



GEMS World Academy

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



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## School information



### General information

Location	Al Barsha
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2008
Website	www.gemsworldacademy-dubai.com
Telephone	04-3736373
Address	Al Barsha South, Dubai P.O. Box 126260
Principal	Stuart Walker
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	6 to 9 February 2017

### Teachers / Support staff

Number of teachers	186
Largest nationality group of teachers	American
Number of teaching assistants	80
Teacher-student ratio	1:10
Number of guidance counsellors	7
Teacher turnover	18%

### Students

Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	3-18
Grades or year groups	KG1-Grade 12
Number of students on roll	1919
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	26
Number of students with SEND	97
Largest nationality group of students	Other European

### Curriculum

Educational permit / Licence	IB
Main curriculum	IB / Ministry of Education
External tests and examinations	IBDP, IBMYP
Accreditation	International Baccalaureate (IB) Council of International Schools (CIS)
National Agenda benchmark tests	ISA, IBMYP



## 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.

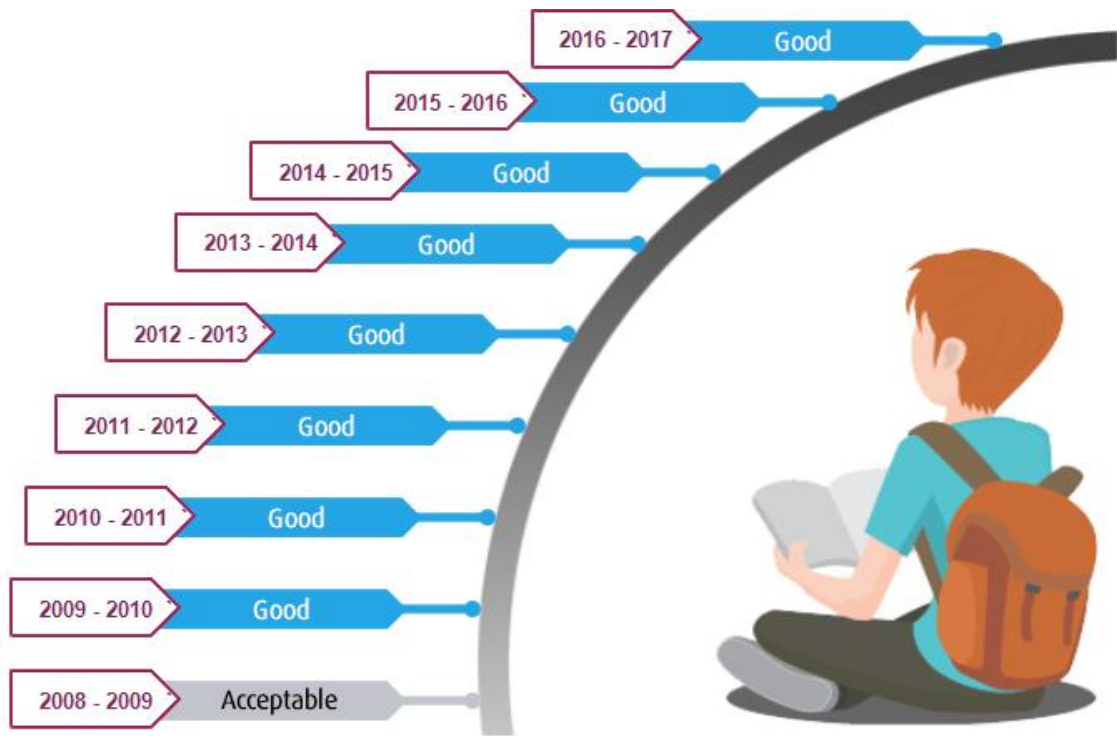
Inspection judgements are drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observation of students' learning in lessons, review of their work, discussions with students, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and review of surveys completed by parents, teachers and students.

