

Fourth
Follow-Through Inspection Report
on
Little Flowers English school
Kindergarten-Grade 6
Girls and Boys

Report Published February 2012

Basic information

Little Flowers English School was inspected during the 2008-9 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 three Follow-Through Inspections and a Guidance Visit to Little Flowers English School since the full inspection. This fourth Follow-Through Inspection evaluated the progress of the school in meeting the recommendations.

Progress

Inspectors judged that Little Flowers English School had still not satisfactorily addressed the recommendations made by DSIB at the full inspection. Inspectors will carry out a full inspection of the school during the coming academic year.

Overview

Little Flowers English School had met four of the seven recommendations to an acceptable level. In a majority of the lessons, students' attainment was acceptable or better. A majority of teachers had begun to make positive changes in their practice through the introduction of consistent methods of planning. There remained a need for further promotion of active and purposeful learning and to reduce the reliance on textbooks and teacher-dominated communication. Teaching in Kindergarten did not provide an environment where young children could develop their language and social skills through the use of collaborative exploratory and imaginative activities. The curriculum has been broadened to include sports, art and music as well as trips and extra-curricular activities. The appointment of a new principal had given the school a renewed sense of direction and focus. Systems and policies had been put in place and teachers had benefitted from additional training. There was a need to continue with the implementation of this support for teachers and refine the accountability structure to further raise the quality of teaching. A Board of Governors was in place and enhanced by the addition of members with relevant educational expertise as well as three parent representatives.

Inspection Recommendations

Raise attainment in the school across all areas of learning

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

The school had met the requirements of this recommendation to an acceptable level. Attainment levels for the majority of students across most grades were now broadly in line with curriculum expectations. Attainment was improving in Arabic where most students had more opportunities to develop their speaking, reading and writing skills. Islamic Education knowledge was acceptable and in a few grades good. In English, mathematics and science, the majority of students read accurately and met grade-level expectations in computation and topic knowledge. Writing skills were limited to grammar work and did not sufficiently support students' imaginative development.

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

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

A significant minority of teaching during the Follow-Through Inspection remained unsatisfactory. Teachers shared learning objectives consistently. They planned their lessons using a common template and they used different worksheets for the various ability groups identified in each class. However, there were inconsistencies in the quality and relevance of the teaching objectives that had been planned. Teachers planned in their subject groups but these subject meetings did not link together to ensure effective integration of topics and skills. Questioning remained focused on factual recall and did not promote understanding or active learning appropriately. Teachers used information and communication technology (ICT) mainly for presentation of facts. They did not regularly facilitate students' use of these resources for critical thinking or independent enquiry-based research opportunities. Assessment strategies did not accurately identify students' needs. Marking remained inconsistent and generally, did not outline the next steps for each student.

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

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

The curriculum at all levels included opportunities for physical activities and creative activities, such as art and music. It was further enhanced through extra-curricular clubs and trips to locations related to curricular topics. The recent implementation of Saturday

classes provided lessons for students who required additional support. Further enhancement of teachers' ability to provide choice in learning was required. Creative opportunities in lessons across the curriculum, such as the opportunity to do extended writing in English and Arabic were underdeveloped.

Introduce more active teaching methods and an activity-based curriculum in the Kindergarten

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

Revision of the Kindergarten curriculum had introduced new activities such as brainteaser and music and movement which were carefully planned and structured. However, children were not enjoying an interactive early learning programme as they still spent too long sitting and listening to the teacher talking. Insufficient opportunities were available for children to develop their language through imaginative play. Co-operative activities in groups and opportunities to enjoy stories read aloud expressively were rare. Resources, such as sand, water, building bricks and dress-up clothes were not readily available to engage children in exploring materials and imaginative situations. Training needed to include a specific focus on the management and teaching of young children.

Provide support for students with special educational needs

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

The school had identified students with special educational needs (SEN). New appointments had taken place to provide support for these students on a class withdrawal basis. Individual education plans were in place. However, this work had only just begun. There was no link between the topics and skills being developed across the subject range and the needs of these particular students. Teachers did not engage all students at an appropriate level to develop their language or specific skill requirements. ICT was rarely used to help the students interact effectively with the lessons taught. In a few lessons, there was an over-reliance on using other students to support students with special educational needs.

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

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

The newly appointed principal had inspired a sense of purpose and motivation in the teaching team. A team of middle level leaders was in place and empowered to be active in developing curriculum and teaching practice. These leaders needed further training to support them in leading and guiding teachers to raise standards. Training in methods of

active learning and more clearly defined expectations about planning of lessons had resulted in an emerging improvement in the quality of teaching and student attainment. This was most notable in Arabic and English. Changes to the Kindergarten curriculum had potential for more interactive learning. However, further development of teaching methods and resources suited to young children was needed.

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

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

The board and new principal were working collaboratively to address the recommendations contained in the full inspection report. The board had been enlarged beyond the owner and business colleagues to include two new members with educational expertise who could advise the Principal and provide access to training opportunities. They had the expertise to pose questions focussing on teaching and learning standards and to hold the school accountable. The board had three parent members who were included in decision-making processes. Further work was needed to refine medium and long term goals for the school.

What happens next?

Little Flowers English School will be scheduled as part of the regular inspection cycle for a full inspection during the next academic year.

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.

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

Copyright 2012

This report is for internal use only and for the self-evaluation purposes of the school. It should not be used for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement.