

National Agenda



Early years



Special educational  
needs and disabilities



Innovation

## Inspection Report 2015-2016

American School of Dubai

Curriculum: US

Overall rating: Good

Read more about the school



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“Don't look  
behind to  
see who is  
following you,  
but look forward  
to be ahead”



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

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## School information

### General information



Location	Al Barsha
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	1966
Website	www.asdubai.org
Telephone	04-3950005
Address	PO Box: 71188
Principal	Dr. Brent Mutsch
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	25 to 28 January 2016

### Students



Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	4-18
Grades or year groups	Kindergarten 1 to Grade 12
Number of students on roll	1,792
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	5
Number of students with SEND	100
Largest nationality group of students	US

### Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	149
Largest nationality group of teachers	US
Number of teaching assistants	44
Teacher-student ratio	1:22
Number of guidance counsellors	9
Teacher turnover	15%

### Curriculum



Educational permit / Licence	US
Main curriculum	US / CCSS
External tests and examinations	MAP, SAT I and II, AP, PSAT, DRA, AVANT
Accreditation	Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
National Agenda benchmark tests	None

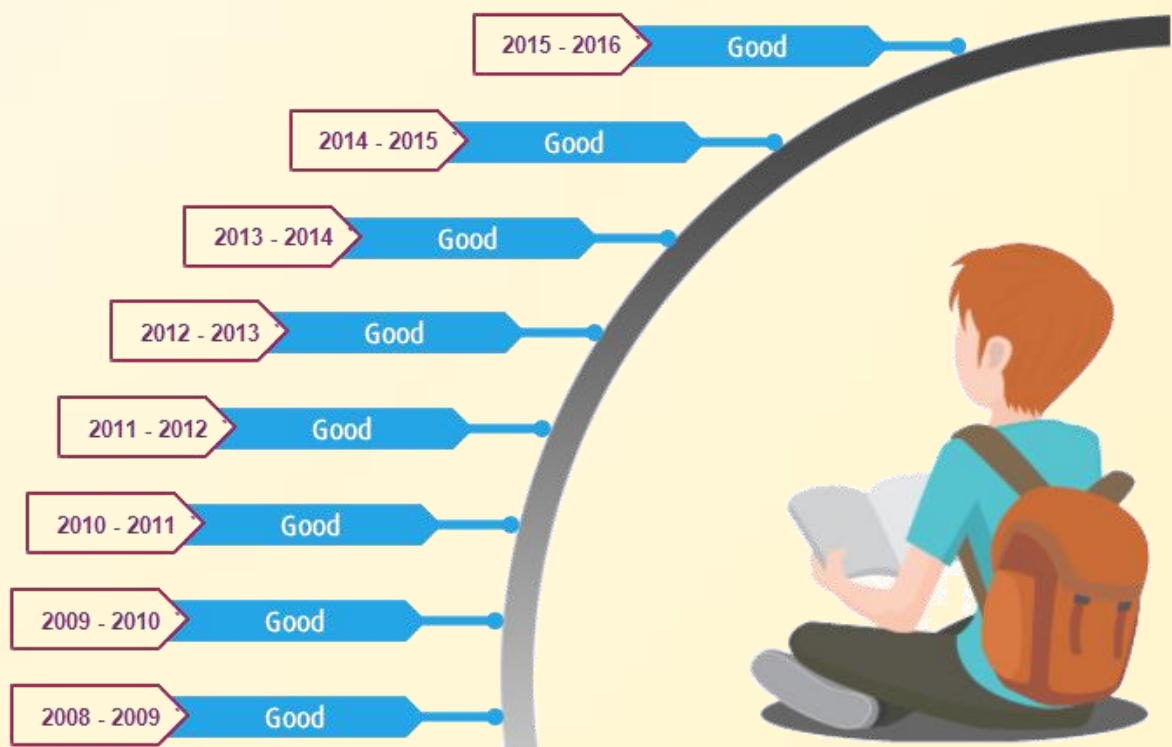


## Summary for parents and the community

**American School of Dubai** was inspected by DSIB from 25 to 28 of January 2016. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **good**.

In order to judge the overall quality of education provided by the school, inspectors considered six key standards of performance. Inspectors looked at children's attainment and progress in key subjects, their learning skills and their personal and social development. They judged how effective teaching and the assessment of learning were across the school. Inspectors considered how well the school's curriculum, including activities inside and outside classrooms, met the educational needs of all children. They judged how well the school protected and supported children. In addition inspectors judged the effectiveness of leadership and governance, including management, staffing, facilities and resources.

The inspection judgements were drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observing children learning in lessons, looking at their work, talking with children, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and reviewing the parents', teachers' and senior students' surveys.





### How well did the school perform overall?

Overall, the **American School of Dubai** provided a **good** quality of education for its students.

