



Dar Al Marefa School

 Curriculum: IB

Overall Rating:

Good



"We are keen to prepare the new generation that is ready to be creative and innovative to help us achieve our ambitions for even greater prosperity"

Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum



Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| School information..... | 3 |
| The DSIB inspection process..... | 4 |
| Summary of inspection findings 2016-2017 | 6 |
| Main inspection report | 12 |
| 1. Students' achievement..... | 12 |
| 2. Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills..... | 17 |
| 3. Teaching and assessment | 18 |
| 4. Curriculum | 20 |
| 5. The protection, care, guidance and support of students..... | 21 |
| Inclusion | 22 |
| 6. Leadership and management | 23 |
| The views of parents, teachers and senior students..... | 26 |



School information



General information

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Location | Mirdif |
| Type of school | Private |
| Opening year of school | 2008 |
| Website | www.daralmarefa.ae |
| Telephone | 00971-4-2885782 |
| Address | PO Box 112602, Dubai |
| Principal | Mr.Daljit Sohi |
| Language of instruction | English, Arabic |
| Inspection dates | 20 th to 23 rd February 2017 |

Teachers / Support staff

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| Number of teachers | 75 |
| Largest nationality group of teachers | British/Irish |
| Number of teaching assistants | 24 |
| Teacher-student ratio | 1:10 |
| Number of guidance counsellors | 1 |
| Teacher turnover | 40% |

Students

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Gender of students | Boys and girls |
| Age range | 4-18 |
| Grades or year groups | KG 1-Grade 12 |
| Number of students on roll | 730 |
| Number of children in pre-kindergarten | None |
| Number of Emirati students | 548 |
| Number of students with SEND | 26 |
| Largest nationality group of students | Emirati |

Curriculum

| | |
|---------------------------------|------|
| Educational permit / Licence | IB |
| Main curriculum | IB |
| External tests and examinations | IB |
| Accreditation | None |
| National Agenda benchmark tests | ISA |



The DSIB inspection process



In order to judge the overall quality of education provided by schools, inspectors consider the six standards of performance that form the basis of the UAE School Inspection Framework (the framework). They look at children's attainment and progress in key subjects, their learning skills and their personal and social development. They judge how effective teaching and the assessment of learning are across the school. Inspectors consider how well the school's curriculum, including activities inside and outside classrooms, meet the educational needs of all students. They judge how well schools protect and support children. In addition, inspectors judge the effectiveness of leadership, which incorporates governance, management, staffing and facilities.

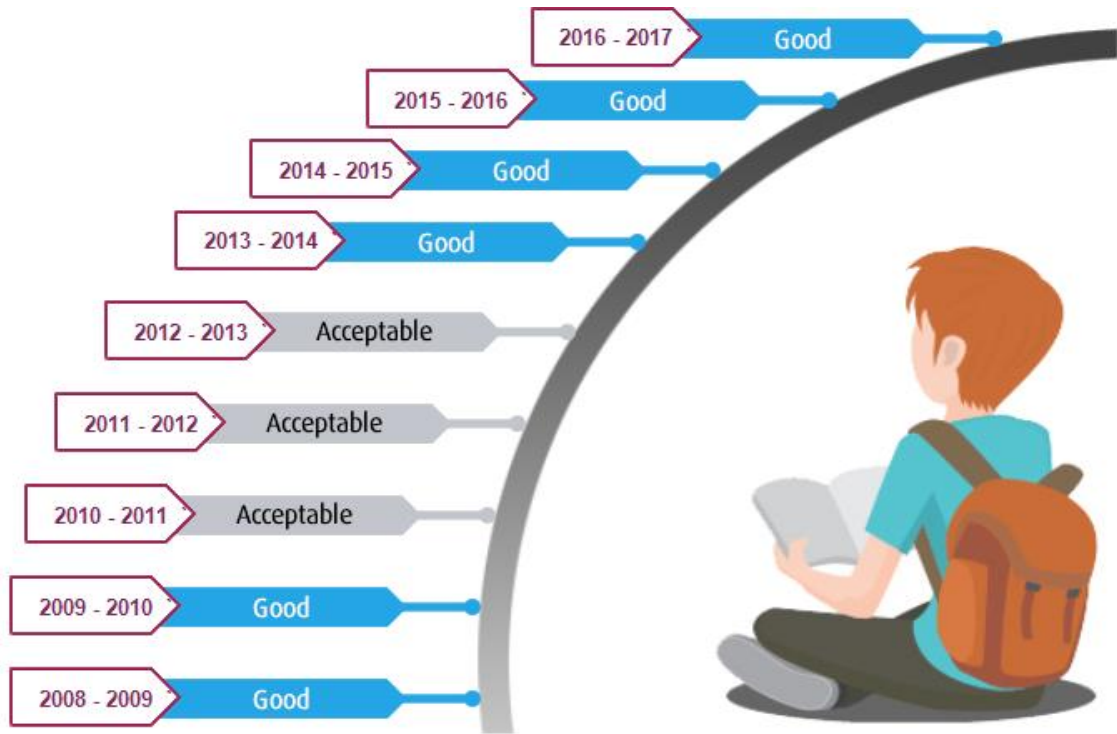
Inspection judgements are drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observation of students' learning in lessons, review of their work, discussions with students, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and review of surveys completed by parents, teachers and students.

Judgements are made on a six-point scale

DSIB inspection teams make judgements about different aspects, phases and subjects that form the work of the school, using the scale below, which is consistent with the framework.

