

INSPECTION REPORT

Little Flowers English school

Report published in January 2013

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Little Flowers English school

Location	Hor Al Anz
Type of school	Private
Website	www.littleflowersschool.ae
Telephone	04-2667620
Address	PO Box 19771, Hor Al Anz, Deira, Dubai
Principal	Abdullakutty Valappil
Curriculum	Indian (CBSE)
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-12 / Kindergarten to Grade 6
Attendance	Acceptable
Number of students on roll	725
Largest nationality group of Students	Indian
Number of Emirati students	0 (0%)
Date of the inspection	10th to 12th December 2012

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The context of the school

Little Flowers English School is located in Hor Al Anz. A significant number of the students, who are largely of Indian and Pakistani nationality, live in the surrounding community.

The school offers the Central Board Secondary Examination (CBSE) curriculum to 725 students from Kindergarten to Grade 6. A total of 30 students had been identified as having special educational needs. Provision for them included systems to identify needs and provide additional support.

At the time of the inspection the staff of 42 included a number of recently created leadership positions. Six teachers were new to the school. Thirty one teachers held a degree, and 21 held a recognised teaching qualification. This report gives information of the first full inspection following four visits in which the school had been judged unsatisfactory.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Acceptable

Key strengths

- The positive attitudes and behaviour of students; their sense of responsibility, appreciation of Islamic values and pride in their school;
- The school's provision of a safe, caring and healthy environment;
- The commitment of governors, leaders and teachers to the improvement of the school;
- Positive and productive relationships with parents and the local community.

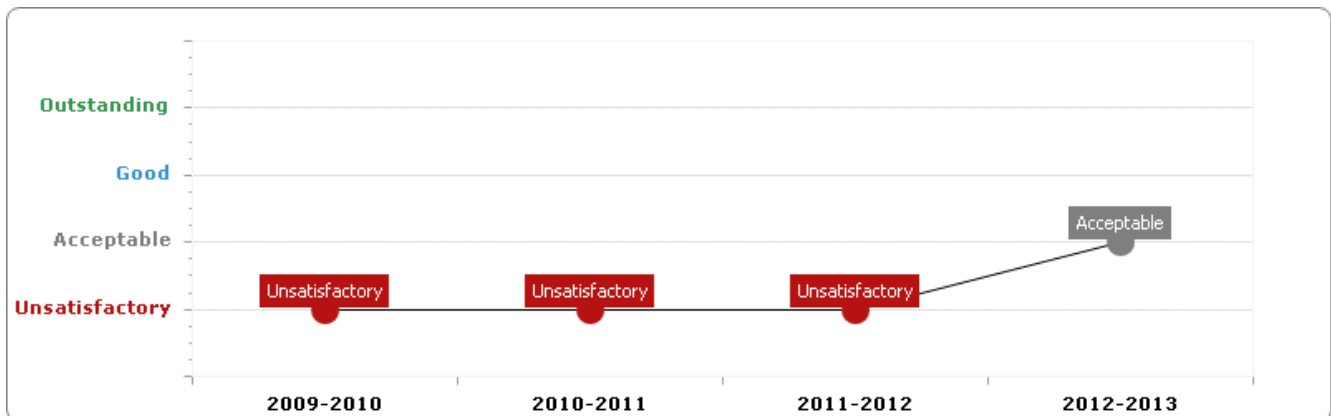
Recommendations

- Continue to develop the quality of teaching and learning so that students' attainment and progress are enhanced;
- Make better use of assessment information to plan teaching and learning by all teachers and to ensure accurate measures of students' progress;
- Improve progress for students with special educational needs, including the gifted and talented, by ensuring adequate support and challenge in all lessons;
- Improve self-evaluation so that judgments are based upon accurate analysis and reference to appropriate international expectations.

Progress since the last inspection

- Improvement in the quality of planning and teaching;
- There were more opportunities for children to make choices in their learning and learn actively through play in Kindergarten;
- A broader and more balanced curriculum had been developed and this included creative and active, as well as academic, learning;
- There was increased involvement of parents in support of their children and the life of the school;
- There was increased capacity for improvement through the committed leadership of the Principal and the distribution of leadership and management responsibilities.

Trend of overall performance



How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?

	KG	Primary	Middle
Islamic Education			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as an additional language			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
English			
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mathematics			
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Science			
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	KG	Primary	Middle
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Good
Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness	Good	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	KG	Primary	Middle
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students?

	KG	Primary	Middle
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	KG	Primary	Middle
Health and Safety	Good	Good	Good
Quality of Support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	Whole school
Quality of leadership	Acceptable
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
Partnerships with parents and the community	Good
Governance	Acceptable
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?