- There were no courses in Islamic education or Arabic as a first language. Arabic as an additional language was offered only as an elective to the upper phases, resulting in weak provision overall and acceptable for the elementary phase. Students' attainment and progress was outstanding in English and mathematics across all phases, and in middle and high school science. Students' learning skills were outstanding.
- Students had outstanding personal development, social responsibility and innovation skills, with creative and inventive applications of their learning. They were proud of their community and volunteer service. Younger students had a good understanding of Islamic values and Emirati culture. A strength of the school was the diversity of its student body, which helped build their understanding of world cultures.
- Teachers were highly skilled, knowledgeable in their subjects and of effective teaching strategies well-suited to the age of the students. Lessons were creative, connected to practical applications of learning and cross curricular, resulting in students gaining a deeper understanding of each concept. Assessments were performance based, tightly linked to standards, and well-matched to the school's curriculum.
- The school offered a full, interesting curriculum, including English language arts' and mathematics, AERO plus standards, performing and visual arts, modern languages, technology and sports. However, there was no enacted curriculum for Islamic education or Arabic as a first language. In KG, teachers made very good curriculum adaptations to respond to all learners, and good modifications took place across the other phases.
- Outstanding health and safety remained a strength of the school, with excellent facilities and effective policies for child protection and the safeguarding of all students. Overall care and support for all students was very good, including support for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Seamless management and effective leadership ensured the school ran smoothly. Improvement planning and understanding of the strengths of the school were good. Relationships with parents were outstanding as were the quality of the school's teaching resources. The governors were highly committed to the development of the school and were well-informed. The judgements for leadership and governance reflected the inability to meet statutory requirements.



### What did the school do well?

- The excellent attainment and progress in English and mathematics in all phases of the school.
- The outstanding range of learning skills that enabled almost all students to think critically and derive a deeper understanding of the world around them.
- The exceptional sense of community and social responsibility amongst students, parents and teachers.
- The cohesion and best practice in the middle school, which contributed to exemplary achievement and students' social, emotional and academic progress.
- The management and resourcing of the school which enabled students to explore ideas, be innovative and use technology in creative and insightful ways as a tool for learning.





### What does the school need to do next?

- Provide instruction in Islamic education for Muslim students, in accordance with the Ministry of Education requirements and curriculum expectations.
- Deliver as a matter of urgency the detailed instruction in Arabic to meet all curriculum expectations and Ministry of Education requirements.
- Use the external benchmarks identified in the National Agenda Parameter as an independent assessment of students' attainment and critical thinking as a comparator to their peers internationally.



### How well did the school provide for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) ?

- Most students received appropriate academic support in class, or in the learning support center, and made good academic progress in almost all lessons in line with expectations.
- Teachers provided suitable accommodations and modifications to help students access the curriculum. Many learning activities were differentiated and based on student needs.
- The school's support team provided regular information to parents regarding their child's academic and personal development through formal and informal communication.
- Parents were involved in planning meetings to discuss the development and implementation of an individual education plan (IEP) to support their child, but a few parents did not feel encouraged to contribute to the planning.
- Parents were very positive about the care and support that their child received in the school and the high quality of classroom instruction.

### National Agenda Parameter



In 2014, H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of UAE, and Ruler of Dubai, launched the UAE National Agenda 2021, with education being a prime focus. The National Agenda includes two major objectives developed with the intent of placing the UAE among the most successful countries that provide world-class education. By 2021, it is expected that the UAE will feature in the top twenty countries in the 'Programme for International Student Assessment' (PISA) test and in the top fifteen countries in the 'Trends in Mathematics and Science Studies' (TIMSS) test.

In response to this, each participating school was issued a report on their students' performance in these international assessments and in addition, they were provided with clear targets for improving their performance. This academic year, KHDA introduced the National Agenda Parameter, which is a method for measuring and monitoring schools' progress towards achieving their individual National Agenda targets through the use of external benchmarking assessments.

#### Main points:

- The school did not meet the registration requirements of the National Agenda Parameter. No attainment data from the National Agenda Parameter was available to make a judgement on the progress of the school in meeting the National Agenda targets.
- The school did not specifically promote awareness and understanding of the National Agenda Parameter amongst its stakeholders. However, the school scored very high in the previous cycles of TIMSS and PISA and other curriculum related benchmarks.
- There was no specific alignment that took place between the school's curriculum and the TIMSS and PISA frameworks, although the development of critical thinking, investigations, open-ended problems, inquiry and application to real life situations were integral parts of the teaching strategies in all core subjects.
- Students used learning technologies and other resources very effectively to develop their research skills. The use of smartboards, tablets and laptops to conduct research and create e-portfolios were features in the school.

## Innovation in education

The *UAE Vision 2021* sets out the National Agenda for the UAE to be among the most innovative nations in the world. The National Innovation Strategy sets the context for 'innovation' and 'innovative leadership'. It provides a basis for evaluating public and private schools in order to deliver a world-class education for all children in the UAE.

Innovation is driven by a commitment to excellence and continuous improvement. It is based on curiosity, the willingness to take risks, to experiment and to test assumptions as well as questioning and challenging the status quo. Being innovative is about looking beyond what we currently do well, identifying the great ideas of tomorrow and putting them into practice.



