

A Special School Visit Report

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ABSTRACT

This report is a comprehensive overview of a special education school, aiming to understand the support systems involving unique pedagogical approaches, infrastructure, and inclusive environment designed for children with diverse learning needs. The visit to Al-Shifa Trust Special School provided valuable insights into the special education systems in terms of the dedication of specialized staff, the use of special aids, adaptive technologies, and the collaborative learning environment involving educators, therapists and parents. The report is based on an interview session with the principal, doctor, coordinator, etc. but also personal observations. The report serves as a means of reflection to support the differently abled students.

Introduction

The report outlines my visit to the Al-Shifa Trust Special School and Rehabilitation Centre situated at Terminal-2 Road, Karachi Airport, Karachi-75200. This charitable institute was formed in 1967 through the collaboration of PIA and Civil Aviation. In 1981, it was converted into a Trust.

Objectives of the Visit

The objectives of the educational visit were as follows:

- i. Institute role in catering to the needs of a special student.
- ii. General problems of these students.
- iii. General problems faced by the teachers in classroom management.

Summary of Activities/Observations:

Knowledge-Based Learning:

English, Urdu, Mathematics, General knowledge (Islamiat and General Science)

Skill-Based Learning

1. Cognitive.
2. Fine gross.
3. Social.
4. Self-help.
5. Language.

Extra-Curricular Activities

1. Tableaus.
2. Parent Teacher Meeting.
3. Functions.
4. Educational trips: Rangoonwala.
5. Picnic.
6. Games: Special Olympic Pakistan.
7. Arts competition.

Offered Services

1. Physiotherapy.
2. Speech therapy.
3. Hydrotherapy.
4. Conductive education.
5. Occupational therapy.
6. Orthoses and Prostheses.
7. Orthopedic and Pediatric OPD.
8. Sports activities.
9. Music class.

Detailed Observations

Al-Shifa Trust is a beacon of light and hope for those special children suffering due to negligence and lack of facilities. This institute's aim is to bring these special children back to life and not only educate but also equip them with skills to lead an independent lively life. During my visit I interviewed the Headmistress regarding the Al-Shifa facilitation. Some of my personal observation is mentioned below:

Online ISSN

3007-3197

Print ISSN

3007-3189

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1. Admission criteria 4-12 years old.
2. Medical aids available.
3. Wheelchair accessible area.
4. School classes: Montessori-Grade 3.
5. Affiliated special schools after grade 3.
6. Neat and clean classrooms.
7. Well-organized classrooms.
8. Qualified head and staff.
9. Separate play area. Skill-based vocational training:
10. Computer training, Artwork. Stitching, cooking and beautician course.

Al-Shifa Strategy

To provide medical facility to children suffering from:

1. Cerebral palsy.
2. Down syndrome.

Children's mental and physical health assessment is made by a team of medical doctors such as orthopedic surgeon, physiotherapist, and a pediatrician. A well-planned therapeutic treatment and curriculum designed to cater to the needs of every special admitted child.

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Photo Gallery of the Visit



Al-Shifa Special school Headmistress



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Coordinator



Al-Shifa Entrance Gate



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Issues/Concerns Identified

Some of the key issues identified during my educational visit at Al-Shifa special school are highlighted below:

1. Governmental budget constraints.
2. Inadequacy of federal funding and financial aid.
3. Limited assistive devices or technology such as braille textbooks, a screen reader, a sign language interpreter, or a captioning service etc.

Recommendations

Following steps must be taken to ensure a safe and inclusive special education system:

1. Special school education recruitment programs.
2. Parental counseling.
3. Governmental support.
4. Provision of special health medical aid and facilities.
5. Maximize the number of special treatments at medical facilities.