

Follow-Through Inspection Report on Dubai Arab American School

Report issued June 2009

Basic information

Dubai Arab American School was inspected in January 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, school inspectors identified a number of recommendations which the school was required to address.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) conducted a Follow-Through Inspection during May 2009. The purpose of this Follow-Through Inspection was to evaluate the progress made by the school in achieving improvements based on the recommendations set out in the first inspection report.

Progress

Inspectors judged that Dubai Arab American School had not yet satisfactorily 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.

At the time of the next full inspection the school will have an opportunity to alter the unsatisfactory grading achieved in the Initial Quality Inspection.

Initial Quality Inspection Recommendations

- Work with students and parents to promote positive attitudes and behaviour for student learning and school citizenship;
- Develop a comprehensive assessment and student tracking system to inform teaching and learning;
- Ensure a stable, qualified teaching faculty;
- Provide training for teachers in the areas of classroom management and delivery of instruction to students who have limited English skills;
- Develop a process for ongoing curricular review and development;
- Provide sufficient instructional and equipment resources;
- Prepare a strategic plan for school development and introduce rigorous and effective self-evaluation processes.

Overview of progress achieved

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

The school had made limited progress towards addressing this recommendation.

Although the behaviour of girls throughout the school was at least satisfactory and often better, the behaviour of some boys in the junior and senior sections was unsatisfactory. Where it was unsatisfactory in lessons, it was linked to inappropriate teaching methods and weak classroom management skills. In the boys section, the classrooms were stark and bare, with little to stimulate interest. The learning environment did not set sufficiently high expectations, with the result that there was much graffiti in some classrooms. Also, some furniture was not age appropriate. For example, chairs were too low for the heights of the desks and this detracted from the students' abilities to apply themselves to the tasks.

At break times the boys left a great deal of litter in the courtyards and had a general disrespect for their environment. The supervisors at break times were not sufficiently proactive in setting standards and managing the behaviour of the boys and there was nothing organised for the students to do. Nevertheless, the school had made plans to address this. Recreation equipment had been purchased and there were plans to redesign and redevelop the outside recreation areas during the summer vacation.

The school had made plans to address the issue of boys' unsatisfactory behaviour, including greater involvement of students and their parents and teachers. However, at the time of the Follow-Through inspection, the school lacked corporate agreement on an appropriate behaviour management policy.

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

The school had made limited progress towards addressing this recommendation.

Although the school had continued to assess students and collect data about their performance, as yet, insufficient was being done with the information to respond quickly and appropriately to the students' learning needs. Diagnostic tests were done three times per year. Although the school responded to the needs of some students by providing support classes, this was retrospective. A new lesson planning format had been introduced in which learning objectives were stated clearly but it did not give sufficient emphasis to on-going assessment. Consequently, teachers did not gain good enough feedback on how well the students were progressing. There was some planning for individual needs in the older grades but it was not yet happening consistently across the school. Benchmarking of age appropriate expectations to international standards had not yet taken place.

Ensure a stable, qualified teaching faculty.

The school had not yet addressed this recommendation.

Progress in planning for improvement was satisfactory although, as yet, there had not been sufficient time to see the impact of the changes. The school had made an additional appointment of a second vice-principal to manage administrative issues. The teachers' timetables for next year had been reviewed to provide more time for teachers to monitor standards and improve teaching and learning.

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

Although the school has responded to this recommendation by providing some training in lesson planning for teachers, insufficient progress has been made in improving classroom management skills of all teachers.

Further training in teaching strategies was planned for all staff during June and September, using trainers from the publishers and suppliers of new teaching resources.

Develop a process for ongoing curricular review and development

The school had made satisfactory progress in reviewing the curriculum.

A lower school committee has been set up to review the curriculum to eliminate any repetition in content and set agreed learning goals for English, mathematics and science. There were plans to increase the number of periods in English and to include library sessions in the timetables. A more flexible curriculum model was being devised by which teachers could respond more quickly to students' learning needs. The timetable for next semester had been revised to include class-teachers in the lower grades.

Provide sufficient instructional and equipment resources;

The school had made satisfactory improvement in the resources for English, mathematic and science.

More apparatus and equipment had been obtained to give students hands-on experience. The library had been opened but it was still only partly usable. Further learning resources were needed to make the library more user-friendly.

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

The school had made satisfactory progress towards creating a strategic plan through the detailed response to the inspection report.

However, this plan required further development. In particular it needed clear success criteria and time indication to drive the planning forwards based on the main issues identified in the recommendations at the end of the school report.

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 they are 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 this occurs.

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.

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