### Promoting a culture of innovation:


- School stakeholders collaboratively embraced innovation as a national priority, and to embed it within the culture of the school. School leaders reinforced the value in promoting their school's innovation practice through the personalization of learning, inspiring each student to be creative. Teachers' professional development was supported by instructional coaches. Common planning time given to teachers supported the consistent integration of technology and innovation into classroom learning. The school's infrastructure was well resourced with a plethora of innovation opportunities. Significant use was made by students of on-line platforms including digital technologies, 21st century research skills, design skills and innovation spaces. Students in all grade levels benefitted from a curriculum designed to incorporate innovation skills development, creativity and risk-taking.



Overall school performance

Good

1. Students' achievement

		KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Islamic education</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Not applicable	Weak	Weak	Weak
	<b>Progress</b>	Not applicable	Weak	Weak	Weak
<b>Arabic as a first language</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Not applicable	Weak	Weak	Weak
	<b>Progress</b>	Not applicable	Weak	Weak	Weak
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Not applicable	Acceptable	Weak	Weak
	<b>Progress</b>	Not applicable	Acceptable	Weak	Weak
<b>English</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
	<b>Progress</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
<b>Mathematics</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Outstanding ↑	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
	<b>Progress</b>	Outstanding ↑	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
<b>Science</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Good	Very good ↑	Outstanding ↑	Outstanding
	<b>Progress</b>	Good	Very good ↑	Outstanding ↑	Outstanding

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Learning skills</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

## 2. Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good	Good ↑	Acceptable
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

## 3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑
Assessment	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

## 4. Curriculum

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum design and implementation	Outstanding ↑	Acceptable ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓
Curriculum adaptation	Very good ↑	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good ↑

## 5. The protection, care, guidance and support of students

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Care and support	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

## 6. Leadership and management

	All phases
The effectiveness of leadership	Acceptable ↓
School self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good
Parents and the community	Outstanding
Governance	Acceptable
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding



## Main inspection report

The Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) is responsible for inspecting and reporting on the standards reached by students and the quality of education provided in Dubai's private schools.

### Judgements are made on a six-point scale



Using this scale, the *Main inspection report* contains the judgements about the different aspects, phases and subjects that form the work of the school.

It provides the reasons for the answers to the questions in the *Summary for parents and the community*:

- How well did the school perform overall?
- What did the school do well?
- What does the school need to do next?

## 1. Students' achievement

KG		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Not applicable	Not applicable
Arabic as a first language	Not applicable	Not applicable
Arabic as an additional language	Not applicable	Not applicable
English	Outstanding	Outstanding
Mathematics	Outstanding ↑	Outstanding ↑
Science	Good	Good

- The attainment and progress of children was outstanding in English, well above expectations. Almost all children spoke audibly and pronounced familiar words clearly and confidently. Most children described the characters, settings and key features of a story; recognized and read common high frequency words by sight. They were able to explain their ideas very well. Children used technology to do simple research and recorded their findings about the topics neatly and accurately. Different groups of children made similarly outstanding progress in their sessions and over time.
- In mathematics, as in English, children performed well above expectations for their age. The conceptual understanding of almost all children demonstrated outstanding attainment and progress. In the daily classroom environment, most children experimented with and practiced their knowledge of the relationship between numbers and quantities. Almost all kindergarten (KG) children could identify numerals six to ten. KG 1 children learned how to count and compare data on a graph and discussed how to interpret information such as their favorite subject. Progress was evident in the ability of most children to describe objects by attributes such as color, size or shape. The exploration and manipulation of geometric shapes, of sorting by certain criteria and describing sorting rules reflected high levels of progress.
- Good attainment and progress was evident in science. During the inquiry and observation part of science lessons, children usually applied their knowledge individually or in small groups well. The majority of children were provided with hands-on activities and other opportunities to demonstrate their investigative skills. The adjoining school garden was a rich resource for children to gather and plant their own seeds, observe the changes in plants and nature during different seasons and understand the benefits of composting. Most groups of children had explored the nature of heat energy and how important the sun was to all living things. The different groups made similarly good progress over time.

### Elementary

Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Weak	Weak
Arabic as a first language	Weak	Weak
Arabic as an additional language	Acceptable	Acceptable
English	Outstanding	Outstanding
Mathematics	Outstanding	Outstanding
Science	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- The school did not offer courses in Islamic education to its Muslim students. Consequently, students' knowledge, understanding and skills were below age related and curriculum expectations.
- In Arabic as a first language, the attainment level of the majority of the Arabic first language speakers was below the expectations of the Ministry of Education curriculum standards. Most students only studied Arabic as an additional language. As a result, students made limited gains towards meeting the national curriculum expectations. Students' progress in speaking, reading and writing was weak.
- In Arabic as an additional language and in the absence of external benchmarked tests, most students demonstrated attainment levels broadly in line with curriculum expectations for additional language speakers and met the curriculum expectations in internal assessments. In lessons, most students' listening ability was at a level that enabled them to understand basic classroom instruction. Speaking skills were acceptable overall, because students were able to use several familiar phrases and words. They could say a few sentences about themselves or about a familiar context but had difficulty applying their knowledge to unfamiliar situations. Students could write a few short phrases, but there were limited opportunities for independent writing. Progress was inconsistent across grade levels. Students with SEND did not study Arabic.
- Almost all students worked well above grade expectations in English. Students used reading and writing workshop approaches effectively to produce high quality texts, improve reading fluency and comprehension, and guide their own progress through self-assessment. Students improved their attainment through rigorous use of reading and writing strategies. They used rubrics to revise their writing, express their critical reading and track achievement. Across the phase, students successfully read, wrote and discussed increasingly complex texts. Internal and external assessments demonstrated how students performed exceedingly well against international benchmarks over time. Most students progressed well against learning objectives, including those with specific learning difficulties. For example, Grade 4 students with SEND used research tools, technology, and peer feedback effectively to revise non-fiction essays.
- In mathematics most of the students attained levels that were well above national curriculum standards. The Measures in Academic Progress (MAP) results showed high level attainment and progress in every grade in this phase. Almost all students had good number sense, they accurately represented and identified relationships among numbers and number systems. They understood meanings of operations and how these related to one another. They made calculations fluently and formulated reasonable estimates. Their ability to perform mental arithmetic, to calculate written answers and to solve problems was commendable. Different groups made similarly outstanding progress over time.