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Outstanding | Quality of performance substantially exceeds the expectation of the UAE |
| Very good | Quality of performance exceeds the expectation of the UAE |
| Good | Quality of performance meets the expectation of the UAE (This is the expected level for every school in the UAE) |
| Acceptable | Quality of performance meets the minimum level of quality required in the UAE (This is the minimum level for every school in the UAE) |
| Weak | Quality of performance is below the expectation of the UAE |
| Very weak | Quality of performance is significantly below the expectation of the UAE |

Inspection journey for Dar Al Marefa School



- The school, which opened in 2008, is located in Mirdif. The roll has increased from 533 students in 2014-15 to 730. The school follows the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum and delivers the Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP) and courses within the Diploma Programme (DP). The principal has been in the post since the beginning of the current academic year.
- The school has been inspected since 2008. On each of the last three occasions the overall quality of the school has been judged to be good. Recurring strengths of the school highlighted in the last three inspection reports include: students' personal development and, in particular, their understanding of Islamic values, the impact of these on life in Dubai, and Emirati culture; the provision in Kindergarten (KG), and procedures for ensuring students' health and safety.
- Recurring recommendations over the last three years have included the need to: raise attainment in mathematics and Arabic; enhance self-evaluation by monitoring and evaluating the quality of lessons more accurately; improving assessment processes and the use of assessment data, and improving aspects of the curriculum, including offering more opportunities for students to lead investigative projects, use technology and present findings using a variety of media. The 2015-16 report also included a recommendation about ensuring compliance with the Ministry of Education (MoE) statutory requirements with regard to the provision of Islamic education in the DP and lower years of the PYP.

Summary of inspection findings 2016-2017



Dar Al Marefa School was inspected by DSIB from 20th to 23rd February 2017 . The overall quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The section below summarises the inspection findings for each of the six performance indicators described in the framework.

- Kindergarten (KG) children and students make good progress overall. Attainment varies between good and acceptable but is good at KG in English, mathematics and science. Children and students have well-developed learning skills.
- Most students display high standards of behaviour and attitudes. Their social responsibility and innovation skills are good. Their understanding and application of Islamic values, and awareness of Emirati and wider cultures are highly developed.
- Teachers explain concepts well and set up interesting lessons. Through effective assessment procedures they have a well-developed knowledge of the strengths and developmental needs of the students in their classes. Some aspects of lessons, including planning, questioning and development of students' higher-order thinking skills, are not consistent across subjects and phases.
- The curriculum is well balanced and is designed effectively to allow students to progress in a continuous fashion. The social studies curriculum is a strength but IB principles are not fully implemented in the curriculum at all phases. In KG, the curriculum is adapted well to meet the needs of different groups. Curriculum adaptation is acceptable in the other phases.
- The school has effective arrangements for ensuring that all are safe and healthy in the school. Some members of staff are unclear about who the designated child-protection officer is. Care and support are of a good quality in KG and the DP phase. In the other phases, the identification and support of students with special educational needs is in need of improvement. The quality of support is acceptable in these phases.
- Leadership and governance are effective in moving the school forward, based on mainly effective self-evaluation activities and improvement strategies. All stakeholders benefit from well-developed partnerships between the school and parents. Some aspects of the week-to-week management of the school require reviewing.

What the school does best

- Staff successfully support KG children and older students to make good progress in almost all key subjects, and help them to develop effective learning skills.
- Most students show very positive behaviour and attitudes towards their work and to other people. They understand and apply Islamic values in their lives, and have a wide knowledge of Emirati and other cultures.
- The school has developed strong aspects of its curriculum, including UAE social studies and inclusion of Arabic and Islamic education in KG, in a way which helps students progress in their social development.

Recommendations

- Raise attainment, particularly in those subjects and phases where it is only acceptable, by ensuring that teachers':
 - plan lessons with clear objectives
 - ask probing, open-ended questions to develop critical thinking skills
 - incorporate differentiation of tasks and activities for different groups of students to ensure that all are challenged appropriately
 - use assessment processes that provide clear evidence of the strengths and developmental needs of individuals to support their next steps in learning.
- Continue to develop the curriculum to bring it into full alignment with the IB principles and adapt it to meet the needs of different groups of students more effectively.
- Improve the quality of systems for identifying and supporting students with SEND and those who are gifted and talented. Where necessary, draw up IEPs that include measurable targets to help teachers to meet students' needs and allow them to track students' progress more readily.
- Improve management procedures to:
 - ensure consistency across phases
 - eradicate shortcomings in timetabling
 - train staff further on IB and SEND procedures
 - work with parents to reduce the high incidence of student late-coming at the start of the school day.

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 intention 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. In 2015, KHDA launched 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.

The following section focuses on the impact of the National Agenda Parameter in meeting their targets:

- Attainment based on the National Agenda Parameter benchmarks is below expectations in mathematics, science and English.
- The school meets the registration requirements for the National Agenda Parameter.
- The National Agenda is being implemented well through whole-school and subject action plans. Senior staff are aware of National Agenda Parameter challenges. They are preparing students for participation in the external PISA and TIMSS tests. Staff are beginning to analyse CAT4 outcomes and use them to track students' progress. Training on the use of benchmark data is being extended to all teachers. Parents and students are aware of the importance of the National Agenda.
- Staff are placing an enhanced focus on key curricular aspects, including investigative activity, and real-life applications. In English, teachers are trying to improve students' vocabulary and extended writing skills. There is an increasing emphasis on critical analysis of up-to-date articles and understanding of terminology specific to mathematics and science.
- Staff are working to improve teaching. In the best practice, effective questioning skills prompt thought and discussion by students, and learning activities involve self-directed learning, though these aspects are not consistent across phases or subjects. When they are implemented well, students develop critical thinking and independent learning skills.
- Students have a general awareness of the importance of CAT4 and benchmark tests as a guide to preparation for PISA and TIMSS testing. Their knowledge of their own results in these tests is improving.

