



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational needs and disabilities



Innovation

## Inspection Report 2015-2016

GEMS Wellington Primary School

Curriculum: UK

Overall rating: Very good

[Read more about the school](#)



www.khda.gov.ae

“Great achievements remind us to be humble, but we should always be determined to do more”



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

## Contents

School information .....	2
Summary for parents and the community .....	3
Main inspection report .....	10
1. Students' achievement .....	11
2. Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills .....	14
3. Teaching and assessment.....	15
4. Curriculum .....	17
5. The protection, care, guidance and support of students .....	18
Provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) .....	19
6. Leadership and management.....	20
The views of the parents, teachers and students .....	23

## School information

<b>General information</b>  	Location	Al Satwa
	Type of school	Private
	Opening year of school	2008
	Website	www.gemswps.com
	Telephone	04-3433266
	Address	PO Box 114652 Satwa Behind the Shangri La Hotel Dubai, UAE
	Principal	Stephen J. Chynoweth
	Language of instruction	English
	Inspection dates	16 to 19 November 2015
<b>Students</b>  	Gender of students	Boys and girls
	Age range	3-11
	Grades or year groups	Foundation Stage 1 to Year 6
	Number of students on roll	1,189
	Number of children in pre-kindergarten	93
	Number of Emirati students	45
	Number of students with SEND	107
	Largest nationality group of students	Indian
<b>Teachers / Support staff</b>  	Number of teachers	89
	Largest nationality group of teachers	British
	Number of teaching assistants	56
	Teacher-student ratio	1:13
	Number of guidance counsellors	0
	Teacher turnover	31%
<b>Curriculum</b>  	Educational permit / Licence	MoE
	Main curriculum	UK / MoE
	External tests and examinations	SATs, GL, CAT4
	Accreditation	COBIS
	National Agenda benchmark tests	GL

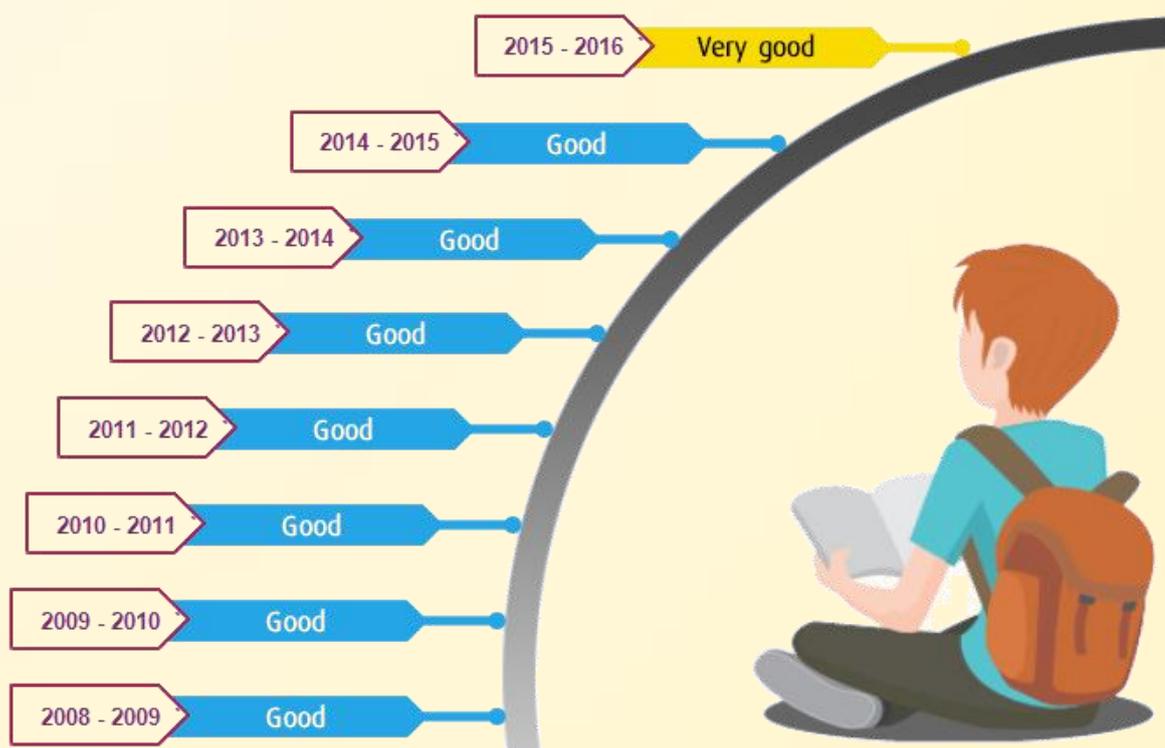


## Summary for parents and the community

**GEMS Wellington Primary School** was inspected by DSIB from 16 to 19 of November 2015. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **very 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 school provided **very good** education for its students.