- Student work in science was consistently of a high level. In examinations, a large majority of students attained levels that were above national and international standards. In class, students demonstrated levels of knowledge that were above curriculum standards, as they used investigation skills, made practical connections between their reading and life science, or learned about space. Internal measures of student progress tracked consistently very good progress over time. In classes where there was support, almost all groups of students performed at high levels.

### Middle

Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Weak	Weak
Arabic as a first language	Weak	Weak
Arabic as an additional language	Weak	Weak
English	Outstanding	Outstanding
Mathematics	Outstanding	Outstanding
Science	Outstanding ↑	Outstanding ↑

- In Islamic education, students' attainment and progress were weak against the Ministry of Education curriculum expectations because no classes were offered to Muslim students. Consequently, any progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills in Islamic education came from outside the school.
- The school did not offer Arabic as a first language. Arabic native speakers who wished to study Arabic were taking a modified version of Arabic as an additional language. The standards and expectations of the modified course was significantly below that of the Ministry of Education. A minority of native Arabic speakers were enrolled onto this course, as it was offered as an elective. The attainment level of the majority of the Arabic native speakers was below Ministry of Education curriculum standards, especially in students' speaking and writing skills. Students made limited progress towards meeting the expectations for native speakers.
- In learning Arabic as an additional language and in the absence of externally benchmarked measures, only a minority of students attained levels that were in line with general expectations. Attainment and progress were weak. The majority of students, did not study Arabic. Those who did study this elective subject made insufficient gains in developing Arabic language skills, but they did make progress in listening and speaking against the general expectations for additional language speakers. Students' writing skills were underdeveloped. Students with SEND did not study Arabic.
- Most students' level of attainment and progress in English was outstanding against curriculum standards, and external assessments. They made consistent progress from sixth to eighth grade. Students developed their mastery of complex texts by comparing genres, analyzing literary techniques, and discussing author's purpose and theme. Students demonstrated high level reading and writing skills and applied those skills to higher order tasks, research, and problem solving. For example, students used detailed analysis of statistical information on Nepal, Thailand, and Tanzania, drafted research questions in preparation for their 'Week without walls' project, fluently discussed research to inform their experiences abroad, and made connections among the content areas. All groups of students made significant progress in all aspects of English.

- In learning mathematics, most students attained levels that were above national curriculum standards. External MAP assessments indicated high outcomes in every grade in this phase. Most students understood patterns and relations. They represented and analyzed mathematical situations and structures using algebraic symbols, and used mathematical models to represent quantitative relationships. Students analyzed change in various contexts by using equivalent ratios and rates. Progress of all groups of students was consistently strong in this phase of the school both in lessons and over time.
- In science, as in English and mathematics, most students attained levels that were well above national curricular standards. Students demonstrated a keen understanding of science concepts and could apply new knowledge to their existing understanding. In lessons, students met the lesson objectives and worked at a high level as they explored new topics. Over time, most students made better than expected progress in relation to their individual starting points and the curriculum standards, including all groups of students within each year group.

High		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Weak	Weak
Arabic as a first language	Weak	Weak
Arabic as an additional language	Weak	Weak
English	Outstanding	Outstanding
Mathematics	Outstanding	Outstanding
Science	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The school did not offer Islamic education to the Muslim students in the school. Consequently, students were not making progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills in Islamic education against the Ministry of Education curriculum expectations. Students' attainment and progress were weak.
- The school did not offer Arabic as a first language in the high school. Arabic native speakers who wished to study Arabic took as an elective a modified version of Arabic as an additional language. The expectations of this course were significantly below that of the Ministry of Education. A few Arabic students were enrolled on this course. The attainment level of the majority of the Arabic first language speakers was below the expectations of the Ministry of Education curriculum standards, especially in their speaking and writing skills. Students made limited progress.
- In learning Arabic as an additional language and in the absence of externally benchmarked measures, a minority of students had generally appropriate attainment levels. The majority of students in the required year of Grade 9, did not study Arabic because it was offered as an elective course. The minority of those who studied the subject had prior experience of the language. As a result, their attainment levels were significantly higher, especially their speaking and writing skills, when measured against those of additional language speakers'. In lessons, the majority made appropriate progress against the stated objectives. However, the progress for all Grade 9 students overall was weak. Students with SEND did not study Arabic.

