

Fourth Follow-Through Inspection Report on Dubai Arab American School

Report published May 2011

Basic information

The Dubai Arab American School was inspected during the 2008-9 academic year 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, 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 now conducted four Follow-Through Inspections; the first in May 2009, a second Follow-Through Inspection in December 2009, a third in May, 2010 and a fourth in November 2010. The purpose of the fourth Follow-Through Inspection was to evaluate the progress made by the school in achieving improvements based on the recommendations set out in previous inspection reports.

Progress

Inspectors judged that Dubai Arab American School had still not addressed the recommendations made by DSIB at the Initial Quality 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 Dubai Arab American School had made some progress towards meeting the recommendations of the initial quality inspection report, particularly in regard to positive behaviour and attitudes of students, the provision of sufficient and appropriate teaching resources and the preparation of a strategic action plan for school development based on the recommendations of previous inspections. The school had not made acceptable progress in student assessment and tracking, an effective and stable teaching faculty, teacher-training in classroom management and instruction delivery, and a proficient process for curricular review and development. A newly appointed principal had made considerable impact in a short time, in changing poor student behaviour and attitudes, in developing more productive relationships with teachers and parents, and in the preparation of the school action plan.

Initial Quality Inspection Recommendations

Work with students and parents to promote positive attitudes and behaviour for student learning and school citizenship.

The school had met the requirements of this recommendation to an acceptable level.

Strategies for school improvement have been implemented since the arrival of a new principal and were embraced by the majority of staff. The school had made decisive and successful moves to address the attitudes and behaviour of many of the students. The students and parents now had an opportunity to voice their concerns and to be partners in the development of their students' welfare. Tracking programs were helping to monitor and address behavioural issues in the school. The Principal was aware of the immediate need to ensure that the school achieved the same success with boys' behaviour and attitudes that had so far been achieved with the girls and younger students.

Develop a comprehensive assessment and students' tracking system to inform teaching and learning.

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

The school had commenced work in this area by developing a pilot assessment programme in English. A computerised teacher-input system was in place where teachers, on a daily basis, recorded data based on the outcomes of their lessons. Devised and monitored by the Head of Department, the programme was generating good quality assessment data. Diagnostic tests were administered to all students from Grade 3 to 11. This complemented the overall testing system of pop quizzes, term tests and a grade-average construction mechanism. Plans were in place to extend this programme across the other departments. External benchmarking systems were not in place. The school had yet to decide on a mandatory High School Diploma policy that was based on accredited access to US universities. Also, the impact on the available data on teaching and learning was still underdeveloped.

Ensure a stable, qualified teaching faculty.

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

The school had taken steps to address this recommendation and many improvements were noted. The school was fully staffed and all departments had subject coordinators, some of whom were capable of leading change and improvements. Some staff members had extra responsibilities in their job description, such as overseeing tracking and assessment across the school. However, a number of teachers were still delivering unsatisfactory lessons with teaching methodologies not suitable for all learners' ages and

abilities. Based on needs observed, the school had yet to recruit qualified personnel to meet the educational, behavioural and emotional needs of a number of students. The school did not have a career counsellor for example, nor did it have an effective staff for guidance and counselling issues.

Provide training for teachers in the area of classroom management and delivery of instruction to students who have limited English skills.

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

Work had commenced with training of teachers but had not impacted on actual delivery in many areas of the curriculum. Plans were in place to develop training through respective departments and delivered by the Heads of Department within the school. Diagnostic testing of students' literacy skills was in operation with results being analysed. A resulting plan of action was in place to assist students who had limited English skills. The school had yet to identify how this plan would work in practise through the identification of relevant and achievable success criteria. The impact of the CAMI program and the development of literacy skills had still to be monitored by the school.

Develop a process for ongoing curricular review and development.

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

Although the provisions for the teaching and learning of Islamic Education for non-Arabs and Arabic as an additional language had improved, there still remained a few cases where students did not have full access to the curriculum. There were attempts during the last academic year to align the school's curriculum with the Indiana standards, but the rationale for this was not clear for most staff and subject co-ordinators. As such, most lessons remained based on the pace and contents of the textbooks being used. A developing understanding of what constitutes a curriculum was evident among most subject coordinators. However, curriculum review had yet to become an embedded, ongoing process in all departments and at the school level.

Provide sufficient and appropriate teaching resources.

The school had met the requirements of this recommendation to an acceptable level.

A resource audit had identified the resource needs of each section in the school. A systematic phased introduction of new resources had been provided for Kindergarten to Grade 12 and there was evidence that the resources were being used well by most teachers and students. There was an awareness of the need to continue this resources upgrade on a phased basis determined by identified needs.

Prepare a strategic plan for school development and introduce rigorous and effective self-evaluation processes.

The school had met the requirements of this recommendation to an acceptable level.

The Principal and members of the school management team had created a school action plan and targeted areas for improvements based on previous inspection report findings. There was evidence of a strong desire and commitment by leadership and management to make significant changes to all areas of the school. There had been improvements made to the school in terms of parental involvement, and improved student attitudes and behaviour resulting in a more positive and caring school environment. However a significant minority of students, particularly in the boys' school, showed a degree of disrespect for teachers and for each other. There also needed to be a greater commitment by the staff to the vision and mission of the school.

What happens next?

DSIB will continue to undertake Follow-Through Inspections of Dubai Arab American School until the school has progressed to the stage where it is included in the usual 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

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