

# SCHOOL VISIT OBSERVATION NOTES

## JASMINE ASH SHAM ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION CENTRE

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**OBSERVER:** Etienne Visser  
Deputy Head of Primary at Garden International School

**COURSES:** Curriculum & Assessment  
Managing Diverse Learners

**TEACHERS:** Amal Al Tahan, Nawal Nader Allaham, Rasha Selo, Safa Al Tahan,  
Nur Amira Binti Mohamed, Mohamed Ali Ahmed, Mohd Imran  
Bin Mohd Yusoff, Muhsin Kolapo Otuyo

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## **CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT**

### **Foci of the course**

- Relationships - The Warm Demander Framework, The Zones of Regulation
- Teaching to the edges of students' jagged profiles
- Using inclusive language
- Multiple means of engagement, representation and expression
- Long, medium and short-term planning
- Understanding by design (UbD)

## **MANAGING DIVERSE LEARNERS**

### **Foci of the course**

- Neurodiversity
- The medical vs. the social model of disability
- Review: Teaching to the edges of students' jagged profiles
- Review: Using inclusive language
- Strength-based goal setting / Growth goals
- Behaviour
- Interventions

## **OBSERVATION NOTES:**

### **The observation notes are focussed around the foci of the two courses outlined above**

It has been an honour to be invited to visit the centre and observe the teachers that were involved in the two courses I facilitated in action.

First, I would like to commend each and every teacher I observed for their dedication to their job. Strong, respectful relationships with their students stood out as a clear strength. It was a joy to observe how teachers and students interacted. The students feel safe and supported and are willing to take risks as their teachers act as warm demanders who have

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high expectations from their students, but are willing and able to support them along the way.

I appreciated how **Ms Amal** took the time to create a growth plan for one of the students in her class who has some challenges around friendships and accessing the learning in class. It was clear that she went through a process of problem solving where she included other teachers to help find the best ways to support the student. Through this process, she did not only learn more about her students, but also discovered the expertise of the teachers she worked with. It was also good to observe how Ms Amal planned a Islamic lesson where students had to work together to complete the task. All students were engaged and the activity was a good one to assess their understanding of the concept she was teaching.

Ms Amal could think about how she further differentiates tasks so all students feel that they can access the learning and be successful.

For example: One student is not able to read at the same speed and level as their classmates but competed against the other students in a quiz on the tablets. He showed clear frustration as he got every question wrong as he could not read it as fast as his classmates. How could this have been done differently to support this student and help them develop their reading skills?

It was a joy to watch **Ms Nawal** interact with her students. She has a warm and caring nature and her students respond well to this. They feel supported and safe and one student specifically tried his hardest to impress her. The activity that Ms Nawal prepared for the students was engaging and enabled students to work independently. There was one student in particular that found the activity quite challenging and did not seem to have the confidence or the language to ask for help.

It would be useful for Ms Nawal to reflect on how the same lesson could be differentiated so that all students can feel challenged but successful. Also, how could the classroom be set up to avoid students at single desks that face the wall? How could the furniture be organised to encourage dialogue and collaboration?

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**Ms Safa's** science lesson was student centred and it was good to see the students interact with the learning with not much teacher talk. Most students were on task and participated. There were some students, however, that might not have engaged equally and Ms Safa could reflect on why this might be. Although good for collaboration, could the activity have been more effective if the different sections of the lesson were on separate sheets and students worked in pairs to find the answers to both? The cutting and pasting section was quite time consuming and might have distracted students from the main objective of the lesson. Overall a good lesson with minor tweaks to consider. Ms Safa's students were also happy to ask to clarify understanding and it was clear that she has a positive relationship with them.

**Mr Mohamed Ali** creates an environment in his maths class where students are willing to take risks. His friendly nature makes every student feel seen and valued. This was especially evident with one student with a fantastic sense of humour who felt comfortable enough in class to respectfully joke with her teacher throughout the lesson. The students were all engaged in the lesson. Mr Mohammed Ali might like to consider ways to structure his lessons so that students do not all get the same problem one at a time presented on the board. He could consider setting up a system where students have access to a range of problems to choose from and either work on solving the problems on their own or in pairs or small groups. This will free the teacher up to formatively assess students to assess their understanding and provide verbal on-the-spot feedback where necessary.

## **FINAL COMMENTS:**

Thank you for allowing me to visit your centre, observe your classes and provide some feedback. I have so much respect for each and every one of the teachers in your centre. Can we all be better at our craft? Always. But the one thing that matters most, and the one thing you all possess is the heart to do what we do. The ability to see, hear and value our students for the people they are and the gifts they bring, not only the learners we think they should be.

Keep being Warm Demanders who have high expectations for their students, keep telling them they can achieve and supporting them to reach your expectations.