Overall, the school's improvement towards achieving its National Agenda targets meets expectations.

Innovation in Education

The UAE Vision 2021 sets the aspiration 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' and provides a basis for evaluating schools in order to deliver a world-class education for all children in the UAE.









Promoting a culture of innovation:

- When given opportunities, students can produce new ideas in their learning and use technology to support innovation. However, these aspects and the development of higher-order thinking and creativity are not fully integrated into the curriculum. Staff help most students to develop a good work ethic and try to encourage new student initiatives. PYP students show initiative in designing and making a 'green zone', using recycled materials. The effectiveness of lessons in promoting critical thinking, and curriculum design to promote innovation, are aspects which are not developed well enough as part of the school's drive to align its curriculum further with IB principles. The new principal has been in post for only a few months, and many teachers are new to the school, consequently strategic planning, to promote innovation, is at an early stage.

Overall school performance

Good

1 Students' achievement

| | | KG | PYP | MYP | DP |
|---|------------|----------------|-------------|------------|----------------|
| Islamic education  | Attainment | Not applicable | Good | Good | Acceptable |
| | Progress | Not applicable | Very good ↑ | Good | Acceptable |
| Arabic as a first language  | Attainment | Not applicable | Good ↑ | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| | Progress | Not applicable | Good | Acceptable | Good |
| Arabic as an additional language  | Attainment | Not applicable | Good | Good | Not applicable |
| | Progress | Not applicable | Good | Good | Not applicable |
| English  | Attainment | Good | Acceptable | Acceptable | Good ↑ |
| | Progress | Good | Good | Good | Good |
| Mathematics  | Attainment | Good | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| | Progress | Good | Good | Good | Good ↑ |
| Science  | Attainment | Good | Good | Good | Acceptable |
| | Progress | Good | Good | Good | Good |

| | KG | PYP | MYP | DP |
|-----------------|------|------|------|------|
| Learning skills | Good | Good | Good | Good |

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

| | KG | PYP | MYP | DP |
|---|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Personal development | Very good | Very good | Good ↓ | Very good |
| Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures | Outstanding | Very good | Very good | Very good |
| Social responsibility and innovation skills | Good | Good | Good | Good |

3. Teaching and assessment

| | KG | PYP | MYP | DP |
|---------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Teaching for effective learning | Good | Good | Good | Good |
| Assessment | Good | Good | Good | Good |

4. Curriculum

| | KG | PYP | MYP | DP |
|--------------------------------------|------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Curriculum design and implementation | Good | Good | Good | Good |
| Curriculum adaptation | Good | Acceptable ↓ | Acceptable ↓ | Acceptable ↓ |

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

| | KG | PYP | MYP | DP |
|---|-------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding | Very good ↓ | Very good ↓ | Very good ↓ | Very good ↓ |
| Care and support | Good | Acceptable ↓ | Acceptable ↓ | Good |


6. Leadership and management

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

Main inspection report



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 | Good | Good |
| Mathematics | Good | Good |
| Science | Good | Good |

- In English, children can write their names and simple sentences in KG2. They communicate well as second language learners and are developing good reading skills. They regularly practise reading, which helps them to remember simple words by sight. Their ability to write progresses well from the beginning of KG1 throughout KG1 and KG2. Frequent opportunities for speaking and listening help children to improve their communication skills. This builds on their confidence to speak and engage in conversations.
- In mathematics, the curriculum units of enquiry offer children a range of experiences which help them to count, explore numbers and solve simple problems using addition and subtraction. They are building an increasing awareness of the way numerals represent tens and units. The enquiry-based curriculum helps them to explore shape, space and measurement, giving an added dimension to their learning in mathematics. Children make sense of what they observe around them such as tall buildings and three-dimensional structures.
- Attainment and progress in scientific enquiry are developing well as children learn about their own environment. They undertake activities which enable them to explore and investigate, so that, by KG2, they are using their natural curiosity to reach their own conclusions based on what they observe. They can experiment, for example by using light sources, dark spaces and coloured paper, to discriminate between transparent, translucent and opaque.

| PYP | | |
|----------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Subjects | Attainment | Progress |
| Islamic education | Good | Very good ↑ |
| Arabic as a first language | Good ↑ | Good |
| Arabic as an additional language | Good | Good |
| English | Acceptable | Good |
| Mathematics | Acceptable | Good |
| Science | Good | Good |