- Students attained good standards in English, mathematics and science across the school. Attainment in Islamic education and Arabic as a first language and as an additional language were of an acceptable standard. Students made at least good progress in all core subjects. In English and mathematics, across the school, and in science in the primary phase, progress was very good.
- Students, in both phases, were highly responsible, self-disciplined, and maintained positive relationships with classmates and teachers. Most students appreciated the Emirati heritage and the values of Islam. They had a strong knowledge of other cultures and religions. Students worked hard and showed a high degree of care for their environment.
- The quality of teaching and assessment was very good across the school. Systems and practices were especially well developed in the Foundation Stage. Teachers knew their students very well and planned engaging and interesting lessons. They were skilled at questioning and this led to deep, reasoned thinking by the students. Assessment systems were thorough and this ensured that tracking of students' attainment was accurate and continuous.
- The curriculum was very well balanced, and met statutory requirements. It was effectively planned to ensure progression in subjects. Teachers devised links across all subjects. A very wide range of engaging, often imaginative, activities motivated almost all students. The curriculum made strong links with the UAE, which enabled all students to develop a broad understanding of local culture and society.
- The school provided a safe and nurturing environment and welcomed students, regardless of need. The school had high expectations for student conduct and, as a result, nearly all were self-reliant and self-disciplined. Early identification of students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) informed support in the classrooms and resulted in these students making good progress.
- School leadership was very good. Leaders knew their school very well and effectively planned for further improvement. They had established efficient systems to accurately measure student performance and these were embedded into the school's routines. As a result, plans could be adapted at short notice, if the need arose. The school had outstanding support from its parents and was guided well by the governing body.



### What did the school do well?

- Inspirational leadership, led by the principal, had resulted in huge improvements in many areas of school life in a short period of time.
- The school welcomed all students, regardless of need, and provided a nurturing environment in which each could learn.
- Students were safe in the school and were supported very well. The school took every opportunity to celebrate students' personal and academic successes.
- A wide range of initiatives enabled parents of all groups of students, including Emiratis, and those with SEND, to give excellent support at home and so further develop their children's learning.
- High calibre teaching, support and administrative staff, and a wide range of excellent resources promoted very effective teaching and learning.



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

- Raise attainment in Islamic education by giving a greater focus to all elements of the school's curriculum; for example on applying the concepts to the everyday lives of Muslims.
- Raise attainment in languages by:
  - establishing greater balance in lessons between the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing in Arabic as a first language
  - consolidating teachers' understanding of best practices so that they may make effective choices of the strategies to use in order to deliver the curriculum in both Arabic as a first and as an additional language
  - placing greater emphasis on improving the quality and quantity of students' writing especially in English, science and social studies.
- Continue the effective strategies for improving performance by:
  - consolidating and embedding teachers' knowledge of how to plan for greater depth of understanding in students' learning
  - developing students' abilities to accurately assess how well they are learning and ways in which they can improve their performance.



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

- Students with SEND had acquired good levels of knowledge, skills and understanding and made good progress overall. The school gathered a wide range of information from individual education plans, copybooks and assessment data.
- The quality and methodology of reporting progress was outstanding and greatly valued by parents. Reports were sent to parents on a daily basis and included feedback from learning support assistants.
- Links with parents were open, transparent and consistent. Class teachers had a strong awareness of students' needs and parents appreciated the professional approach taken by the SEND team to inform the various school departments of individual student's needs.
- Parents were highly valued and supported the school's efforts to create and develop an inclusive environment for their children. Twice each term, parents were invited to visit the school to discuss their child's learning and be involved in planning the next steps. Teachers were proactive when adjustments to practice were necessary.
- Very good levels of guidance and support were available to parents in the school. As yet, the school did not have sufficiently wide specialist expertise across the full range of SEND and this impacted on their ability to offer more targeted interventions to students with sensory or behavioural needs.

