

Amir Public School (APS) Visit Report

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By Rahat Austin



Location:

Village Mor. KotPriyva, Town Kalaskey, Tehsil Wazirabab, District Gujranwala.

Kalaske is the main Town situated on the Alipur Chatha road about 15 kilometers west of the Gujranwala City, Punjab, Pakistan and about 90 kilometers North West of the provincial capital Lahore. It has a combined population of approximately 38,000. Most of the people living around are laborers small formers (the petty farmers yield is almost as laborers).



It is surrounded by many villages. To the east, west, and north lie Gujranwala, Chak Sada, Derveshkey, Ahmed Nagar Chatha, and Alipur Chatha respectively.

The Alipur Chatha Road crosses the Kalskey from center; Amir Public school is situated on the same road after 1.5 KM in a village known as Mor. KotPriyva.



Directions: - The school is located approximately two and hours (driving time) from Lahore. Take a left from the Bypass road from AliPur Chowk, Gujranwala and then go straight on this road for 20km. The school is on the left hand side. In-order to reach the school you have to go through a narrow alley way into a neighborhood.

General Observations:

It was drizzling when we arrived at the site, a narrow but fully carpeted ally built by the local government, leading to the school entrance.

Mr. Naveed Malik (Mr. Amir's brother), Mr. Davis William's (Mr. Amir's father) and other school staff were



there to welcome us. While I was on my way to the school, I phoned and requested Naveed to see if they could call some Parents and former students of institution, I was glad to see that it was fulfilled by the school management and we got around 10 of the Parents and 5 former students.



This is a tidy school having appropriate boundary walls for security perspective. The wall paint was bit washed out due to the moon soon rains. I was told that school gets re-painted almost once a year after the rainy season. The school overall has been pretty well maintained. All the classes were clean, airy and very well decorated. There were paintings and charts on most of the walls. The Paintings & Charts were mixture of Scientific, educational and ethical portraits. The school staff also had initiated the word of the day series since last few months through the drawings on boards to increase the vocabulary of the students.



All of the class rooms were very well equipped with appliances such as Fans/Lights etc.

It was raining today so the temperature was quiet pleasant.



All the children were in proper clean uniform. The school provides a free uniform to each child. A uniform costs around Rs. 400 to the school. The school also provides free books. The school has recently increased the monthly fee charges from 100 to 150 per month. I was told that this is a great mile stone when parents copped very well with the change. School Management played an important role to let this transition happen smoothly without any drop outs etc. I couldn't meet as many parents as the previous ADP representative had but the Management seems to done marvelous job to raise the

awareness on importance of education among the locals. The parents were looking very excited and took the school expansion as a big opportunity for betterment of the children and their future.

The furniture in all the classes was in very good shape, I was told that the recent investment was made on decent furniture for the children and the school staff which could be clearly seen.

In-spite of the rural locality, this school has done very well to maintain itself as hygienic, clean and well-furnished premises.

I was also shown the new land purchased (506 Square meter), for Middle Section is adjoined to the back side of the school and class room through which the passage will be made to link this section with the primary area.



This piece of land is marked with 3 feet boundary wall. The Proposed building on new land will also have its own entrance/gate which will be connected via 16 feet street from main road. School Management is intends to use that street as the main entrance by closing the narrow alley way.

The size of the class rooms is as under:

Size of Class Rooms (inner Space)			
Class Room	Size in Feet		Remarks
	Length	Width	
Play Group	36'	14.6'	ADP sponsored
Nursery	21'	13.6'	
Class 1	21'	14'	
Class 2	15.9'	13'	
Class 3	14.6'	9.6'	
Class 4	15.8'	13.3'	
Class 5	21'	13'	
Office	13'	10.10'	

The size of the whole school is 36ft x 16ft 4inch.

Student Break-Up:

The breakup of students per class according to enrolment register and the present students at my visit time is as under:

Classes	Students	Male	Female
Play Group	30	15	15
Nursery	31	14	17
Class 1	43	23	20
Class 2	42	20	22
Class 3	25	14	11
Class 4	19	9	10
Class 5	17	6	11
Total	207	101	106

Please note that 8 of the students from above list didn't return to the school after summer and Eid Vacations. School Staff is following up with their families.

Teachers:

There are eight teachers and one Female Care Taker in total. Six teachers are female and two are males. Three teachers are ex-students of the school. 4 teachers have completed their graduation. Both of the Male teachers have completed the PTC and bring more than 10 years' experience with them. 2 of the teachers are under-graduate.

Head Teacher:

The head teacher AyishaYaseen took the charge of the school this year when previous Head Teacher Ruksana moved to Lahore with her family. Teacher Ayisha seemed very confident, enthusiastic and passionate about the school growth.

Gender composition:

The gender ratio is almost equal; however female's ratio is slightly higher than Male students.

Pass Rates:

This year (2012), total 11 students (6 females, 5males) of class 5 took the board exams. The passing percentage was 100%.

Percentage of students continuing:

The drop outs from the school are rare since School is progressing to the state where majority of the locals look forward to have their children staying with the schools. Drop outs are mainly caused by families migrating from the area. 8 of the students didn't return to the school after summer vacations so follow up is in progress with the families.

Answers and Questions

1. Attendance of students? What target does she have and how does often does she check?

Answer:

Attendance is taken every day and on average 180-190/207 students are present daily. Head Teacher personally follows up with the absent students' parents/families.

2. Are quality teachers available?

Answer:

Yes they are. All of the Teachers were looking confident and seemed very familiar with the standard procedures of work plans and students records keeping.