- In Islamic education, a majority of students demonstrate levels of attainment that are above curriculum standards. Students can listen and understand what the teacher says and respond correctly to questions. Students in Grade 1 understand the importance of co-operation between Muslims while, in Grade 3, students are able to explain the meaning of words of Hadeeth. By Grade 5, students demonstrate understanding of Islamic morals for using transportation, and can memorise short surat and read them well. A large majority make better than expected progress.
- A majority of students in Arabic as a first language attain levels above curriculum standards. Internal assessment results are high but do not reflect the actual standards seen in students' work and in lessons. Students demonstrate improvement in their final writing drafts as a result of constructive feedback from teachers. Students understand teachers' instructions well and respond appropriately, using suitable language. Their reading skills of comprehension and clarity of expression are well developed. A majority of students make better than expected progress against their starting points.
- In Arabic as an additional language, a majority of students achieve levels above curriculum standards based on their years of study. Students in Grade 2 can read and write familiar sight words. They also can name common objects and colours. By Grade 5 they can use present and past tense in their free writing. Students' listening skills enable them to follow and respond to teacher instructions. They can use greetings and ask and answer personal questions. In lessons and in their recent class work, a majority make better than expected progress.
- In English, most students' attainment is in line with age-related curriculum standards. The progress of the majority of students', from their individual starting points, is better than expected. The level of attainment and the good progress seen in lessons and students' work do not always translate into high results in tests, and the results of ISA benchmarking tests are below international expectations. Students develop a good range of speaking and listening skills. They make good progress in reading because the skills are taught systematically. Weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and grammar hinder the development of writing skills.
- In mathematics, attainment has improved over time and the gap between attainment against international and curriculum standards is narrowing. Most students attain in line with curriculum standards. Skills in mental mathematics are developing very well. Most students progress well in lessons, in line with curriculum expectations, and a majority make better than expected progress. Knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts are good. Students are increasingly able to apply their knowledge to real-life problems, for example in using angles in navigation at sea.

- Most students make better than expected attainment and progress in understanding scientific phenomena. For example, students in Grade 2 have a secure understanding of the importance of relevant evidence when attempting to solve problems. Those in Grade 4 understand that a hypothesis can be explored by devising a series of suitable practical activities. Skills of observation, recording and interpretation of simple data are well developed by Grade 5. Students' capability to find things out for themselves improves as they progress through the phase.

|  MYP | | |
|---|------------|------------|
| Subjects | Attainment | Progress |
| Islamic education | Good | Good |
| Arabic as a first language | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Arabic as an additional language | Good | Good |
| English | Acceptable | Good |
| Mathematics | Acceptable | Good |
| Science | Good | Good |

- A majority of students demonstrate attainment and make progress ahead of expectations in Islamic education. Students understand the main ideas of lessons and can make presentations to the class. For example, by Grade 10, students understand the conditions for a correct marriage. In Grade 8, non-Arab students are able to distinguish between angels, messengers and prophets. Students read Surat (Kaaf) but their level in reading is weak. Their ability in recitation is also not well developed.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students reach levels in line with curriculum standards. Students have strong listening skills but their speaking is characterised by frequent use of dialect words and expressions. Their ability to hold extended discussions in standard Arabic is developing. They can read and understand prose texts adequately. Their writing meets curriculum expectations in general but is inconsistent across the phase. In lessons and in their recent class work, most students make adequate progress.
- In Arabic as an additional language, a majority of students achieve levels above curriculum standards with respect to their years of study. Students demonstrate strong literacy skills. Their free writing demonstrates acquisition of a good variety of vocabulary and structures. Their listening and conversation skills are inconsistent due to variation in their backgrounds. Progress is good, particularly for higher-attaining groups. In lessons and in their recent class work, a majority of students make better than expected progress given their starting points.
- In English, the school's internal data indicates weak attainment, especially when it is compared to the results of the ISA benchmark tests. However, in lessons, most students demonstrate reading, speaking and listening skills that are closer to those typical of their age. Writing skills are improving, although at a slower rate than the other three skills. By Grade 10, the majority of students are able to summarise the main points of a range of texts, although weaknesses in comprehension and vocabulary remain. Oral skills develop well and most students make presentations with confidence.

- Attainment measured internally against curriculum standards for mathematics is better than that against external benchmark tests. Students have a high level of secure subject knowledge and can accurately use this in solving set questions. There is a well-established level of skill in mental mathematics, especially in speed tests. Students' ability to interpret word problems and every day examples are generally well developed. For example, students can explain the relevance of statistics for research in some industries such as tourism in Dubai. In most lessons the majority of students generally made better than expected progress, in relation to their starting points and the curriculum standards.
- In science, results vary across the grades, and outcomes are stronger in Grades 9 and 10. Students can carry out practical activities with clear instructions from their teachers. Students in Grade 6 know that static electricity is produced as a result of the transfer of electrons from one substance to another. Grade 10 students are able to propose how to reduce the possible errors that occur in a practical investigation. Overall the majority of students attain at levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that are above curriculum standards. The majority also make better than expected progress in lessons, in relation to their starting points and the lessons learning objectives.

| DP | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Subjects | Attainment | Progress |
| Islamic education | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Arabic as a first language | Acceptable | Good |
| Arabic as an additional language | Not applicable | Not applicable |
| English | Good ↑ | Good |
| Mathematics | Acceptable | Good ↑ |
| Science | Acceptable | Good |

- Students demonstrate acceptable understanding and wide knowledge of Islamic principles. Their progress is acceptable. They can explain the importance of Islamic economy in Islamic nations' progress. They can compare fines and Zakah and they explain the important of Zakah as one pillar of Islam. Most students can provide reasons for poverty in the Islamic world and give suggestions to solve this problem.
- Most students attain at levels in line with curriculum standards in Arabic as a first language. Students have strong listening skills but they do not use standard Arabic confidently during discussions and presentations. Grade 11 students can read and understand short newspaper articles. Grade 12 students can read short excerpts from a novel and understand the factual information, but their understanding does not extend to wider contexts. Students' written work shows good progress.
- In English, students' progress and attainment are above the expected curriculum standards. The results of the small number of students who sat the DP examination in 2016 are above average. Students can read and understand a range of demanding texts and make connections with current political and social events. For example, in a Grade 12 lesson, students explored the social, psychological and cultural effects of migration on the individual. Students' writing shows an increasing ability to construct well-structured, convincing arguments.

