

Follow-Through Inspection Report

Little Flowers English School

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Knowledge and Human Development Authority

P.O. Box 500008, Dubai, UAE, Tel: +971-4-3640000, Fax: +971-4-3640001, info@khda.gov.ae, www.khda.gov.ae

Basic information

Little Flowers English School was inspected during the 2011-2012 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 two Guidance Visits and five Follow-Through Inspections in Little Flowers English School since the full inspection. This fifth Follow-Through Inspection evaluated the progress of the school in meeting the recommendations.

Progress

Inspectors had judged the performance of Little Flowers English School to be unsatisfactory for a period of three academic years. Little Flowers English School will now be scheduled as part of the regular inspection cycle for a full inspection during the next academic year.

Overview

Little Flowers English School had not yet met the recommendations of the inspection report of May 2012 to an acceptable level. The school leaders were now clearer on its priorities for improvement. The school's focus was firmly on the remaining recommendations that had not yet been met to an acceptable level. Leadership at all levels was improving and was driven from the principal's high expectations of staff and students. Governance had widened its range of stakeholder and school leadership was both supported and challenged. Improving Kindergarten teachers' understanding of how young children learn remained a priority. The monitoring of teaching and learning was limited. Teachers received inconsistent messages as to what aspects required improvement and, in particular, how students learn. The monitoring of individual educational plans for students with special educational needs (SEN) remained ineffective.

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.

Attainment levels for the majority of students across most grades were now broadly in line with curriculum expectations. The attainment of a significant minority of students was just above age- related expectations in the majority of grades. Attainment was improving in Arabic where most students had better opportunities to develop their speaking, listening and reading skills whilst writing was less well developed. Most students had an acceptable knowledge of Islamic Education but recitation of The Holy Qur'an still required improvement. In English, most students read accurately and attained age-related standards as second language learners. Students' writing skills were sometimes limited to grammar work and this did not always support enough opportunity to write for a range of purposes. In mathematics, most students met age-related expectations but their problem solving skills were limited. In science, most students had an acceptable knowledge and understanding, however, scientific skills, such as investigation, inquiry and research were underdeveloped.

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.

Too many lessons remained unsatisfactory. Teachers shared learning objectives with their students consistently. They planned lessons using a common template that included active learning and different content to address the needs of all students. Students used different worksheets according to their attainment levels in some classes, but tasks were left incomplete as teachers rushed students into subsequent tasks. In a few classes, students performed activities with no purpose or link to their learning needs. Teachers' awareness of students' progress was generally weak. The emphasis across the school was on changing teaching styles rather than ensuring that active learning was taking place. Teachers' questions to students still focused on factual recall and did not promote understanding or active learning appropriately. A few teachers talked at great length, leaving their students disengaged. Teachers did not use information and communication technology (ICT) well to enable active learning, critical thinking or independent research. The assessment of learning set unusually low expectations of students across all key subjects.

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 was broad and balanced and based on CBSE curriculum standards. The curriculum, especially in Kindergarten, provided more creative subject choices including art, music and physical education. The curriculum was further enriched by subject clubs for the majority of the subjects, except for Islamic Education and Arabic. The curriculum was supported with occasional trips to a variety of Dubai locations. The majority of teachers planned to include active learning opportunities in their lessons. However, their impact on students' learning was as yet limited. The curriculum lacked challenging opportunities for the more able students and did not always provide enough learning experiences for the less able students.

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.

Activity areas had been set up in classrooms but their effectiveness in allowing children to investigate, explore and make choices was limited to just a small minority of classes. Focused group learning was clearly planned. However, it lacked challenge for more able learners. Planning for other activities was weak as learning objectives were not always identified and most children did not have a clear understanding of what they had to do. All too often, too much adult instruction limited opportunities for children to become independent learners. In older classes, the teachers spoke for too long and this limited the time children had to take responsibility for their learning, investigate and share what they had understood. Resources, such as sand, water, building bricks, dress-up clothes and reading books were not readily available to encourage the children to explore, make choices and use their imagination. Most teachers needed to improve their understanding of how young children learn and how to manage more effective learning spaces in classrooms.

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 a few students with special educational needs. Diagnostic testing had been carried out, parents were consulted and individual education plans put in place. Leaders, teachers and students showed awareness of students with special educational needs. Leaders monitored their progress in terms of results. Teachers and students regularly gave emotional and practical support to these students. However, there was no evidence of curriculum modification during lessons to address the academic levels of the students. Teachers did not

engage them at appropriate levels of challenge to ensure good progress. In a few lessons the students with special educational needs were not given sufficient attention by their teachers.

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 Principal had high expectations of teachers and students and he provided a clear sense of purpose and direction. Planning was more precise and accurate and the leadership had identified strengths and weaknesses. Monitoring of teaching and learning was now in place. However, the impact on how well students learned was limited because of too many teacher-led lessons. Interactive learning in English in the upper part of the school provided a good model of how well students can learn.

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 Principal had worked well in addressing the majority of recommendations with improvements made in key areas of the work of the school. There was a shared vision amongst the governing body of what the school needed to do next to improve further. These improvements have been identified in an action plan. Understanding of self-evaluation was improving with a more systematic approach of how judgements were made using a clear rationale. The board's educational expertise and parental involvement was now providing the owner and colleagues with a more balanced view of what the school needed to do to improve; the board provided both support and challenge to the school's leadership team. Further work was needed to improve action-based learning in Kindergarten and overall student learning in the rest of the school.

What happens next?

The school has been unsatisfactory for a period of three academic years. Little Flowers English School will now be scheduled as part of the regular inspection cycle for a full inspection during the next academic year.

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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