Attainment in the key subjects was acceptable throughout the school. The strengths in Islamic Education were the students' knowledge of Islamic concepts and principles and their skills in recitation. In Arabic as an additional language students read and understood short texts. However, their vocabulary was limited to the content of their textbooks. In English, students demonstrated effective speaking, listening and reading skills, but they relied too much on direction from teachers when putting their thoughts into writing. In mathematics, Kindergarten children counted backwards and forwards confidently and recognised numbers. In all phases students reached an acceptable level in number, shape, space and measure, but primary students' use of number was often inaccurate. Overall, science was acceptable with the strongest attainment in the upper primary and middle phases where skills in experimenting, predicting and reasoning were developing well.

On entry to the school children had limited knowledge or preparation for school; they made acceptable progress in all subjects. Almost all students were beginners in Arabic as an additional language and English; they made steady progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing, although writing developed more slowly than the other skills. In mathematics, children were able to read and recognise numbers by the end of Kindergarten. By the end of primary and first year in middle school, they clearly understood how mathematics linked to everyday life and were able to use their knowledge and understanding of number to solve simple practical problems. By the end of Grade 6, students' factual knowledge of science was in line with age-related expectations, but their skills in investigation and applying their knowledge to practical tasks was less well developed.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' personal and social development was good across the school. Kindergarten children showed self-reliance and thought for others. Most primary students demonstrated mature attitudes. Relationships among students and staff were respectful. Students both understood and practised healthy living. Older students demonstrated strong self-reliance; they took their assigned roles and responsibilities seriously. Their commitment to school life was evident. Attendance was acceptable overall. Understanding of Islamic values was good across the school. Students recognised features of an Islamic society and demonstrated kindness and consideration for others. The majority could name aspects of UAE culture such as foods, animals and architecture. Boys attended daily prayer. Students explained how local traditions and cultural features had changed over time. The sense of their personal cultural identity was strong; however

awareness of wider world cultures was limited. Across the school, students respected their school environment. Kindergarten, children took care of their own possessions and classroom resources. Most primary and middle school students were knowledgeable about the culture and traditions of the UAE. Students of all ages recognised the importance of education and worked hard to be successful. Older students participated in city-wide environmental projects but did not always have a full understanding of the impact of their activities. Their regular service as literacy tutors to adults showed a mature ongoing commitment to their local community.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

The quality of teaching was acceptable in all phases. Lessons were well organised, although sometimes plans were not fully implemented. Most teachers demonstrated sufficient subject knowledge. They often started with a good review of what had been covered in the previous lesson. Teachers mostly shared the lessons' objectives with the students but often this was in terms of what would be learned rather than the skills that would be developed. Time management was effective overall but there were occasions when plenary sessions were rushed or the teacher summarised the learning instead of the students. There was a good rapport between most teachers and students. Where differentiation was planned it was often through worksheets that had some simple questions for the less able. Teachers rarely provided students with opportunities for critical thinking. The teaching of information technology, PE, humanities and other subjects was acceptable overall.

Students' learning was acceptable in all grades. Most students demonstrated a good commitment to their learning. They behaved well, worked co-operatively and helped each other. They showed enthusiasm when, in a few subjects, they learned from real life situations. Learning was at its most effective during group work because students were actively engaged. Although students developed information technology skills in specific lessons there were limited opportunities for their use in other subjects. As a result, opportunities for independent learning and research were very limited. Well-planned learning opportunities for students with special educational needs were limited to a minority of classes.

Arrangements for assessment were acceptable throughout the school. Data was collected from regular classroom assessments which also included project work and homework. More formal internal testing also took place at the end of each term. The teachers were therefore aware of what individual students had learned and where their weaknesses lay. However, analysis of the data was underdeveloped and was not used in teaching to plan next learning steps for groups of students. In lessons teachers encouraged and advised students while they undertook their activities. Teachers marked students' work regularly, but the advice they gave students was variable across year groups and subjects. In English, where guidance was

better than in other subjects, students were clear about what they next needed to do to improve. This was not the case in other subjects

[View judgements](#)

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students?

The quality of the curriculum was acceptable overall. The Kindergarten curriculum adequately provided for the needs of young children including opportunities to learn through play. However, opportunities for exploration and investigation were limited. The curriculum provided a balanced programme of academic, creative and active subjects. The progression across grades prepared students for the next stage of their education. A few examples of cross-curricular links were evident but these were at the early stages of development. Across the school, practical and problem-solving experiences were provided, most often in science and mathematics. These experiences motivated students and promoted deeper thinking, creativity and meaningful independence as learners; they were not a consistent feature across all grades and subjects. Although the use of information technology to support learning had improved, it was not maximised to enhance all students' learning experiences.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Systems and procedures for ensuring students' health and well-being were good. The school environment was well maintained. Daily checks and regular fire drills ensured safety and security. Transport services were well organised. The well-staffed clinic kept accurate, detailed records of all students, which were shared with relevant adults. The school was proactive in promoting a healthy lifestyle. All staff had first aid and child protection training.

Relationships between staff and students were warm and caring. Students felt safe and comfortable to turn to a range of adults when they needed help or advice. Effective systems monitored attendance and communicated quickly in case of absence or other issues concerning the child's wellbeing. The school communicated regularly with parents about the progress of their child in key subjects. Parents received six-weekly reports and had opportunities to meet with teachers to discuss each report. They were encouraged to help their child with work at home.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?

Identification of students with special educational needs was in its early stages and therefore provision was limited. The identified students received effective support from the special educational needs leader outside the classroom. However, not all teachers were aware of how students with special educational needs learn and so did not consistently provide the support that would help them make good progress. In classes where students received more focused support and where they could learn through practical activities and in co-operation with their peers, they made good progress. Screening of children for gifted and talented abilities had not yet been carried out and so provision for them was limited in almost all classes.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

There was a strong commitment to school improvement by the Principal and his senior leaders based on shared values, a realistic vision and a clear understanding that student learning and wellbeing should be put at the heart of the school. A new leadership structure had been organised to include leaders of all subjects. There were effective leaders of Kindergarten, primary and middle phases. The school had focused on the recommendations set out in the previous Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau report. Not all challenges had been sufficiently addressed. An absence of rigorous analysis of teaching quality meant that teachers did not have access to all of the information they needed to meet students' needs fully. Leaders demonstrated a good capacity to develop the school further.

Senior leaders together with the newly appointed departmental heads were aware of the school's strengths and some weaknesses and had successfully identified areas for development, bringing some positive changes. The school had made good progress in addressing the recommendations from the last report, particularly in the Kindergarten. The evaluation of data was insufficiently systematic and focused and therefore it was not adequately linked to analysing and improving the learning outcomes for students.

Partnerships with parents and the community were good. An increasing number of parents had become involved in the life of the school. They participated in meetings about their children's progress, celebrations and competitions. They attended educational events on topics such as family and child health. Parents appreciated the approachability of the staff, their willingness to communicate in their home languages and the clear information about their children's progress through helpful reports. The adult literacy programme staffed by teachers and students provided a useful service to the local community.

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The board of governors worked in close co-operation with senior management and provided support and direction to the school. It had broadened its representation by including persons with relevant, specific expertise as well as parents. Board members had facilitated useful professional development for teachers; however the board did not hold the school more closely to account for improvements resulting from these inputs of training and resources.

The Principal had strengthened the organisation and management of the school. Staffing was stable; teachers were well qualified and mostly well deployed. The building was well maintained and used to the best advantage. The school had invested in information technology resources but more training was required in order to maximise its potential for improving learning. Further resources were required to continue the change to an interactive Kindergarten programme. A few upper primary classes were over crowded.

[View judgements](#)

What are the views of parents, teachers and students?

Before the inspection, the views of parents, teachers and senior secondary students were surveyed. Key messages from each group were considered during the inspection and these helped to form judgements. A summary of the survey statistics and comments from those who responded to the survey follows:

Responses to the surveys			
Responses received	Number		Percentage
Parents	This year	225	44%
	Last year	The school was part of the Follow - Through inspection cycle in 2011 - 2012	
Teachers	31		74%
Students	There are no upper secondary-aged students in the school		

*The percentage of responses from parents is based on the number of families.

Most parents stated that their children were making good progress in key subjects, although there was less agreement about progress in Arabic and Islamic Education. Almost all thought that their children were well behaved and enjoyed school. Most parents agreed that the school was effective in its efforts to involve them in their child's learning and provided communication that helped them support their children. A significant minority of parents commented upon the improved organisation and quality of education offered by the school in the past year. A few cited concerns about the bus service, although by the time of the inspection all parents and students confirmed that the service now ran well. Most teachers responded to the survey. They reported favourably about the level of training they had received and the spirit of collaboration in the school.

What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an updated action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the most recent report. This plan should address:

- Recommendations from DSIB;
- Areas identified by the school as requiring improvement;
- Other external reports or sources of information that comment on the work of the school;
- Priorities arising from the school's unique characteristics.

The next inspection will report on the progress made by the school.

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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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