- Students' work in English was consistently well above curriculum standards. In international and national assessments at the end of high school, students gained exceptional results including SAT assessments. They demonstrated very high levels of understanding. In lessons, students connected different areas of their learning to create high-level outputs. For example, in one class students analyzed the poem *The Imaginary Iceberg*. They made connections to symbolism, structure and diction to extract thematic meaning from the poem, then applied those themes to real world situations. Students engaged in discussion and extracted textual references to support their writing. They effectively guided their own critical thinking, drafted research and used those questions to conduct advanced inquiry using university data bases, scholarly journals, and academic articles. All groups of students made outstanding progress.
- In mathematics, most students attained levels that were well above curriculum standards. The SAT I, SAT II, Advanced Placement and MAP results displayed similarly high level outcomes in this phase. Most students understood functions and used function notations well. They analyzed functions using different representations. They were able to construct and compare linear, quadratic, and exponential models to solve problems. They extended the domain of trigonometric functions using the unit circle and modeled periodic phenomena with trigonometric functions. Over the four years of high school, students developed and consolidated their mathematical skill, with excellent results achieved in their internal and external assessments. All groups of students made strong progress.
- Most students worked well above curriculum standards in science, similar to their performances in English and mathematics. They branched into Advanced Placement science courses and demonstrated mastery of the high school science curriculum. In external examinations, most students attained high level results. In science lessons, students demonstrated a similar high quality of learning. In most cases students were highly motivated and self-directed learners, which contributed to their consistently outstanding progress and high attainment. Most groups of students gained outstanding attainment and progress scores in international measures.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Almost all students took responsibility for their own learning. Lessons provided a rich variety of creative opportunities which developed key critical thinking skills. KG children self-selected center activities, learning tools, reading materials, and writing topics. Students set their own learning targets and shared that information with parents. Almost all students accessed digital and other resources to enhance learning each day.
- Almost all students developed the skills of effective collaborators and communicators, as they shared their learning, worked, listened and learned from others. An e-portfolio model connected students' reflective capacity to their learning. Students formally reflected and presented their individual strengths and weaknesses to teachers, peers and parents, in opportunities such as 'Falcon Dreams' and 'Student Led Conferences'.
- A strong feature was the ability of students to apply their learning in new situations. In the co-curricular student organizations, students developed skills necessary to work with peers in solving real world problems. Through community service, students put into practice their skills as successful, confident learners. A sustainable garden helped students connect art, literacy, science, social studies, and physical education.
- Students used learning technology such as laptops, iPads, iPod touches and smart-boards. This motivated students to develop research and presentation skills. They used online resources to archive their portfolios of learning. The school fostered investigation through inquiry and research methodologies. In Advanced Placement Capstone courses, students conducted independent original research, conducted a literature review and gathered and analyzed data on an original question.

## 2. Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Personal development</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students had very positive and responsible attitudes towards each other and their learning. They were confident and independent, and even from a young age were self-reliant.
- Students' behavior was exemplary. Students were frequently seen supporting each other, offering to help or working things out together. There were no reported cases of bullying across the school.
- Relationships were positive at all levels of the school. Attitudes of students were respectful to each other as well as to their teachers. A positive ethos was always evident.
- Most students had an excellent understanding of the value of good health. They spoke proudly of their organic garden produce. They had a keen awareness of the value of sporting activities and made excellent use of the school's grounds and facilities.
- Students almost always arrived at school and to lessons on time. The overall attendance was very good. Older students were self-disciplined, knowing where they should be and planning their time well.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures</b>	Good	Good	Good ↑	Acceptable

- Students were aware of Islamic values and translated them into a culture of kindness and respect. Most students were aware of how Islamic values have a positive effect on life in the UAE. However, the understanding of these values was not consistent among the high school students.
- Students showed a developing understanding of Emirati society, culture, heritage and history. This was developed through a rich program of school events and field trips and through the teaching of the Arabic language in the elementary phase.
- Most students had understanding, awareness and appreciation of their own culture, the culture of their peers and across the world. The school played a big part by providing cultural activities, country visits and trips.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Social responsibility and innovation skills</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Student council, class representatives and clubs had a very positive impact on the school and the local community. Their volunteer efforts and community service were essential experiences for life in this school. They raised money for causes around the world.



- Students' excellent work ethic was demonstrated daily by their work in lessons, by their innovative class projects, by their diligence in activities in the younger grades, commitment to trips abroad in the middle school, and internships or other specific learning tasks in the high school.
- Students across the school contributed to the recycling program and organized events to raise money to support environmental projects. Students participated in a variety of projects to build environmental awareness across the school.