## 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 fully meet the registration requirements of the National Agenda Parameter. No attainment data from the National Agenda Parameter was available to support a judgement on the school's progress towards meeting the National Agenda targets.
- The school has taken efficient steps to ensure that all teaching staff and governors were fully involved in the development of the National Agenda in the school. Parents and students were not well informed about the National Agenda or the national priority to provide a curriculum and develop skills in students that were appropriate for learning in the 21st Century.
- The school had reviewed the findings of TIMSS international benchmark test for mathematics and science and had ensured that the curriculum had been adapted to meet the challenge. Scientific thinking and the skills necessary to conduct investigations skills were a developing feature in the school. Opportunities for problem solving and mental mathematical agility were regularly planned. The school recognised that reading comprehension, inferential as well as literal, was a key skill for future learning.
- The school had identified the development of critical thinking, prompted by high level skills in teachers' questioning, as a priority. All teaching staff had engaged positively with the extensive professional development programme. As a result students were being challenged to think more deeply and to apply their understanding in one subject area to others. The objectives of the National Agenda were partly met.
- Students, especially in mathematics and science, had opportunities to propose ideas, carry out research and test their skills in class. They were encouraged to carry out small research projects, both in the classroom and at home. The school was well equipped with the infrastructure and technological devices necessary to allow research and enquiry to take place.

## 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 leaders saw innovation as an integral part of achieving excellence and to supporting children's learning. The school had yet to formalize an innovation policy which would meet the National agenda expectations. School leaders, teachers and students were encouraged to use the facilities, technology and time effectively to generate new ideas and develop innovation skills, and communicate effectively with parents. The school had developed a curriculum which promoted enterprise and innovation skills.

Overall school performance

Very good ↑

1. Students' achievement

		Foundation Stage	Primary
Islamic education 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good
Arabic as a first language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good
Arabic as an additional language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good
English 	Attainment	Good	Good
	Progress	Very good ↑	Very good ↑
Mathematics 	Attainment	Good	Good
	Progress	Very good ↑	Very good ↑
Science 	Attainment	Good ↑	Good
	Progress	Good ↑	Very good ↓
		Foundation Stage	Primary
Learning skills		Very good ↑	Very good ↑

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Very good ↑	Very good ↑
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

## 3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Teaching for effective learning	Very good ↑	Very good ↑
Assessment	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

## 4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Curriculum design and implementation	Very good ↑	Very good ↑
Curriculum adaptation	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Care and support	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

## 6. Leadership and management

	All phases
The effectiveness of leadership	Very good ↑
School self-evaluation and improvement planning	Very good ↑
Parents and the community	Outstanding
Governance	Very good ↑
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

### Foundation Stage

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	Good	Very good ↑
Mathematics	Good	Very good ↑
Science	Good ↑	Good ↑

- The majority of children demonstrated English literacy skills that were above expected curriculum standards. A large majority made better than expected progress. Children were able to communicate their ideas effectively using a rich vocabulary. They listened attentively and followed instructions in class and during group activities. The older children were able to recognize a broad selection of high frequency words, blend some sounds to read three- and four-letter words and the majority were reading short sentences. They understood the meaning of books and talked about features such as the title and characters. They were also able to sequence a story. Their writing skills were developing especially then they were given opportunities to write for a purpose. Some of the older children were beginning to write in short sentences.
- The majority of children demonstrated skills that were above expected curriculum standards in mathematics. They were able create picture graphs and analyse the data to generate more questions for investigation. Mathematics operations were also above expected attainment levels. For example, the children were challenged to count on by keeping the last number counted "in their head" and then adding more numbers to it. Integrated lessons, based on a holistic view of learning, challenged the children to use their skills in both reading and writing during their mathematics activities, which helped deepen understanding and allowed for connections to the real world. A large majority exceeded the progress expected of them.
- In science, the children's understanding of the world and healthy living was very secure. They were given time for deepening their understanding of concepts through a play based, discovery time each day. Their use of the scientific method was developing through focused activities that encouraged them to think and make predictions. During lessons, the children were given some opportunities to use their investigative skills to question what was around them. For example, they predicted if items that were the same size would also weigh the same. They checked their hypotheses using a balance scale.

Primary		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Acceptable	Good
Arabic as a first language	Acceptable	Good
Arabic as an additional language	Acceptable	Good
English	Good	Very good 
Mathematics	Good	Very good 
Science	Good	Very good 

