

Fourth
Follow-Through Inspection Report
on
Buds Public School

Kindergarten to Grade 12
Girls and Boys

Report Published February 2012

Basic information

Buds Public 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 Buds Public School since the full inspection. This fourth Follow-Through Inspection evaluated the progress of the school in meeting the recommendations.

Progress

Inspectors judged that Buds Public 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

The genuine determination among senior leaders to improve the school and the committed response from staff were having a positive impact on the school's development. Acknowledged shortcomings were being addressed through regular training and monitoring. New resources and curriculum improvements supported this work. Consequently, most classrooms were effective learning environments. Students' progress in most subjects was showing signs of improvement because teachers' skills had increased. Learning in Arabic, however, especially in speaking and writing, had not improved because teaching was insufficiently challenging. Overall, teachers were more aware of the needs of individual students, but their expectations of students in most lessons were not closely linked to prior learning and, therefore, inappropriate to meet the students' needs consistently in order to raise standards. Teachers did not make effective use of assessment data. Senior leaders demonstrated a good capacity to improve the school, but had, as yet, not ensured consistently effective teaching and learning across the school.

Inspection Recommendations

Develop a culture of high expectations and challenge that celebrates student success rather than accepting their limitations

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

Teachers had high expectations of students' behaviour and their attitudes to learning. Relationships in lessons were positive and encouraging. As a result, students were attentive and hard-working. Teachers' expectations of students' learning were mostly acceptable. A minority of teachers still supplied undemanding tasks but, in most lessons, teachers provided sufficient levels of challenge, usually linked to the text books. In a few lessons, teachers expected more from students. In Kindergarten 1, for example, children were required to learn basic addition. In Arabic, teachers' expectations of students were too low and, therefore, unsatisfactory. Overall, though, teachers provided more challenge and were able to generate an ethos where success was encouraged and praised.

Extend the curriculum to include more challenge and higher order thinking.

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

The school had continued to develop opportunities for learning outside the classroom. Field trips and other external visits were closely linked to classroom learning and so strengthened students' understanding of how their learning related to real life. For example, the children in Kindergarten gained a clearer picture of transport by travelling on the Dubai Metro. The school had developed a richer curriculum experience in classrooms, helped by new resources. For example, part of the water cycle was well explained to Grade 4 students with the help of a steaming kettle. Lessons were enhanced by computer graphics. Often, teachers' open-ended questioning enabled students to work problems out for themselves, although such practice was not fully embedded across the school.

Address the needs of different students and identify clear learning outcomes in lesson planning

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

Senior leaders had ensured that all teachers used the same lesson planning. This format produced a good structure to planning and contained clear learning intentions. In their plans, teachers identified different groups of students and highlighted some different activities for them. However, the plans were not effective enough. Teachers tended to give all the students work of a similar challenge level, but with some different tasks. The level of work was not sufficiently varied to meet the needs of all groups. This was true of all subjects, but particularly in Arabic.

Improve the quality of teaching by using a broader range of teaching strategies.

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

Through training, teachers had cultivated a more diverse range of approaches in lessons. They were moving away from formal, teacher-dominated styles to those that focused more on students' learning needs. For example, teachers were using drama, scientific experiments and role play more readily and productively. The learning was more student-centred, including opportunities for healthy discussion with time for students to formulate questions and develop ideas. Such practice was not yet consistent in all classrooms and especially in Arabic where lessons were characterised by too much teacher direction.

Develop assessment processes so that teachers are aware of students' understanding as well as their factual knowledge

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

The school had developed satisfactory systems for recording information about students' progress. Regular testing was carried out on each student on individual subjects. The resultant data were particularly helpful to identify students who were underachieving and to place students in ability groups in lessons. However, teachers were not using assessment data skilfully enough to plan work to meet the different needs of students, based on their previous learning. There was not enough flexibility of approach in lessons to enable students to learn at their own pace. Teachers often provided constructive comments to students in lessons, yet students were not sufficiently aware of how they could improve their work.

Introduce performance management techniques that support and ensure teachers' professional growth

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

The school had placed good emphasis on training for teachers. There had been focused sessions on, for example, teaching strategies, activity-based learning and classroom management. Some training was delivered by external professionals, notably training about Kindergarten practice. Much of the training, however, had been given by senior staff. This developed a sense of teamwork. However, there was not enough high-quality teaching in this school for shared practice to be effective. Weekly monitoring of teaching by senior leaders gave teachers useful indicators for improvement through the judgements and the feedback were not linked closely enough to outcomes for students' learning. The school had not developed the provision for Arabic. There had been no subject-specific training and, as a result, there had been little impact on students' progress.

Formalise and broaden the role of the advisory group to ensure that it has stakeholder representation, provides regular guidance and holds the leadership of the school to account.

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

The school had already established an advisory group of stakeholders who were beginning to have influence on the way in which the school developed. Regular meetings of the group gave governance a valuable view of the current views of parents and teachers, in particular.

Develop a school development plan which sets out measurable goals and time-frames to ensure that the school makes significant progress.

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

The school had succeeded in producing a well-structured and detailed development plan. The plan was sharply focused on the DSIB recommendations, as well as findings from its own self-evaluation; such as improvement classes for mathematics and the use of technology. The individual plans of action were relevant to the needs of the students, and had clear success criteria and timescales. They were subject to regular evaluation by senior staff. Some of the plans were too vague and not all were linked specifically enough to students' outcomes. Nevertheless, the plans gave all teachers clear direction about what needed to improve and, most importantly, the plans were already having a beneficial impact.

What happens next?

Buds Public 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.

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