearance of the kindergarten classrooms although the furniture in most cases remained inappropriate for children of this age. An activities room had been provided. However, much of the teaching was not matched to the learning needs of the children. Children did not have opportunity to learn through play or to develop collaborative skills in groups. In lessons where less formal methods were used, teachers' unsatisfactory classroom management skills resulted in too many children not being involved. Some were excluded to the edges of large noisy groups. At the end of the kindergarten session, some

children remained in school for up to two hours each day to wait for parents. However, there were no planned, structured activities for these children during this time.

Provide support for students with special educational needs.

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

The school's medical staff had identified students with apparent special educational needs and referred them to a specialist in a nearby medical centre. All teaching staff had been briefed on identifying students with special educational needs and had access to a specialist and a clinical psychologist for further advice. However, because little was done to modify the curriculum or use appropriate teaching strategies, the needs of these students were not met in lessons.

Develop leaders in the school who have the capacity to initiate and implement change in order to raise standards.

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

A new co-ordinator for kindergarten had been appointed and there were plans in place to appoint a new Chief Education Officer and a Vice-Principal. However, leadership roles had not been distributed appropriately between management personnel. No structure was in place to ensure that the school's leadership team had successfully implemented appropriate changes to raise standards. There was a lack of accountability that resulted in the ineffective monitoring of teaching and learning. The new board of governors was aware of the need to ensure that key targets were set and that teachers were held to account. However, little progress was evident in the development of effective leadership and management structures.

Create a governing body to advise, support and monitor the leadership of the school.

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

A new governing board had been created consisting of the owner and some business colleagues. A few meetings had been held and the non-profit rationale of the school had been decided. However, the action plan made no reference to how the board would advise and monitor the school. The board has provided financial support in terms of new resources in information and communications technology and in the library. It remained unclear how the senior leaders and the teachers would be accountable to the board and no formal appraisal system of the staff members was in place. The school's capacity to improve was limited because no clear goals had been identified and no strategic plan was in place to ensure these goals were reached.

What happens next?

DSIB will continue to undertake Follow-Through Inspections of Little Flowers English School until the school has progressed to the stage where it is included in the regular 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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