- Internal test results in Islamic education showed that most students attained levels that were in line with curriculum standards. This had been the trend for the past three years. Non-Arabic speaking Muslim students had better levels of understanding and knowledge than their Arab Muslim peers. Most students had acceptable knowledge of the key principles of worship within Islam and a strong understanding of Seerah. Recitation and memorisation skills were underdeveloped across the school. Additionally, the application of their knowledge to their own daily lives was limited. Most groups of students across the school made good progress during lessons and over time. They had recently begun to make better than expected progress from their starting points.
- Students in Arabic as a first language made good progress in their reading and in different aspects of their writing. Most students attained at the level expected for their age. Students made frequent pronunciation errors when reading or speaking. Students reading fluency increased across the year groups. In reading comprehension, students could understand main details and general events in a text. Making inferences, unpacking hidden meaning, drawing conclusions and reflecting on literature were not common features of students' Arabic as a first language work. Their extended speaking and writing skills were the least developed. The majority of students made similarly good progress during lessons and from their individual starting points.
- In Arabic as an additional language, the majority of students exceeded the expected progress in their listening, reading comprehension, speaking and in their basic writing skills. Students know how to spell, pronounce and explain a range of vocabulary. Some students were able to read short extracts and sentences. When they were asked to copy write, their script shaping was legible but with some inaccuracies. Their creative writing skills and their ability to apply their speaking and writing to new contexts were still at a developing stage. Most students attained the expected UAE Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum levels for their age.
- Following the pattern of the past three years, the majority of students attained English outcomes that were above curriculum standards in reading, writing and speaking and listening. Older students used extensive vocabulary in their writing and read confidently. In the most recent external examinations, the majority of Year 6 students attained levels above national standards. Attainment in lessons and in books showed that most students had knowledge, skills and understanding above those nationally expected. Accurate spelling and the quality of handwriting were not consistent across all classes. The development of writing was hindered by insufficient reinforcement across all areas of the curriculum. A large majority of students, including different groups of students, made better than expected progress.

- Compared to national benchmarks, the majority of students were attaining above curriculum standards in mathematics and this had remained the case over recent years. The development of mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding during lessons was consistently good. This was particularly evident in number, calculations and problem solving activities and was well advanced in the older age groups. For example, students in Year 6 were able to interpret statistics on world populations as part of their data analysis lessons. Progress against national standards was above expectation for a large majority of students, with groups of students all making similar progress.
- Attainment in science over the past three years had been steadily improving with the majority of students attaining above expected National Curriculum outcomes for England. They had a sound understanding of the full range of concepts covered and their investigative scientific skills were developing well. For example, students designed experiments using iodine to test different foods for starch. Different groups of students, including students with SEND and Emiratis made very good progress during lessons and from their individual starting points.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Learning skills	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- Almost all students were motivated and actively engaged in their learning. They responded positively to their teachers' questioning and were capable of working productively on their own. In the Foundation Stage (FS) young children worked independently and purposefully in their activity centres. Students' knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses varied between classes and year groups.
- Most students collaborated very effectively in a wide range of activities. They were able to clearly articulate their learning to their peers. This helped them to clarify their own thoughts and to consolidate their learning. Very good examples of this were seen in FS 2 where children worked as a team to write a shopping list for their group and in Year 5 where students worked together very effectively in order to evaluate similarities and differences between different persuasive texts.
- Nearly all students in FS made meaningful connections to the real world. In the primary phase, as some subjects began to be taught in isolation, this was less developed. However, a good example of relating learning to the real world was seen in a Year 6 science lesson on wind resistance. It incorporated a video of parachuting from the Burj Khalifa and an activity investigating the relationship between surface area and the rate at which the parachute fell. This activity helped to develop students' awareness of the Dubai context.
- Most students developed their critical thinking and problem solving skills during lessons. Children in FS used technology effectively, on a daily basis, to enhance and deepen their understanding of key subjects. The older students in the primary were able to follow their interests and develop their skills in research and investigation during the 'Genius Hour'.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students had excellent attitudes to learning and their school life. They demonstrated an extremely caring, cooperative, and respectful attitude toward their peers and the adults in the school. They responded positively to feedback from their teachers and peers. A good example was seen in a Year 6 mathematics lesson where students were assessing their peers and giving advice on how they could improve.
- Both in and out of class, students were self-disciplined and responded well to teachers' prompts when necessary. Their understanding of tolerance and respect was outstanding and contributed to the harmonious climate in the school. Their knowledge of appropriate behaviour on social network sites was secure and they were fully aware of the consequences of on-line bullying.
- Students valued their relationships with their teachers. They felt comfortable and confident to ask in-depth questions and share their ideas and personal opinions. They were considerate of others with differences in ability or culture. Students enthusiastically worked with peers from a range of different cultural groups.
- Healthy living was an integral part of the school culture. Students were clear on what to have in their lunch boxes and were aware of the importance of healthy food when developing a healthy lifestyle. Physical activities were a much-enjoyed part of the students' regular school day.
- Attendance was very good and students promptly arrived at lessons at the start of the day and after play or specialist teaching sessions. They understood the importance of punctuality.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- Students had a very clear understanding of how Islamic values influenced contemporary society. They were able to provide examples of how they appreciated the friendship, fairness and respect promoted by Islam. Students had extensive knowledge of Islamic values and understood Islamic traditions. For example, during the month of Ramadan, students showed great respect for Siyam, the practice of fasting.
- Students had a very good appreciation of the Emirati heritage that was still relevant in the present-day culture of the UAE. Most students were able to list and discuss some of these local traditions and contrast them with modern Dubai. They could name and describe the different landmarks in the UAE. Students often used the Muslim greeting 'Assalamu alaikum' with their teachers.
- Most students had a strong appreciation of and respect for their own culture as well as the wide range of cultures within the school. They were able to identify and give details of each other's languages and had a basic knowledge of the different religions in the school.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- In lessons and in the projects and activities most students showed great enterprise and worked very diligently. One of the many examples of activities that made a worthwhile contribution to society, included making and selling lemonade and cakes for charity.
- From very early ages students developed an awareness of a wide range of social and environmental issues. They recognised their responsibility for the environment as future citizens of Dubai and the world. They were engaged in a range of initiatives, both at home and in school that supported the conservation of the world's limited resources.
- A strong feature of the school was the students' participation in a very wide range of environment related initiatives such as the national beach cleaning project. They were able to make direct links from this to their class studies on coasts and coastal change.