- In mathematics, students' progress has improved and, as seen in their written work and in lessons, is good. The cohort of DP mathematics students is small, and so trends in attainment are difficult to identify. Students are working hard to prepare for their DP external exams with special focus on tackling typical examination questions. As a result, their knowledge and understanding is generally secure. Their ability to apply knowledge successfully to unfamiliar situations is less well developed but is slowly improving.
- IBDP results in science in 2016, the school's first, were very weak, with all students attaining levels below national and international standards. Overall though, attainment for the small number of students in 2016-17 is acceptable, and students' work shows that they make good progress in the development of their knowledge and understanding of science. The development of students' conceptual understanding is secure due to the challenging activities presented to them. For example, Grade 11 students are able to use their knowledge of genetics to explain patterns of inheritance.

| | KG | PYP | MYP | DP |
|-----------------|------|------|------|------|
| Learning skills | Good | Good | Good | Good |

- Students are generally engaged and motivated, particularly in English and mathematics. When they are given targets for learning students respond well and take steps to improve. In science, students are not always clear about their strengths and areas for development. This reduces their opportunities to take responsibility for self-improvement.
- Levels of interaction and communication between students are good, particularly in Islamic education in all phases. Students benefit from opportunities to collaborate in groups but these tend to be less prevalent in lower grades. In English in MYP, boys do not always pay attention or listen carefully. In science, group work results in sharing ideas and explanations in purposeful discussion.
- Students apply their knowledge in a variety of situations, for example in a PYP cross-curricular project in Islamic education, Arabic and English which involved studying the transport system in Dubai. Units of enquiry, particularly in KG, offer natural links between different subjects which enhance learning. In a number of science lessons, students make meaningful connections between their learning and daily life.
- In some classes, particularly in English and science, students have opportunities to investigate or research a topic using technology. In general, critical thinking, innovation and enterprise are not significant features of students' learning skills, although these features are evident in some science lessons. Independent learning and research skills are limited in English and Islamic education in MYP and DP but are more secure in PYP.

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

| | KG | PYP | MYP | DP |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|--------|-----------|
| Personal development | Very good | Very good | Good ↓ | Very good |

- Students' attitudes towards work and to other people are positive, particularly in KG where children are very friendly towards each other and are keen to be active participants in what is on offer. Students are, on the whole, considerate of others, but this is less so in MYP, whilst in DP and PYP attitudes to work and to each other are very good.
- Behaviour is very good overall, but less so in MYP, where a few students can be disobedient and disruptive at times. When moving around the school at break times and in lessons, most students behave in an orderly way. They self-regulate and, while enjoying themselves, know they have to have due regard for others. For example, greeting others politely when they meet, holding doors open or explaining that they need to check the timetable for their next class.
- Relationships are very cordial and affirming in most phases of the school. Students readily ask staff members questions, share their work experiences or engage in informal conversations. They do this knowing they will be greeted warmly and that staff are interested in what they have to say.
- From KG onwards, children have positive attitudes about what they eat and will usually make healthy choices and take part in exercise when they can. At break time in PYP, students are the first to comment if there are any unhealthy snacks. Students are involved in the range of physical activities the school provides but these are rather limited.
- Attendance is very good. Punctuality is an issue for the school which has yet to be resolved. Arrival times for the start of the school day are being monitored and action is being taken, but as yet this has not resulted in significant improvement.

| | KG | PYP | MYP | DP |
|---|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures | Outstanding | Very good | Very good | Very good |

- Students in all phases have secure understanding and appreciation of how Islamic values influence life in the UAE. They can give a variety of examples of how these values influence their lives, such as tolerance, decency and being respectful to other.
- Students have strong knowledge and appreciation of UAE culture. They demonstrate great respect for the heritage and traditions of the UAE through taking part in Emirati celebrations and singing the National Anthem in morning assemblies. The development of this respect gets off to an excellent start in Kindergarten. By MYP and DP, students recognize the importance of the transformation in the UAE's economy and education system.

- Students demonstrate a deep understanding and appreciation of their own cultures. During International Day, students immerse themselves in other cultures where each class chooses to represent and present a particular culture from around the world. Their experiences in travel and in school enable them to compare their own culture to others around the world.

| | KG | PYP | MYP | DP |
|--|------|------|------|------|
| Social responsibility and innovation skills | Good | Good | Good | Good |

- Students know the importance of taking responsibility in the school. When they are given the opportunity, they willingly contribute to initiatives proposed by the school. They participate well in morning assemblies and teacher-initiated activities such as environmental campaigns and fund raising for the Breast Cancer campaign. Older students are not as proactive or involved in their school or community.
- Daily assemblies begin with a poignant music video of school students singing the National Anthem, which includes a student with a hearing impairment signing for the deaf. "Young Authors" work in the library during breaks to prepare stories for the book week sale. These demonstrate the potential and untapped impact of student leadership and enterprise at the school. Students have a strong work ethic and recognise that being active participants in school initiatives helps prepare them for future roles in the wider community.
- Students have a good level of environmental awareness. They are instrumental in picking up litter around the school and re-using materials in a purposeful manner to decorate their Green Zone. Students have been successful in external environmental competitions. They show care for their own environment and support recycling initiatives.