### 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.

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

## Inspection journey for GEMS World Academy



- The school opened in 2008. Since the appointment of the current principal last year, a new senior and an enhanced middle leadership team have assisted school improvement. Teacher turnover is 18 per cent which compares to 35 per cent last year. Although the number of students attending the school has declined from 2041 to 1919 over the past year, the number of teachers has increased slightly.
- Recent inspections have found the Kindergarten (KG) and most aspects of Primary Years Programme (PYP) to be outstanding. The last inspection identified improvements in students' progress in Islamic education and their understanding of Islamic values in Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Diploma Programme (DP). DP students' attainment and progress in English, school leadership and governance also improved. DP students' attainment in mathematics declined as did MYP and DP students' personal development and social responsibility. Curriculum adaptation in PYP improved, but the management of staffing and resources declined.
- The last inspection identified the need to improve teaching and learning in MYP and DP to raise students' attainment and progress. The school was asked to improve students' learning experiences in Islamic education and Arabic, including their Arabic communication skills. There was also a requirement to ensure that students followed the school's code of conduct and behaviour policies.



## Summary of inspection findings 2016-2017



**GEMS World Academy** was inspected by DSIB from 6 to 9 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.

- DP students' attainment in Islamic education has improved. PYP students' attainment has improved in Arabic as a first language. The progress of DP students in Arabic as a first language has improved, but their attainment remains weak. The progress of MYP students in Arabic as an additional language has declined.
- Students' personal development has improved in the MYP and DP, the social responsibility of MYP students and DP students' understanding of Islamic values also have improved.
- Significant differences exist between teaching, learning and assessment in the lower and the upper phases of the school despite some recent improvements in MYP and DP. These improvements include monitoring individual students' progress. However, there is insufficient rigour in analysing and evaluating students' assessment data within year groups and across subjects in those phases.
- Curriculum design and implementation are outstanding across all phases of the school. Curriculum adaptation is variable but is outstanding in the KG and very good in PYP. This has resulted in excellent student outcomes in the two phases.
- The provision for health and safety and the quality of support and care are outstanding across all phases of the school. Students are kept safe at all times and receive excellent support in their learning.
- Leadership and governance remain very good, reflecting the improvements in the management and resources in the school and their positive impact on developing students' sense of responsibility. The inconsistent use of assessment information is a barrier to making self-evaluation and improvement planning sufficiently focused on raising students' attainment in MYP and DP.

### What the school does best

- The attainment and progress of children in the KG and PYP in English, mathematics and science.
- Students' personal development and social responsibility across the school.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the KG and PYP.
- The design of the curriculum that promotes student choice and supports transitions across the phases.
- The arrangements for health and safety and the quality of support and management of staffing, facilities and resources.

### Recommendations

- Improve attainment and progress in Arabic by:
  - ensuring work is appropriately differentiated to meet the needs of different groups of students
  - providing more opportunities for students to develop their independent reading and writing skills.
- Improve the use of assessment information, particularly in the MYP and DP, to:
  - establish students' academic starting points
  - record trends in achievement over time more systematically
  - analyse the variations within and across year groups, identify areas of strength and weakness and set targets for improvement
  - help teachers evaluate and adjust their own performance
  - secure more accurate self-evaluation and improvement planning that address variations in students' performance.

## 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 the school's targets:

- The school meets the registration requirements for the National Agenda Parameter.
- Attainment of students in the National Agenda Parameter is below expectations in mathematics and science and meets expectations in English.
- Data from the National Agenda Parameter is analysed and strengths and weaknesses are identified. Training for all teachers has raised their awareness of the importance of this data and has strengthened their understanding of how to use it.
- The school has adjusted its curriculum significantly in response to the demands of PISA and TIMSS. There is an increased focus on more challenging subject matter, clearer progression within the subject and more opportunities for students to apply their learning in real-world contexts. Critical thinking is included in teachers' lesson planning.
- Teachers use a wide variety of activities to help keep students interested and challenged. Students respond very positively to the increased opportunities to develop their critical thinking skills, especially when teachers use real-life examples to make learning purposeful. These improvements are not established across the school.
- The school uses a wide variety of resources to align the curriculum effectively to the National Agenda priorities. These include learning technologies to develop students' research skills.