### 3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- Most teachers had a sound knowledge of their subjects. They were skilled in applying their knowledge to enable students to successfully learn. Teachers in KG demonstrated expertise in how young children learn best. They were mindful of children's potential and had developmentally high expectations of them.
- Teaching across the school was motivating to students. The learning environment was inspiring and teachers used a range of rich resources to stimulate students' learning. Lessons were well planned and often included a variety of activities. In the best lessons, teachers adjusted the pace of learning and as a result students made excellent progress.
- Teachers' interactions with students ensured that they were always active, interested and focused learners. Questioning challenged students' thinking and promoted insightful responses. In the KG, the quality of child-teacher interactions was outstanding and reflected in the high quality responses to oral questions, confident dialogue and meaningful engagement while focusing on the lesson objectives.
- The use of effective teaching strategies to meet the individual needs of students was a strength in most classes. In the best lessons seen, personalized approaches were used to ensure all students made accelerated progress. In a few lessons, strategies employed were not as varied and did not effectively meet the individual needs of students, including the more able.
- The development of critical thinking was high on teachers' agendas. Teachers provided good opportunities for students to analyze, evaluate, and critically evaluate. Consequently, most students demonstrated well developed learning skills. Teachers provided ample opportunities for students to make effective use of learning technologies to support and advance their learning.
- The quality of teaching in Arabic lessons was inconsistent. The best lessons seen were interactive and had positive interactions that enabled students to make good progress in developing language skills. However, in the less effective lessons students' progress was restricted by modest expectations and the inefficient use of time.





	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Assessment	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- The school had developed strong assessment systems and processes. Internal assessments were firmly aligned with Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Units were planned with the assessment of the learning targets in mind. Students achieved high results academically, personally and socially. Assessment tasks and other information were used to anchor curriculum content and guide lessons.



- A variety of external assessments were used to benchmark student achievement. Assessments in MAP, the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), Advanced Placement, PSAT, SAT I and SAT II were analyzed and used to adjust student grouping, instruction and curriculum. AVANT assessed the languages of Arabic, French, and Spanish. No external assessments were in place for science below high school. The school had not as yet used one of the assessments identified in the National Agenda Parameter as an external benchmark.
- Teachers analyzed data from different assessments to evaluate progress and attainment. MAP results in English and mathematics were analyzed for Grades 2 to 10 to monitor progress and support benchmarking to both national and international norms. The student growth summary report generated by MAP was primarily used to understand the academic growth of each student and determine progress.
- The school had a comprehensive system of data analysis allowing managers and teachers to use assessment data effectively to guide lesson planning and provide support to all students. Assessments were designed based on specific standards, and students were evaluated on the skills and competencies embedded in the standards as prescribed by CCSS or AERO.
- Teachers' reports were designed to give specific feedback to students regarding the standards they had mastered or needed to improve. Furthermore, formative assessment results allowed teachers to plan targeted interventions for specific, individual students during the 'Flex and Pursuit' periods.

#### 4. Curriculum

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum design and implementation	Outstanding 	Acceptable 	Weak 	Weak 

- The curriculum was well planned with breadth and progression. A wide range of curricular options enhanced students' talents, interests and creativity. The curriculum had a significant gap with the absence of Islamic education courses for Muslim students and Arabic as a first language. Overall, it promoted innovative and challenging engagement for most students. KG children enjoyed a balanced education that promoted independent learning.
- The curriculum was planned and sequenced seamlessly to build on students' previous learning. Strong content and planning supported students and prepared them for success in each phase of school. Courses for middle and high school students were especially designed to provide in depth understanding of a range of topics towards enhancing their aspirations in and beyond school, building college readiness.
- Cross-curricular links were abundant and authentic. Due to thoughtful progressions, students transferred their learning and applied significant knowledge among subjects. Integrated planning was evident in research papers, the 'Week without walls' project, and a student-guided tour through the organic garden. Most learning tasks required students to draw on knowledge and skills from a variety of content areas.
- The school regularly reviewed its existing curriculum, and adaptations were made. Teachers and leaders planned lessons collaboratively and incorporated provisions to meet the academic and personal needs of the majority of students. High school courses were newly designed for Islamic education and World Civilization, but not for the current academic year.
- The school had an integrated social studies program. Whenever appropriate, aspects of the UAE culture, history and geography were integrated into the content of the subject.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum adaptation	Very good ↑	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good ↑

- Teachers adapted the curriculum effectively. Programs were planned to include sufficiently challenging work and support was in place which enabled students with SEND to meet learning targets and develop their social, emotional, and academic skills.
- An innovative, diverse, and engaging curriculum was planned and the inherent flexibility and creativity of the course offerings provided students with individualized pathways to achievement. Opportunities, which supported and extended student aspirations were embedded in the curriculum and reflected the school's core values. Innovative practice was consistently seen across the school.
- A limited range of appropriate learning experiences were provided to develop students' understanding of UAE culture and heritage. There was evidence within the social units of study, English selection of regional texts, and local field trips and their accompanying projects of culturally appropriate learning, but overall it was not a strong feature.
- The curriculum was enhanced through the offering of 30 minutes of Arabic three times a week to all of its children in KG. The content of these sessions was developed by teachers and focused on letters, basic words and phrases.