### 3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Teaching for effective learning	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- Most teachers, across all core subjects and both phases, had good or better knowledge of their subject and used this effectively to enhance student's learning. Teachers in FS, especially, had very good understanding of how young children learned best. Teachers of Arabic and Islamic education had embraced the best practice of their colleagues but had yet to develop their understanding of which teaching strategy would be most effective in any given situation.
- In all core subjects, most teachers planned engaging and interesting lessons, which in most cases took into account the differing needs of students. A wide range of resources was used across both the FS and the primary phase. These resources fostered a good learning climate and motivated students to become fully engaged. Lessons were often well paced and maintained students' interest but on occasion some lessons moved forward too quickly and did not allow enough time for reflection or deeper thinking. There were supportive, colourful and informative displays in all learning areas across the school.
- Interactions between students and teachers were very positive. The quality of dialogue was a real strength and ensured thoughtful and meaningful discussions. Learning was consistently set in the context of Dubai and the UAE. Questioning, particularly in the older year groups, promoted critical thinking and elicited higher-level responses. Students increasingly used subject specific vocabulary in lessons, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- Teachers' knowledge of students was detailed. At times, planning was insufficiently explicit and provision to meet the needs of all groups of students, particularly the more able was lacking. However, teachers were particularly capable of supporting students with SEND. Specialist staff enjoyed a close partnerships with class teachers which contributed to the very effective support that these students benefited from.

- Teachers, across both phases, placed significant emphasis on problem solving and critical thinking. This was particularly evident in science, where students were often engaged in practical activities and investigations. These activities promoted high levels of independent learning skills. Research and the use of technology, was variable across year groups. Excellent examples were seen in Year 2 with students' use of the 'show me' application. This activity provided valuable information to parents about learning in school.
- The teaching of Arabic was well-planned, engaged students and used a variety of interactive strategies to encourage students to get involved and participate. Teachers, generally, had strong subject knowledge and modelled the classic Arabic language appropriately. Teachers accommodated students' strengths and weaknesses, adapted levels of challenge to need, and helped the majority of students improve rapidly. There was variable use of learning technologies by students in this curriculum area.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Assessment	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- The school had rapidly developed and improved its internal assessment procedures in line with recent curriculum changes. The system provided very cohesive, informative and robust sets of data, linked to the curriculum expectations. This enabled teachers and leaders to gather reliable measures of attainment and progress within both phases. Assessments were moderated both within the school and across other partner schools. Systems in FS were particularly effective in measuring progress.
- The school had an accurate, comparative view of their students' performance. Student achievements were benchmarked against national expectations and a range of other external tests were used to determine individual students' progress and set future targets. The school tracked progress for individual students and for different groups of students very well. However, they did not have comparative international data for Arabic, English, mathematics and science, and wider comparisons could not be made.
- The analysis of data was taking place at individual, class, phase and subject level. Systems were robust and allowed real-time progress to be measured and monitored. As a result, teachers and leaders were able to make decisions about future provision for individuals and groups of students effectively and in a timely manner.
- The use of assessment data to influence curriculum adaptation and to influence teaching was effective, particularly in the Foundation Stage. Year group leaders and Curriculum leads, together with the class teachers, modified teaching and learning strategies as the needs were identified. Recent improvements to whole school systems, including moderation and data analysis, effectively highlighted differences in attainment and progress between different groups of students.
- Teachers knew their students very well, and they were successful in the majority of lessons in meeting the needs of different groups of students. The ability of students to assess their own learning and to determine how best they might improve was variable across the school. As a result, some students were not ready to take full responsibility for their own progress.