3. Why does she think they need a High School?

Answer:

School Expansion will help the Female students to carry on their studies in same school, which are on risk of restricting themselves to primary studies. The students passing out to Government school do not seem to keep the same standard which was provided to them in their early education. So this will keep the quality education momentum going. It will

also increase the admission rate and the strength of the school both in financially and socially.

4. How does she monitor the teachers? How does she evaluate the teacher's performance? How does she motivate the teachers?

Answer:

The teachers are asked to develop lesson plans and then teach accordingly. The Head teacher then tests each class.



Regular meetings with teachers are also held to discuss issues and results. Quarterly bonuses and yearly salaries raise are the forms of incentives paid to the teachers

5. Does she encourage people in the locality/ parents to send their children to school?

Answer:

Yes. The strength of the school has increased from 160 to 207 during the past 1 year. I am told that the Parents meeting sessions are held regularly where not only the head teacher but some other guest speakers come to school. A recent example given to me was when Motorway Police officers turned up to the school where they spent time with Children and parents.



6. What steps has she taken to improve the quality of education in the school?

Answer:

Training on lesson planning with implementing methodology

Refresher courses for teachers in the summers

Organized teacher trainings in collaboration with some local schools and consultants

Implementation of English medium from nursery

Monthly parent teacher meeting

Summer camps, to keep the children engaged during the summer vacations

Small initiatives such as word of day series, Use of Flash Cards and other IEC material for small children learning with fun

The administration plans to start learning through computer games and programs, but they are lack of the equipment for this purpose

7. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the school?

Answer:

Strengths:

- The institution has Deep roots in community.
- The school seems to be in the centre of a very close knit community.
- School have lowest fee structure, comparatively other private schools, I also visited HIJAB public school, the voice principal told me that the school fee for class 1 is 1,000 with 25,00 for books and 1000 more for fee card, result intimation card and others. The telephone no of Hijab Public School is 0092-55-6705450.
- I also met with Mrs. Bushra Naz, the principal of Government Girls High School. She told me that the private school students who want to admit in Govt. school needed a school certificate by previous school and private schools charge it for 1000 to1500 but APS don't have such kind of cruel practices.
- Proper planning, monitoring, evaluation and implementation in place which keeps the quality of education high
- Motivated staff.
- Commitment to provide quality education to the under privileged children
- Successfully competing and performing well (per recent board Exams results) the

other local private schools.

- According to the community and School staff, the institution has progressed and grown in last 3 years since Amir is personally working on this project the school students increased from 80 to 207, the school also got an addition of 2 class rooms along with ADP Hall and school staff growing to 9 from 5. Teachers training and raising educational awareness are other aspects of this growth.

Weakness:

1. There were no any records regarding, salaries and other expenditures, we were told that all data is moved to Naya Ujala office at Lahore but school can provide if required.
2. The progress and growth of the institution is question mark as I was told it's the oldest school in the town but the school is still striving for sustainability.
3. The teachers training and refreshers are needed with continuum.
4. It is impossible to measure the quality of education in this short time visit.

Teachers:

The Teachers looked very satisfied with their current job role and rewards. I was told that the Head of the School Amir Davis conducts regular weekly meetings with the school staff and seem very open to the ideas and teacher's requirements. He also does one to one meetings with teachers (through phone) to take teachers personal ideas and problems.

Teachers said that they are provided with the opportunity for their career development. School allows and encourages teachers to give a replacement and take a sabbatical for the further studies. The recently given opportunity to do computer short courses is prime examples of higher management's support to the individual career's development.



In my personal observation, they seemed very pleased with the working environment and keen to grow their careers within the organization with the school expansion.

Current Students:

I observed education brings a clear change to the Small children of Play Group and Nursery, mostly have illiterate parents but they could read and write. Definitely an amazing thing to watch when they try to speak in English. The children in high classes were very happy with their school and wanted it to extend into a high school so that they could stay and complete their school studies here.



Most of the students belong to the localities; they seemed to be determined to continue their education.

Former Students:

I also met the former students, who were requested to come to the school.

I was introduced to five former female students. Two of them are currently in class 10; one was in class 9 and 2 from class 8. They had high regard for APS for building their strong foundation. They wanted APS to be converted to high school in near future and have computer lab setup there for the students.



Parents/Members of Community:

1. Why did you decide to send your child (children) to APS?

Financial incentives; b) Quality of the education; c) Location

Answer:



They priorities to quality of education then affordability and safe and healthy environment

1. What do you think about the quality of education imparted at APS?

Answer:

Very good

2. In your opinion how important is it to start a Middle School classes?

Answer:

This is highly populated area, because different villages are combined into one big town so the necessity can be felt big time for the school growth since I found this institute as the only one which is serving the purpose to spread education on non-profit basis.

By looking at the population and underprivileged people from this rural area, there should be more than 1 school like APS.

3. Do you know anyone or do you think other parents would be interested in sending their children for Middle School?

Answer:

Yes, Per Parents Feedback, they want their children to stay within the school and School Management hopes that they will enroll some former and new students in higher classes too.

4. In your opinion do you think APS is fulfilling an important function by providing low-cost education to deserving children? How often do they communicate with the teacher?

Answer:

Definitely they are fulfilling an important function by providing low-cost education to deserving children. Most parents attended the monthly parent teacher meetings. And yes some parents have been more regular than 1 month to meet the Teachers.

My Opinion

It would be great to support Amir Public School in their plans to expand it to Middle level and then High School.