

Follow-Through Inspection Report

New Academy School

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Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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Basic information

New Academy School was inspected during the 2010-2011 academic year as part of the full 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 conducted one Guidance Visit and one Follow-Through Inspection in New Academy School since the full inspection. This second Follow-Through Inspection evaluated the progress of the school in meeting the recommendations.

Progress

The school had not met all of the recommendations to an acceptable level. New Academy School will continue to be inspected by DSIB at regular intervals in accordance with the Follow-Through Inspection cycle.

Overview

New Academy School had not yet met the recommendations of the inspection report of November 2011 to an acceptable level. Although the school leadership was now clearer on its priorities for improvement, it had yet to take the necessary steps to bring these about. Enhancing the school leadership capacity to plan for and implement the necessary changes in key aspects of the school's work was identified by the school as the most pressing need. Immediate attention was still required to improve the quality of provision in the Kindergarten classes. Limited action had been taken by the school towards improving the quality of teaching. The review of the curriculum and the role of governance in the school were both in the early stages of development. Progress towards using assessment information and tracking systems to support students' progress was limited.

Inspection recommendations

Improve the quality of teaching and learning to meet the needs of all students, especially in Kindergarten, by ensuring that teachers:

- plan lessons focused on what students will know and understand;
- question students to develop critical thinking and enquiry skills;
- make connections to previous learning and real-life situations.

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

There was a lack of consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across the school. This was particularly evident in the Kindergarten and lower primary classes. A majority of teachers demonstrated sound subject knowledge and a few had a developing understanding of their students' learning needs. The school had begun to develop lesson plans that had a consistent format; however the quality of these across the school was variable. Teachers did not set targets for students in lessons that were challenging or achievable. Students were often unaware of what knowledge, skills or understanding they needed to achieve. Teachers did not make effective use of plenary sessions in lessons to confirm students' levels of attainment and understanding. Teacher-talk often dominated lessons. When questioning occurred it was narrow in focus and did not encourage students to think critically. Some attempt had been made to incorporate real world learning examples, but this was yet to be consistently applied across the school.

Establish consistent and effective assessments in order to have a clearer understanding of students' progress

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

In a few key subjects, subject leaders had started to analyse student attainment data from regular tests and quizzes and used the information to identify underperforming students who needed support. An increasing number of teachers were now giving feedback, though this was of variable quality. The standards against which teachers were assessing their students were still under review. The school lacked a clear and unified assessment policy. Departmental analysis of data was not well co-ordinated and the school lacked a whole-school overview of student attainment and progress. Only a few teachers attempted to use assessment information effectively to modify their lessons to suit the needs of students. The school had not yet taken sufficient steps towards introducing appropriate international testing for its students

Develop the curriculum in all phases, with a clear rationale to enable the school to move away from the over-reliance on textbooks

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

Subject leaders had begun to review the content and expectations of the curriculum in their subjects. The school had recognised in its action plan the need to review the whole-school curriculum and adopting recognised US Common Core Curriculum standards as the basis for their work. The Kindergarten curriculum was not well planned and did not help children acquire the necessary skills. Limited choice in learning was still a feature of the school curriculum overall. The school had identified the urgent need for better leadership of the curriculum, in the whole school and, in Kindergarten in particular, as its priority in the process of development but steps to address this were yet to be taken.

Ensure that there are arrangements in place to track and support academic progress over time

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

Subject heads continued to compare students' results in regular internal assessments, identify those in most need of support and communicate with parents. Records of the remedial action taken were kept. However, the support available to these students, both inside and outside their regular classes, was still limited. In addition, little was done to support the progress of high attaining students. The social workers' role in tracking the academic progress of students was very limited and co-ordination with subject heads and teachers of all subjects in this respect was weak. The school, therefore, lacked clear systems to ensure that all aspects of students' welfare and academic progress were well monitored and supported.

Improve the quality of leadership by:

- providing a clear sense of direction for the school, involving all staff;
- developing an effective system of self-evaluation that clearly identifies strengths and weaknesses;
- establishing a governing body to provide guidance and accountability for the school

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

The school had not yet completed a comprehensive self-evaluation exercise although some school leaders had a general awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Subject heads had begun to evaluate students' attainment and progress in their subjects but whole-

school analysis of the quality of provision in Kindergarten, teaching and learning, curriculum, support and effectiveness of leadership across the school was still lacking. The school leaders now had a clear understanding of the direction the school should take and its priorities for development. However, this had not been shared with all stakeholders and insufficient steps were taken to bring about the desired change. The school had yet to create a comprehensive improvement for the new academic year. No significant change had taken place in the formation and role of governance in the school.

What happens next?

The school has not met all of the recommendations to an acceptable level. New Academy School will continue to be inspected by DSIB at regular intervals in accordance with the Follow-Through Inspection schedule.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau

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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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