#### 4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Curriculum design and implementation	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- The curriculum was very well balanced and fulfilled all the requirements of the MOE curriculum and the revised National Curriculum for England. The curriculum was challenging and the development of students' innovation skills was developing. In Arabic as a first language there was sometimes an over-emphasis on grammatical skills at the expense of the development of speaking and extended writing.
- The curriculum was effectively planned to ensure progression across subjects. Improvements to the curriculum were beginning to result in a measurable impact on students' achievements, including the rising numbers of students reaching the level 6 in mathematics by the end of Year 6. A very detailed curriculum for Islamic education had been developed from the MOE standards.
- The curriculum included a wide range of opportunities for students to make choices. The dynamic Foundation Stage provision supported the development of children's independent learning through a range of stimulating and highly relevant activities. In the primary phase there were, for example opportunities for students to learn to play a wide range of instruments and students in Year 6 undertook projects of their own choosing.
- Improvements since the previous inspection included the planning of links between Islamic education and other subjects. These links helped to enrich students' learning and enable them to make better connections with real-life situations. Supported by the school's use of 'themes', teachers in most classes planned cross-curricular links across all subjects. For example, students enjoyed the meaningful links between English and history when they compared and contrasted different texts about the Ancient Egyptians.
- The school's regular reviews of students' achievements, notably in the core subjects, had led to improvements in provision. For example monitoring had shown that not all Emirati students were performing as well as they might. As a result, enrichment had been arranged specifically for this group of students. The school had given a high priority to ensuring that students' personal, social and emotional skills were carefully planned for through its curriculum.
- The UAE social studies curriculum was vertically and horizontally mapped out across the school to ensure good breadth and coverage of the core elements. Social studies learning objectives were integrated into every year group theme with particular links made to history, geography and science.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Curriculum adaptation	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- In science, mathematics and English, the curriculum was well organised to meet the needs of different groups of students, notably those with SEND. The FS curriculum was also very well crafted to take full account of the way young children learn and to provide for their developmental needs. In Islamic education, there were missed opportunities for students in the older year groups to link learning with their daily spiritual lives.
- A very wide range of engaging, often imaginative, activities motivated almost all students. Themes fostered practical and well-focused learning. The rich and diverse programme of extra-curricular activities, some provided by outside organisations, linked well to students' academic strengths and their personal interests. These included but were not limited to sports, ballet, debating and skiing.
- Coherent experiences that enabled all students to develop a broad understanding of the UAE's culture and society were embedded throughout the curriculum. This was a strong feature of FS provision where Arabic had been introduced in FS 1. Prominent, informative displays in the primary phase illustrated and promoted Islamic customs relating to the Holy Qur'an and to prayer. The UAE social studies curriculum outcomes had been carefully linked to the school's themes.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The school had a rigorous safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures, which were clearly defined and understood by the staff, the students and their parents. The school had provided regular and appropriate opportunities for students to discuss cyber bullying. Fire and evacuation drills were held regularly and monitored by Dubai Civil Defence.
- All children were well supervised at the beginning and end of the day and at playtime. Senior leaders had a high profile at these times and were easily accessible to parents and students. Arrangements for safety on the buses were outstanding. School escorts were very well trained and the school staff used the Hi Five programme to promote good behaviour. In a few swimming lessons, the ratio of qualified adults to students was very high.
- Supervision of the maintenance of the school environment was excellent. Comprehensive record keeping enabled the school to monitor its success in keeping students safe. The school's medical staff stored medication securely. They dealt efficiently with accidents and illness and contributed to the well-being of students. Maintenance checks were frequent and an effective system was in place for all staff to report any area of concern.
- The school building and equipment were in excellent condition and well suited to promoting students' learning. Ramps were available for students with mobility difficulties. However, the upper levels of the school building were inaccessible to students in wheelchairs. Although some classes were small, school leadership limited the number of children in each of these classrooms, enabling effective learning to take place. The FS teachers made good use of an additional outdoor areas as part of the learning environment.