3. Teaching and assessment

| | KG | PYP | MYP | DP |
|--|------|------|------|------|
| Teaching for effective learning | Good | Good | Good | Good |

- Teachers' subject knowledge is generally secure in most areas of the curriculum. In the most effective lessons teachers use this knowledge to plan stimulating and engaging lessons. Lessons of this quality are most likely to be seen in the PYP. In the KG, teachers use their knowledge of how young children learn to ensure that they make good gains in their knowledge and understanding.
- In the KG and in other grades across the school, there are examples of well-planned lessons with clear learning objectives. In these lessons students make rapid progress because the activities are carefully structured to develop core skills. However, there is considerable inconsistency in lesson planning. Many plans are focused on what students are going to do, rather than the knowledge, understanding or skills to be developed.

- Good relationships between adults and students ensure that teaching takes place in safe and supportive learning environments. There are many examples of skilled questioning being used to challenge students' thinking. There is, however, variability in the extent to which questioning is used to draw out thoughtful responses. In the PYP and MYP, where there is extensive closed questioning, students are not encouraged to think deeply.
- Teachers are generally aware of students' diverse abilities and some adjust the work to meet students' individual needs. In these lessons, teachers use a variety of strategies to meet the needs of different groups of students. Teaching strategies do not always promote high levels of engagement. While expectations are usually high, learning activities are not always well matched to students' abilities.
- There are many instances of the successful development of critical thinking. For example, the application of research and reasoning skills is a feature of many science lessons, and skills of critical analysis are developed in English. However, there is inconsistency in the extent to which these skills are developed across subjects and grades. Learning is often placed in everyday contexts, particularly in social studies.

| | KG | PYP | MYP | DP |
|------------|------|------|------|------|
| Assessment | Good | Good | Good | Good |

- Staff use a wide range of internal assessments for evaluating students' attainment, with the results being recorded systematically and analysed. The school's ongoing assessment is improving, with a more regular and enhanced reporting system for parents and students. End-of-term and other assessments are increasingly linked to ongoing assessment reports.
- The school is aligning its own internal tests with the range of external tests it uses. Staff analyse the results from external tests and use them increasingly well. They have started to use tests of students' cognitive abilities (CAT4) as a basis for matching teaching approaches to students' best learning styles. They use other external tests to highlight areas for improvement in students' skills or subject knowledge.
- Staff analyse data effectively to monitor students' progress over time. External test results are improving the quality of data and providing good information about the starting points of individual students. There are some variations across phases in the effectiveness of approaches to monitoring progress.
- Teachers use assessment information well to highlight gaps in students' learning and to adapt their lessons to meet the learning needs of different groups of students. Adaptation is better developed in Arabic and Islamic education, especially in PYP, than in other subjects. The school is aware of the need to refine and simplify data for use in lessons, so that teachers and students can accurately identify next steps in learning.
- Students' strengths and weaknesses are known well by teachers, across all grades. Their monitoring of progress and attainment is generally effective, with an appropriate mix of teacher, self and peer assessment. Support for learning is best where tasks are adjusted so that students can reach expected targets through defined, meaningful and measurable interventions. This is best developed in DP, where there is a small cohort of students.

4. Curriculum

| | KG | PYP | MYP | DP |
|--------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Curriculum design and implementation | Good | Good | Good | Good |

- The curriculum has a clear rationale. It is broad and balanced, and aims to develop knowledge, skills and understanding. The curriculum promotes interesting activities and enjoyment in learning for students. It meets the International Baccalaureate and national statutory requirements since all key subjects are given appropriate amounts of time. Islamic education and Arabic lessons enhance the bilingual environment in Kindergarten.
- Planning across all phases of the school is structured so that students learn systematically. Learning builds on students' previous achievements in all key subjects. It meets the needs of most students and prepares students well for their next phases of education within and beyond school. Progression is well managed for students moving from one phase to another.
- The small numbers of students at Grades 11 and 12 have a limited choice of IB subjects. The range of subject options has been improved this year as the school moves into the full diploma programme. The extended essay, the theory of knowledge (TOK) as well as creativity, activity and service (CAS) are being incorporated into the programme to fulfil the requirements of the IB programme.
- Interdisciplinary links are strong, since they are built into the PYP and MYP curricula. Planned activities allow students the opportunity to develop key skills such as literacy, numeracy and the use of technology. These links are increasingly allowing students to learn more independently and to develop skills in research and critical thinking, although these aspects are variable across subjects and phases. Greater use of real-life contexts is making mathematics more relevant.
- Review of the curriculum is regular and involves class teachers, subject teachers and middle level leaders. It is an ongoing process in the review of units of enquiry and an annual process across all subjects. Curriculum changes aim to meet the needs of most students including those with special educational needs.
- The UAE social studies curriculum is very well planned. It involves a detailed mapping of the IB curriculum with the MoE social studies curriculum. It is taught in English and Arabic in the PYP as an integrated subject within units of inquiry. It is taught as a free-standing subject in Arabic within MYP. Skills, knowledge and concepts are well balanced, providing smooth continuity and progression. Interesting and challenging lessons help to develop students' skills in problem solving, research, creative writing, and in analysis and critique. Investigative approaches are built into the learning, thus developing the IB learner profile quality of thoughtful inquiry. Assessment includes effective ongoing and summative measurement of students' skills and understanding.

| | KG | PYP | MYP | DP |
|-----------------------|------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Curriculum adaptation | Good | Acceptable ↓ | Acceptable ↓ | Acceptable ↓ |

- KG teachers modify their lessons well to meet the needs of different groups of children. At other phases, although the overall curriculum is planned to meet the needs of most students, modifications are not evident in enough individual lessons.
- Opportunities for students to be innovative and enterprising and to benefit from enhanced activities in the curriculum are limited. While interesting extra-curricular opportunities exist for students from KG to Grade 10, participation by the students is not comprehensive. Older female students feel that their interests are not catered for.
- Appropriate learning experiences about UAE values, culture and society exist in many units of inquiry across all phases. Cross-curricular links are evident in all subject areas, with a focus on developing an understanding of the relationships between the UAE society and others.