#### 5. The protection, care, guidance and support of students

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Child safety and protection was a priority in the school. Policies were established, updated and practiced on a regular basis. School counsellors had presented an anti-bullying workshops, middle school teachers and a consultant taught students about a range of issues and cyber bullying awareness. Rigorous procedures for safeguarding were known by staff, students and parents and were highly effective in protecting students from all forms of abuse.
- The school consistently and in all respects provided a fully safe, hygienic and secure environment for students and staff. Safety checks were frequent and rigorous. Supervision of students was exceptionally effective at all times.
- Buildings and equipment were well maintained and in excellent condition. The school maintained very detailed and secure records, including records of incidents and subsequent actions.
- The school's premises and facilities provided an excellent physical environment, which fully met the learning needs of all. Access for those with physical and mobility issues was in place and all student restrooms contained at least one larger stall for those students with such issues.
- The school's promotion of safe and healthy living was a key priority. It was given a high profile and clearly influenced all aspects of school life. A fully staffed and well equipped medical center supervised medications, emergency and other health needs, and provided guidelines on nutrition. The school cafeteria offered fruit, vegetables and healthy options for breakfast and lunch.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Care and support	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- Staff-student relationships were nurtured from the early years which resulted in an environment which fostered mutual respect and trust. Students were exceptionally well behaved. They learned to take responsibility for their own choices and actions, and to self-regulate their actions through the school-wide promotion of a positive approach to behavior.
- The consistent promotion of personal responsibility, good online record-keeping and monitoring strategies had led to very good student attendance and punctuality. The recent implementation of an electronic tagging system to more efficiently record students as they enter and exit the school grounds had started to improve data collection and to advance follow-up.
- School documentation clearly outlined the systematic and comprehensive approach to identifying students in need of support and the collaborative process used to plan interventions. Students selected from a range of activities designed to enhance personal interests, challenge them and develop talents. However, there was no proactive system in place to identify formally and guide students who were gifted and or talented.
- A school team of qualified and experienced teachers provided individualised support for students identified with special educational needs or disabilities both in mainstream classrooms and in learning support rooms. Scrutiny of student work, and records of careful monitoring and regular assessment provided evidence that the majority of students with SEND made good academic progress in line with expectations.
- From Grade 1, students received quality personal guidance and support from their classroom teachers, from counselors and through timetabled advisory classes, as well as individual appointments. High school students were expertly guided in selecting and applying to colleges, and in choosing an appropriate career path to suit their interests and abilities.

#### Provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

The overall effectiveness of provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities

Good ↑

- Senior leaders expressed commitment to an inclusive ethos, however the admissions policy was not sufficiently inclusive. This was reflected in the relatively low level of students with SEND in the school. Support services effectively supported academic learning and curriculum access for students with SEND in mainstream classes, and this ensured progress for most of the students in line with academic expectations.
- Support teachers collaborated effectively with classroom teachers to implement curriculum modifications and accommodations to increase student learning. Students were challenged to work to their best. Teachers were caring and supportive of students with SEND and many were skilled in planning appropriate interventions. Students took part in curriculum assessments and when necessary were provided with accommodations, such as extra time.

- Parents supported the governors' commitment to, in the future, to strategically plan for and develop a more inclusive school. Parents were invited to planning meetings to discuss their child's individual education plan, but did not feel that they were able to contribute to it.
- The school's support team provided regular information to parents regarding their child's academic and personal development through formal and informal communication.
- While the identification of students' academic needs was effective, the school did not have a process to identify the barriers to learning for those students with SEND. The school was therefore unable to create individualized targets for each students to better address needs beyond just their academic support.

## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Acceptable ↓

- School leaders held a collective vision for the school, ensuring new and interesting opportunities, which well aligned to the culture of the school community. Some new ideas arose from students, others from teachers or parents, but all were welcomed. There was consistency of purpose, allowing for creative new steps, within a long range plan. Leaders in every department shared in the strategic direction.
- All school leaders thoroughly understood the curriculum, both the overall content and the skill based standards, and the philosophy of the school which formed the wider curriculum. Observers could see the effect of student learning outside and inside the classrooms. Best practices were promoted purposefully, supported by a culture of learning, instructional coaches, and better inculcation of inclusive practices.
- Communication with students and parents by school leaders was open, inclusive and effective. Morale was very high, largely due to the effective leadership skills at all levels, and a willingness to change.
- New measures, such as the introduction of instructional coaches, brought about meaningful and effective changes. Spaces were created within the school for the development of innovative practices, of teaching or leading, including leadership by students. Students preparing for trips abroad, for example, were becoming so knowledgeable about their chosen country that they were preparing to act as tour guides in their host country.
- Leaders kept their focus on developing the strengths of the school. Middle leaders were highly effective in guiding and resourcing learning, based on their thorough understanding of best practices in schools that deliver a US curriculum. While leaders at all levels of the school were skilled, innovative and progressive in guiding the school through many improvements, the leaders at the highest level failed to ensure that the school met all the statutory requirements.