Overall, the schools' 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:

An innovation committee is proactively supporting pilot innovative initiatives in the school. These are monitored and amended in consultation with parents and students. Students' and teachers' skills are developing in using technologies to support learning in creative ways. Teachers' common planning time and professional development activities are enhancing their capacities to support students' learning. Students are encouraged to plan their own projects. For example, in Grade 3 students choose a biome to research as part of studying the natural world. Teachers are increasingly recording students' achievements electronically to improve their use of assessment information and to share students' outcomes with parents.

## Overall school performance

Good

## 1 Students' achievement

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

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Learning skills	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good

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

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

## 3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good
Assessment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good

## 4. Curriculum

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Curriculum design and implementation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Curriculum adaptation	Outstanding	Very good	Good	Good

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

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Care and support	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding


## 6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership	Very good			
School self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good			
Parents and the community	Outstanding			
Governance	Very good			
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding ↑			

# 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	Outstanding	Outstanding
Mathematics	Outstanding	Outstanding
Science	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Children demonstrate elevated levels of knowledge and understanding in language development that are well above age-related expectations. They respond very positively to the varied opportunities to improve their vocabulary through speaking and listening. Most make outstanding progress over time and against lesson learning objectives. They can use their understanding of phonics to read words and write simple sentences especially when the topics are exciting, such as investigating mini-beasts.
- Children make excellent progress and consistently achieve well above curriculum and age-related expectations in all aspects of numeracy. In lessons, they are developing a very strong understanding of number. They can perform the key skills of counting, reading and writing numbers and measuring different quantities. They can add and subtract two numbers and record these using the correct symbols. They can place numbers in order and recognise larger and smaller relationships. They can identify and describe the features of simple shapes such as squares and triangles.
- Children's understanding of scientific concepts and their development of enquiry skills are well above curriculum and age-related expectations. They demonstrate natural curiosity about objects in their environment. Critical thinking and problem-solving are integral features of their learning during focused play. An example is when KG1 children select materials to make a shelter for their pets. Children's workbooks show that they make outstanding progress in developing their scientific, knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to their starting points and as measured against lesson learning objectives.

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

- In Islamic education, the work of the majority of students is above the Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum standards. Students demonstrate good knowledge, skills and understanding of Islamic principles. They recite and memorise many verses from the Holy Qur'an, and they understand the meaning of Hadeeth. They can link their understanding to Islamic morals such as respect and honesty, and give correct examples from Seerah. In relation to their starting points, the majority of students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), make better than expected progress.
- In Arabic as a first language the skills of the majority of students in reading, speaking and listening are above expectations. Their comprehension skills and their understanding and application of grammatical rules in unfamiliar contexts are developing well. Although most students make good progress in their writing, opportunities for extended writing and writing for a range of purposes are limited. As a result, students' independent writing skills are variable, especially in the upper grades of PYP. There are no external assessments for benchmarking students' outcomes in Arabic as a first language.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students demonstrate language skills that are in line with curriculum expectations. Most students can read familiar sentences, follow instructions and respond accordingly. Their listening skills are the most developed, while their speaking and reading skills are developing well in relation their starting points. Their writing skills are less developed as most students can write short sentences but get few opportunities to extend their writing.
- In English, most students' attainment and progress are well above age-appropriate expectations. Almost all students are committed readers and can read fluently with appropriate clarity and expression. Most students demonstrate writing skills that are particularly strong. They spell common words correctly and are skilled in sentence structure, grammar and presentation. They listen thoughtfully to their teachers and peers. Most have excellent oral skills which provides them with a firm foundation for overall language development. Trends over time show consistently high levels of student attainment.
- The attainment and progress of most students in mathematics are above curriculum standards and show continued improvement over time. Although international benchmarking does not show such high levels, students' work in class and their formative and summative assessment results confirm their high levels of knowledge and understanding. Most students make strong progress in class towards learning objectives. All groups of students, including low and high achievers, make similarly strong progress.