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

| | KG | PYP | MYP | DP |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding | Very good ↓ | Very good ↓ | Very good ↓ | Very good ↓ |

- There is a comprehensive set of policies and procedures to ensure students' welfare and safety. It includes processes for child protection, internet safety, and strategies to respond to bullying. The policies are implemented well. A small proportion of the recently appointed teachers are not clear about aspects of the child-protection policy. Students are well informed about cyber bullying.
- The school carries out extensive, rigorous safety checks on staff. Students are safe in school. There is a very detailed health and safety policy in place, accompanied by similarly strong procedures. Students recognise that the school looks after them well and appreciate the priority given to their safety, for example when they are dropped off at school and have to cross the entry road on their arrival at school.
- Checks are carried out on the buildings and equipment, and deficiencies are noted. A few small issues of maintenance and security were identified by the inspection team which had all been rectified by the end of the inspection. Regular, well-organised fire drills take place. The school's well-qualified full-time nurse and part-time doctor make a valuable contribution to the school's regular health programmes.
- The school premises and buildings are maintained at a high level of hygiene and cleanliness. All school contracts for maintaining the school building and equipment are up to date. All specialist rooms provide good learning environments. An elevator ensures that the upper floors of the building are accessible to students with mobility problems.

- Aspects of healthy lifestyles, such as nutritional food choices, drug awareness and current health problems in Dubai are covered in the science curriculum. A series of events such as the 'Healthy Food Sale' conducted by students in Grade 7 and the programme of physical education for students up to Grade 10 further complement this positive provision. The food available to students in the school canteen complies with the school's policy for the promotion of safe and healthy lifestyles.

| | KG | PYP | MYP | DP |
|------------------|------|--------------|--------------|------|
| Care and support | Good | Acceptable ↓ | Acceptable ↓ | Good |

- Staff have positive relationships with students and are aware of their needs. Senior leaders make the school's expectations of student behaviour very clear to students. The behaviour of most students is excellent, but some poor behaviour, particularly in MYP, is not dealt with consistently.
- The school keeps accurate records of students' attendance and punctuality. Systems for following up absences are efficient and effective. Parents are notified promptly of any concerns about absent students. Many students who travel by car arrive late to school, and punctuality to classes during the school day is not always good.
- The school is inclusive and provides a safe and nurturing environment for students with special educational needs or disabilities. The process of identification of those students, although generally effective, relies too heavily on teacher and parent referral. Identification of, and support for, students who have gifts and talents are not well developed.
- The school has specialist staff to assist with identification and support of students with SEND but not all classroom teachers are familiar with, or experienced in, procedures to support those students. Curriculum modifications are made to accommodate the needs of students with SEND but are not always effectively delivered in lessons. Nevertheless, the needs of most students with SEND are met.
- The wellbeing and personal development of all students is well monitored, especially in KG and PYP where homeroom teachers spend much of the day with their classes. PYP pastoral support provides a daily homeroom session for reflection. Students are less well supported in MYP. Careers guidance is developing to meet the needs of the small group of IBDP students.

Inclusion

Provision and outcomes for students with SEND

Acceptable ↓

- The school has developed an inclusive ethos and has expanded the SEND department with the appointment of an additional teacher with relevant training and experience. A leader has also been appointed from within to oversee the day-to-day operations for support of students with SEND. More effective monitoring and evaluation of the quality of provision is developing to inform the action planning of the department.

- The initial identification of students who might have SEND is mainly through parent and teacher referral, followed up by screening and diagnosis by external specialist agencies. Students are then provided with individualised educational programmes (IEPs) which are shared with all teachers. Identification of students with SEND is not always reliable because the process for screening students is not systematic and does not use a broad enough range of tests.
- The school communicates regularly with parents about all aspects of their children's progress and involves them in the development of IEPs. Most parents express strong support for the school's approach to assisting their children. Most are pleased with the advice received which helps them to be more focused in their home support. Partnerships are developing to support children's learning.
- Curriculum and lesson planning includes modification for students with SEND. Delivery of effective modification is dependent upon the skill of the teachers and this is inconsistent across subjects and phases. When teachers use the IEPs well to target and support students, then progress is better. Learning support staff provide excellent support for students in and out of class.
- Overall, students with SEND make acceptable progress in academic learning and in personal and social development. Too often teachers did not effectively plan or deliver lessons which matched students' needs.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Good

- The new principal has undertaken an extensive round of meetings with all stakeholders to get to know the school's strengths and areas for development. He and other senior leaders promote the governors' vision for the school to all staff. Senior leaders are strongly committed to being inclusive and to implementing the UAE National Agenda.
- The principal has appropriate experience and expertise in the IB curriculum and has made a positive start to leading and improving the school. Other senior leaders are working to improve the aspects for which they are responsible. They have good ideas for improvement, but do not work with the principal sufficiently to ensure consistency across phases.
- Relationships in the school community are positive and productive, and staff morale is positive. Middle leaders such as subject heads have delegated responsibilities and discharge them well, with a degree of variability across subjects.
- The high proportion of new staff means that the school's capacity to improve is not yet assured. Nevertheless, leaders have created systematic plans for enhancing the school's work. A key aspect is the plan for the school to move to a new building at the end of the next school year, allowing an increased roll and wider curriculum choice at the upper phase.
- Leaders and other staff have managed to maintain most aspects of the school at a good level while improving a few.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Good