School self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The systematic processes of school self-evaluation, with a long history of exceptional academic results, contributed to the school's effective improvement planning. Strategic plans in five year increments, contributed to by parents, teachers, students and leaders, ensured reflective and fact-based planning based on a realistic understanding of strengths and next steps.</li> <li>• A variety of approaches were used to monitor, evaluate and promote best practices in teaching for effective learning, supported by exceptional student achievement.</li> <li>• The school improvement plans facilitated and encouraged multiple examples of innovative and creative learning opportunities, which provided students with interesting avenues to investigate and explore, when consolidating learning. While planning matched well the ethos and vision of the school, the UAE priorities were only indirectly addressed, where there was a crossover to school priorities, hence missing a national focus.</li> <li>• The majority of the recommendations of the previous inspection were met, as improvements were seen in teaching, in assessment and in science. Attempts had been made to address the recommendation regarding Islamic education in a long term plan, with a first step in the high school planned for the next school year. The recommendation for Arabic as a first Language was not met.</li> </ul>	

Partnerships with parents and the community	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents were fully involved as partners in the school community. They were involved as volunteers in many aspects of school life, academically, artistically and through sport. The views of parents formed part of the strategic plans of the school and contributed to the selection process for school leaders. They were well informed of the plans of the school, and actively welcomed to play a part.</li> <li>• Parents felt well informed of their children's strengths and development needs. In the younger year groups, they were impressed by the detailed communication on student learning, and in the older years they acknowledged ready access to student work through electronic pathways.</li> <li>• Parents felt fully informed of their children's progress and attainment. Through conferences, written reports, e-portfolios and other means, parents were able to know how well their children were developing in all aspects.</li> <li>• Well-established links with the wider community included partnerships with agencies. Students were able to volunteer, become interns within businesses and hold membership in international organizations such as scouts. Parents and community members participated in 'Career Day', with over 30 professions presented as options to students. The number of clubs and activities were extensive, as internationalism, service and community were part of the ethos of the school.</li> </ul>	






Governance	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The board of governors included representation from most stakeholders. Each member was the parent of a student in the school. They met regularly and were proactive in receiving the views of students, parents and staff in much of their decision making. A recent example was the involvement of all stakeholders in the recruitment process for new senior leaders, including the superintendent.</li> <li>• Members of the board of governors had expert knowledge of finance, the requirements of a US curriculum and the daily work of the school. Their stewardship saw highly successful outcomes for students when selecting a university or career pathway of choice, and were aided in this process through the appointment of a full cadre of counselors. The board ensured that the school was ably staffed and students were fully supported in their learning.</li> <li>• The board was highly aware of the absence of two key subjects in the school's program and of not meeting its statutory requirements and commitments. It had developed an action plan to address compliance and taken the first steps in funding and developing a high school course for next year. The implementation of the plan, however lacked urgency. The gap in meeting the requirement for the provision of Arabic as first language remained.</li> </ul>	

Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school ran smoothly and was highly efficient. Activities related to the curriculum, whether within the school day, externally or special projects, were coordinated exceptionally well, allowing students the opportunity to benefit from a broad range of experiences that enhanced their learning.</li> <li>• The teaching staff were experienced in the US curriculum, and qualified with academic degrees and current teaching qualifications. The faculty benefited from the continual learning of new approaches, technologies and successful teaching practices, particularly those supported by the instructional coaches.</li> <li>• The facilities were of the highest standard, with traditional and innovative learning areas across an extensive campus. Innovative learning examples included the students' organic garden, with Wi-Fi to check the weather, a sound studio run by students, and a new 'maker space' to further extend students' inventive creativity. Libraries were well stocked and well used. Learning technologies were abundant, beginning with full class sets of iPad in the KG and becoming more complex for older students.</li> <li>• Extensive resources for learning were available across the school, with learning tools or games in the lower years to well-equipped laboratories with sufficient resources to teach advanced level science and mathematics courses in the higher grades. There were extensive resources for the fine arts, musical instruments for a band, sporting facilities, equipment, and theatre, all of which contributed to a full, interesting school experience.</li> </ul>	

## The views of the parents, teachers and students

Before the inspection, the views of the parents, teachers and senior secondary students were surveyed. Key messages from each group were considered during the inspection and these helped to form inspection judgements. A summary of the survey statistics and comments from those who responded to the survey follows:

Responses to the surveys		
Responses received	Number	
<b>Parents*</b> 	2015-2016	203
	2014-2015	276
<b>Teachers</b> 	137	
<b>Students</b> 	247	

\*The number of responses from parents is based on the number of families.

- Parents, teachers and students who responded to the survey were strong supporters of the school overall. The views of parents varied, but most were consistent in their high praise of the school and the quality of education provided for their children.
- The arts program, the offering of three languages, and the breadth of the curriculum were highlights for many parents. There were strong views on the nature of curriculum in an "international" school, which varied widely.
- While most parents who responded to the survey, felt there was good communication, a few parents felt their concerns were not met in regard to additional support for their children.
- Teachers were similarly firm advocates for the school and for the support they received.
- Teachers saw the school as a happy place, where students' learning skills were improving significantly. They saw the international backgrounds of students at the school as one of its strengths.
- Students who responded to the survey were generally very supportive of the school, although there were a few areas where they hoped for change.
- Students felt the quality of the Arabic offered by the school did not lead to fluency in the language. Others were concerned that the overall work load and summary tests in the high school were excessive and demotivating.
- Many students hoped for more opportunities to celebrate the diversity that existed within the student body.

If you have a concern or wish to comment on any aspect of this report, you should contact [inspection@khda.gov.ae](mailto:inspection@khda.gov.ae)