- Healthy living was systematically promoted and built into all aspects of school life. Best practices in hygiene were promoted through displays and posters in the appropriate areas of the school. Students were encouraged to bring their own water bottles and were praised for bringing healthy snacks for lunch. As yet, some areas of the outdoor learning environment were still without shade.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Care and support	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- Teachers had very high expectations, knew all their students well and implemented personalised policies such as the 'The Children's Charter' which promoted an atmosphere of respect, kindness and honesty throughout the school.
- The school had a commitment to inspire and develop the social and academic needs of all students. The school actively encouraged and managed a comprehensive and rigorous personal development programme that expected students to self-manage their own behaviour, have very good attendance, be punctual and demonstrate a strong work ethic.
- The school had a comprehensive document that outlined policy and procedures for the identification and accurate assessment of the needs of all students. Entrance and admissions were fully inclusive and involved parents in systematic procedures to identify children's needs at the earliest opportunity. The identification of students that may be able, gifted or talented had started.
- The school had a number of skilled specialist staff. They ensured that targeted support was offered and curriculum modifications implemented through individual education planning. Sustained levels of progress were evident in the key subjects and in the very positive attitudes to learning of a large majority of students. Greater expertise was required to ensure that students with sensory needs received more targeted support.
- Students were well supported and parents expressed confidence in the school's arrangements for their progress and transition to secondary schools. The school's leadership team was very proud of the school's arrangements for meeting parents on a regular basis to hold focus groups on topics of academic or personal interest.

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

The overall effectiveness of provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities	Very good ↑
---	-------------

- The leadership for students with SEND was outstanding. The school had recruited experts with a strong background in special education and psychology and who were very empathetic in their approach. School leaders had undertaken a review of the strengths and areas for improvement in the SEND department and prioritised different strategies for implementation.
- The school had an open and transparent policy on the early identification and accurate assessment of the specific needs of all students. Teachers had received training in this area and this had enabled excellent practice in both phases.

- Parental involvement was a key strength of the SEND department. Written feedback from parents indicated that they valued very highly the inclusive work the school had promoted and developed. Students of all abilities were enrolled and individual learning plans were prepared with parental support.
- Professional development had been provided to teachers to improve the use of modification strategies. Some lesson plans included good levels of modification to meet individual student's needs. Teaching strategies were more inclusive when teachers used the individual education plan as a specific guide to meet the diverse needs of students.
- The quality of progress was good and reflected both an academic and holistic understanding of the child. The measuring, monitoring and personalised reporting of progress was also very good in both phases. Daily feedback was given to almost all parents.

## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Very good 

- Leadership was evident at all levels of the school. Led by the principal, all had a clear understanding of the direction of the school, both in the long and short term. Three elements determined this direction; the school's vision of maximising individual students' academic and personal growth, the high ambitions for Emirate and UAE nationals and a collective responsibility for including all students regardless of ability or need. Parents shared a high regard for the quality of leadership in the school.
- Rigorous appointment procedures, both internal and external, ensured that all senior and middle leaders were in a very strong position to impact positively on school improvement. Although at an early stage, an entitlement to on-going professional development helped all leaders to fulfill their responsibilities skillfully and stay at the forefront of educational best practice. Class teachers took opportunities to lead their colleagues as learning advocates, conducting action research projects and sharing successes; in essence, modelling lifelong learning.
- The recently restructured leadership teams had well-defined responsibilities and lines of accountability, as reflected in their job descriptions. Communication channels had been cleverly created so that discussions in one part of the plan influenced the decisions made in other areas. As a result, all leaders felt that they were an important part of the school improvement process.
- All leaders were able to clearly outline the school's key priorities and detail their specific roles in the improvement plan. This clarity of purpose combined with appropriately devolved professional autonomy allowed leaders to make effective and, at times, innovative decisions about how best to move the school forward in any particular situation. Decisions were made with sufficient reflection on the school's core purpose and vision and with due regard to other developments that were taking place in the school at that time.
- In the short time since the last inspection, leaders had moved rapidly to secure sustainable school improvement. The school had recruited and retained high calibre teachers and supported them to perform effectively and creatively in their classrooms. For example, senior leaders, led by the principal, had developed an innovative programme of pairing specialist Arabic and Islamic education teachers with other class teachers in order to broaden the experience and depth of social studies learning for all students. As a result, the learning in the school was closely related to the culture in which the students lived.