- Leaders apply a wide range of processes for gathering and using information regarding the quality of the school's work, including listening to the views of stakeholders, lesson observations, and analysis of attainment data. They know the general profile of the school's strengths and weaknesses but have an overly generous view of the quality of many areas of the schools work.
- The school's procedures for observing lessons, judging their quality and giving feedback to teachers, are systematic and appropriate. However, the procedures do not take into account the impact of the teachers' actions on students' progress.
- A wide range of improvement plans, including a brief strategic plan, a whole-school plan and other plans for subjects and initiatives, such as SEND, guide the school's improvement work. Most plans are in an appropriate format and, as staff implement them, are having an increasing impact.
- The school successfully addressed a curriculum compliance issue identified in last year's inspection report. This year's recommendations tend to repeat those that have appeared in previous inspection reports. They cover the IB curriculum and aspects of teaching to raise levels of attainment, although some progress is being made in relation to them all.

Partnerships with parents and the community

Good

- Parents are fully involved in the life of the school. They appreciate the approachability of staff. Members of the parents' committee meet regularly with senior leaders and members of the board. They feel that their views are listened to, and give examples of suggestions that have led to change. Parents volunteer at events, such as National Day, and help organise workshops on recent developments in education.
- Parents are very satisfied with the information they receive from the school about their children's progress. Parents are increasingly engaged as learning partners, for example in listening to their children read stories in Arabic and English at home. Parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities feel involved in supporting their children's progress. Not all parents ensure that their children are punctual at the start of the day.
- Reports to parents show that teachers have a good knowledge of each student. Reports are regular and thorough. They provide information on attainment and progress, as well as students' personal development. Parents note that teachers make contact immediately if they feel there is cause for concern or reason to celebrate. Most reports suggest ways in which parents can help to support their children's learning.
- The school makes regular contributions to the local, national, and international communities. Parents are partners in many of these activities. For example, parents make contributions to the curriculum and support the school in projects such as those related to Emirati history and culture. Links with Dubai Police, Civil Defence and Dubai Ambulance Services help to broaden their children's educational experiences.

Governance

Good

- The governing body has good representation from the owners and others in the community, including those with business or academic expertise. The board listens to parents' views and acts upon them. A new structure involving an executive board which will meet monthly is being introduced.
- Through regular meetings involving school staff and with the school's mothers' group and written reports, the governors have a general idea of the quality of the school's work. They are aware, for example, of the need to improve students' attainment in certain subjects, to enhance external benchmarking test results. The governing board does not obtain a detailed knowledge of teaching, by observing it, for example through learning walks.
- Governors have been successful in acquiring sufficient, well qualified teachers, to ensure a good student-teacher ratio and fill the gaps created by the large numbers of teachers who left in the previous school year. They have ensured curriculum compliance. Working with senior staff, they have not managed to ensure that all aspects of attainment are at least good.

Management, staffing, facilities and resources




Acceptable ↓

- Overall, the day-to-day running of the school proceeds smoothly. The timetable is adequately planned. However, there are some issues regarding the access of Islamic education for non-Arab students.
- The school has a sufficient number of teachers to ensure a good student-teacher ratio. They have appropriate subject qualifications but few have a recognised teaching certificate or extensive IB experience. Almost half are new to the school and, as a result, they are inexperienced in the school's expected approach, the IB curriculum and SEND provision.
- Both the inside and outside of the school's premises offer a stimulating learning environment. Specialist facilities are of good quality. However, during rain storms, water leaks through the roof in various parts of the school.
- The school has a good stock of suitable resources for teaching and learning. Resources for Arabic language studies are of a particularly high quality.

The views of parents, teachers and senior students

The views of parents, teachers and senior 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 | |
|  Parents* | 2016-2017 | 113 |
| | 2015-2016 | 100 |
|  Teachers | 66 | |
|  Students | 19 | |

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

- Most parents who responded to the survey are satisfied with the quality of education the school provides. They agree that the school is well led and that staff are approachable.
- Parents agree that their children are well taught and enjoy school. They think that their children are kept safe and are taught how to be safe when using the Internet. Most parents agree that their children are developing an awareness of UAE and other cultures and are being helped to become environmentally responsible.
- A few parents feel that there are insufficient extra-curricular activities, particularly those of a sporting nature.
- Teacher responses are mostly positive. Almost all agree that students are kept safe, enjoy school, are well taught and make good progress. They are of the opinion that they know students' strengths and weaknesses and prioritise students' wellbeing. They agree that school reports are informative and that teachers listen to parents' views.
- A minority of teachers indicate concerns about the range of extra-curricular activities the school provides, opportunities for professional development, the quality of provision for students with SEND and students' behaviour.
- Most of the students who responded, feel safe at school. They agree that teachers know their strengths and weaknesses, want them to do well and provide helpful reports. They also agree that they develop a good understanding of Islamic values and of Emirati and world cultures.
- A minority of students consider that learning activities lack interest, there are not enough subject choices or extra-curricular activities, and that their views are not listened to or acted upon by school leaders.

What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the inspection report. This should address:

- recommendations from DSIB
- areas identified by the school as requiring improvement
- other external reports or sources of information that comment on the work of the school
- priorities arising from the school's unique characteristics.

The next school inspection will report on changes made by the school.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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