

Follow-Through Inspection Report

Crescent English School

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Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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Basic information

Crescent English School was inspected during the 2012-2013 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 2 Follow-Through Inspections in Crescent English 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. Crescent English School will continue to be inspected by DSIB at regular intervals in accordance with the Follow-Through Inspection cycle.

Overview

The school had a number of new academic staff including an acting principal. The vice-principal post was not filled at the time of the inspection. Staff had been active and committed to implementing the actions prescribed in the school's Improvement Plan which was focused on the seven key DSIB Inspection recommendations. Significant staff professional development had been undertaken. The school had been successful in meeting the requirements of a further two recommendations, with some progress being made on the remaining three. As a result there were improved assessments to support better learning experiences in all subjects although inconsistency remained particularly in Kindergarten. Across all phases a majority of teachers, particularly in the primary, middle and senior phases, had engaged students in more active, purposeful learning. Fewer lessons were dominated by teacher talk or textbooks. The school required further time to: identify accurately all students with a special educational need and effectively provide for them. Further work was required to improve teaching and learning in the kindergarten phase, to clarify the role of its leadership personnel and the vision for the school and, finally, to ensure that governance met KHDA requirements to at least a good level.

Inspection recommendations

- Improve teaching and learning, particularly in the Kindergarten and the primary phase;

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

Teaching and learning was at least acceptable and occasionally better in all phases of the school except Kindergarten where it remained unsatisfactory. Most primary lessons observed were acceptable with a few being good. Teacher planning was a developing positive feature. Lesson objectives were well written, specific and shared with students. Teachers used real life examples to engage students. Provision was made for students to solve problems in groups, work on investigations, and develop skills such as drawing graphs. Students were encouraged to discuss and question each other and share their views with the class. In better lessons teachers' questioning challenged thinking and probed for more complex explanations. In Kindergarten there had been a willingness to embrace the Early Years Foundation Stage framework as a means of enhancing the curriculum. The opportunities for play, for exploring, for active learning and for creative and critical thinking were limited. Excessive teacher talk, insufficient resources and a demanding daily teaching load which included teaching two different classes per day, reduced teachers' opportunities to plan, teach, evaluate and track each child's performance. Few teachers were able to meet the learning needs of the broad spectrum of students in each class. They did not challenge thinking, prompt application or encourage reasoning. Consequently not all groups of students made expected progress.

- Improve assessment by using the outcomes of assessment of students' work more effectively to improve their learning experiences in lessons across all subjects;

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

The school had implemented an improved assessment systems across all phases. It had begun a comprehensive recording and tracking system which resulted in improved teachers' understanding of individual student's levels and standards. It had begun to validate its own assessment data using external benchmarking, including ACER, Olympiad, PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS international test results. Low achievers had been identified and improved provision was in place. A remedial literacy and numeracy programme for low achieving primary students took place on Saturdays, when Grades 10 and 12 students also received additional support. More improvement was required in teachers' marking, as there was considerable variation in the correction and comments made on students' work, and in the accuracy of assessment in the kindergarten phase. At the end of lessons, however, in all phases too many teachers failed to

evaluate what students had learned or used this to define what students needed to do to improve their learning.

- Improve the curriculum and its delivery by raising staff expectations and engaging students more actively in their learning;

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

The curriculum offered by the school had shown improvement in all phases, but remained an area for further development in the kindergarten phase. The school had trained teachers to use a broad range of strategies to enhance learning. Teachers were using enrichment activities, increased opportunities for more able students and revision sessions to enhance learning. The school's curriculum was less reliant on textbooks. Greater student engagement in most phases had resulted from improved curriculum delivery. More active learning tasks, including the inclusion of everyday examples, cross-curricular links and problem solving challenges had ensured higher levels of motivation and engagement. The school had identified the need for greater curriculum breadth and balance and had been successful in achieving this through careful planning. Planning for progression ensured smooth transitions between phases. In Kindergarten, the Early Years Foundation Stage framework was not yet firmly established. Expectations and learning outcomes were not being met consistently. Differentiation to support the learning needs of all groups of students, including those with a special educational need, required development in all phases.

- Ensure that the school is compliant in the teaching of Arabic in Grade 9;

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

The teaching time requirements for Arabic in Grade 9 had been maintained which ensured compliance with the MOE guidelines. The school had made improvements to Arabic provision, by increasing Arabic usage in assemblies, and presentations.

- Identify more accurately students who have a special educational need, ensure teachers modify lessons appropriately to meet these needs, and track and monitor effectively the progress of students;

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

The school had invested time and effort to improve provision for students with a special educational need. Supervision of identified students by a counsellor ensured coordination of their provision. KHDA categories were used to describe additional needs, however diagnosis and categorisation were not always accurate. Some who had needs were overlooked. Monitoring of progress was developing, but was not yet fully effective. Numerous assessments for each student were undertaken, but these often lacked a focus on learning outcomes, and were not sufficiently analysed. This restricted targeted support for next learning steps that would ensure better progress. Individualised educational plans were in place, but lacked specificity. Teachers had received training in their use, but currently too few teachers used them effectively.

- Create and implement a suitable child protection policy, including the relevant training of all staff;

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

The school had developed an appropriate policy and procedures for child protection. It covered all relevant areas and procedures were clear. Staff were aware of referral procedures when matters of concern arose. Key staff had been trained in the identification of child protection issues. Overall the school arrangements were effective.

- Improve leadership capacity and governance and ensure that self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate.

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

The new acting principal, supported by a coordinator, was leading the school. School self-evaluation was systematically carried out by staff and improvement plans were in place. Staff were regularly observed as part of their performance management. The efficient day to day management of the school ensured that students were safe and secure, in a clean and orderly environment. There had been some success in improving aspects of the work of the school as described in this report, in teaching and learning in the primary phase, assessment, and curriculum development. A clarified vision and improved evaluation of all improvement plan actions was needed to enhance the school's operation. The governance of the school required significant development to ensure it met expected standards. Currently there were too few parent and other stakeholder representatives and the school was not being monitored effectively or held to account for its actions. The governors did not provide sufficient resources to the kindergarten phase and were not closely involved in school improvement.

What happens next?

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

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:
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