## School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Very good 

- Students' performance in internal, national and standardised testing, results from stakeholder surveys, DSIB recommendations and National Agenda priorities were fully considered when the school improvement plan was created. Key improvement priorities, with measurable success criteria, were linked to improving students' achievement and independent learning, and the quality of provision. The professional development required to meet the needs of the school and individual teachers was identified.
- Year leaders regularly monitored students' achievement, measured against ambitious but realistic targets. This was for different groups of students, namely SEND, English as an additional language learners, Emirati students, boys, girls and different ability groups. A robust system for monitoring teachers had evolved. Although the training for middle leaders had been recent, most were already very effective in their role.
- The wide range of school improvement plans, based on whole school and curriculum initiatives, was clearly focused on the school's mission to promote students' personal and academic growth. Effective links were made between action plans to provide coherence and highlight opportunities to reinforce the key areas for improvement. The plans set the students' learning within the context of their home; the Emirates, Islamic values and global cultures.
- In a relatively short time, the school had successfully addressed the recommendations of the previous DSIB report, raising the effectiveness of assessment from 'acceptable' to 'very good'. Improvements to the quality of teaching of students with SEND, as well as those of high ability, had been brought about by the appointment of skilled teachers and an effective programme of training aligned to best practices in education.

## Partnerships with parents and the community

Outstanding

- The views and considerations of parents were greatly valued. Regular achievement assemblies offered parents opportunities to share in their child's successes and focus meetings allowed parents to keep up to date with current practices at school. A parent and teacher organisation helped arrange events at school. Parental responses to the survey were highly supportive of the school.
- Communicating with, and informing, parents on school related matters were outstanding features. Parents reported that the teachers were readily accessible and reacted to concerns in a timely manner. However, their knowledge of the school's progress towards the National Agenda targets was limited. Parents of students with SEND saw themselves as equal partners in the model of support agreed for their child.
- Reporting to parents was of the highest quality. Reports were professional, sensitive and informative about the learning journey through the school. The progress of students' social and emotional well-being was given due importance by teachers. The use of applications such as 'Show Me', provided excellent daily student created records of important moments of learning and enabled parents to better support their child at home.
- The process of further strengthening wider partnerships was underway. A very good partnership had been established with the Emirati community and the number of Emirati students enrolled in the school had increased. A calendar of events distributed as early as possible in the academic year gave parents more time to plan and offer support to their children in inter-school competitions and sports events.

<b>Governance</b>	Very good ↑
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The governing body, which included representatives from the school owners, sought to gather views from the stakeholders in the school. Regular surveys from parents were received and these gave some insight to their views on the performance of the school. As yet, there was no systematic gathering of feedback from parents on the strategic direction of the school and how it might improve.</li> <li>• The governing body had a very accurate view of the school’s strengths and weaknesses. Through a rigorous performance management system, the governors were able to hold leaders to account for the school’s performance. Regular meetings and school reviews gave the governing body a good understanding of the progress that was being made.</li> <li>• The governing body supported the strong leadership of the school and the development of effective leadership teams. It was in an excellent position to act as a ‘critical friend’ to the principal. The governing body was responsible for a network of schools, which provided many opportunities for mutual development. Performance management procedures aided capacity building and teacher retention through the corporate leadership programmes.</li> </ul>	

<b>Management, staffing, facilities and resources</b>	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School leaders, ably supported by high quality administrative staff, managed all aspects of the day-to-day school management superbly, allowing the school community to go about its business in a calm, quiet and very courteous manner. Timetabling and the use of space to maximise learning opportunities was effectively planned.</li> <li>• The school had continued to develop its mission of inspiring learners to achieve their potential by appointing expert and dedicated personnel. Personalised and creative approaches to teaching and learning were used to build students’ confidence. The effective management of students with SEND, the support for Emirati students and the planning for those that were gifted or talented was linked to the deployment of key personnel.</li> <li>• The school premises were very welcoming and stimulating. School corridors provided rich learning resources for students. Classrooms were not overcrowded and contained attractive furniture and fittings that enabled learning. The environment portrayed a happy school; photographic and other evidence recognised and appreciated students' achievements.</li> <li>• The school was very well resourced with relevant and meaningful materials for all subjects. Resources were well matched to the differing needs of students. Appropriate learning technologies promoted students' research and innovation skills. Skillful use of resources enabled the very good teaching and enriched the learning experience for students.</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	324
	2014-2015	375
<b>Teachers</b> 	21	
<b>Students</b> 	0	

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

- Of those who responded, most parents and teachers were extremely positive about all aspects of school performance. Nearly all believed that the school was well led.
- Nearly all parents indicated that their children enjoyed coming to school and that they were presented with a wide range of activities to improve their learning.
- In view of the school's outstanding partnerships with parents, it was surprising that many did not know how well their children are doing in Islamic education or the existence of the school's cyber protection policy.
- Nearly all parents felt that their children were safe on the campus and whilst travelling on the school buses.
- Nearly all teachers felt well informed about the school's National Agenda targets and most knew about the school's TIMMS results and the school's last DSIB inspection report.

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)