- Students' attainment and progress in science are well above international curriculum standards in most grade levels. Students demonstrate understanding and skills that are above age-appropriate expectations. They explore and investigate real-life issues that interest them. Most make excellent progress in both their understanding and ability to apply scientific concepts. Students show an increased confidence in using scientific terminology to explain how science affects their lives. An example is demonstrating how forces around them provide energy to make objects move differently. Their high achievement levels have been maintained over the past few years.

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

- In Islamic education, most students demonstrate adequate knowledge of Islamic principles and values. They can explain key events in Seerah and name the main companions of the Prophet (PBUH). Their recitation skills of the Holy Qur'an and their understanding of Islamic morals are acceptable. The majority make better than expected progress. However, the progress of Arab students is negatively affected by their variable writing skills. Most students develop their understanding of Islamic concepts well by applying critical thinking, but their development of recitation skills and explanation of Hadeeth are more variable.
- In Arabic as a first language, the listening skills of most students are well developed. However, their speaking skills vary. Most converse in simple standard Arabic but tend to use colloquial Arabic to further express themselves. Their limited vocabulary and expression restrict their abilities to engage in conversations and explore the aspects of a given topic. Students' writing levels vary widely. While most students use minimal words to answer questions, a few are more elaborate and expressive. Basic spelling mistakes and incorrect sentence structures are common in students' writing. Their reading for comprehension varies across the phase.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students are working in line with curriculum expectations. Most demonstrate acceptable listening skills and can read short, familiar sentences correctly. However, their reading is mostly hesitant and lacks fluency, and their comprehension skills vary. A minority of students speak confidently using simple sentences. Most students' reading and writing skills are less developed. Many can copy texts and few demonstrate acceptable independent writing skills.
- In English, a majority of students demonstrate attainment and progress that are above the expected levels. Students' listening and speaking skills are strongest, and most have a sound understanding of grammar, spelling and punctuation. Students read fluently and a majority show well-developed comprehension and research skills. They can write coherently for a clearly defined audience using correct sentence structure. The most able students can write at length. Students have maintained the same level of attainment and progress over the past few years.



- Students' attainment has improved over the past few years in mathematics. The majority of students attain levels that are above curriculum expectations. Students in Grade 6, however, do not reach the same level of attainment. International benchmarking reflects a similar picture where most Grade 6 students achieve levels that are only in line with expectations. In lessons and in their recent work, the majority of students exhibit knowledge, skills and understanding that meet the learning objectives. They make good or better progress in relation to their starting points.
- Students' attainment in science is above international curriculum expectations in most grade levels. Students can apply their knowledge well in real-life situations such as climate change. They use their research skills effectively to carry out scientific investigations. For example, they can check the credibility of scientific publications by evaluating the quality of the presented scientific evidence. Students make good progress in lessons and over time.

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of Islamic principles as measured against the learning objectives and curriculum standards. They can recite assigned verses from the Holy Qur'an, and understand the meaning of Hadeeth. They can explain the rationale behind prescribed Islamic laws and acts of worship such as legal contracts. They solve problems by suggesting solutions based on Fiqh laws. The majority of students make good progress in lessons and over time, although their recitation skills are less developed.
- In Arabic as a first language, the attainment of most students in reading and writing is below expectations. Although most students can engage in a discussion about a text, their command of standard Arabic does not allow them to extend their discussions beyond expectations. They frequently revert to colloquial Arabic or English to convey meaning. Their writing skills develop adequately, but are below curriculum expectations. The reading skills of the majority of students are underdeveloped, and their understanding and comprehension of texts vary.
- In English, both internal and external assessment results show that a large majority of students exceed expectations in their use of language. A majority are very skilled in showing empathy, analysis and knowledge in giving formal speech. They read with clarity and expression and can write for different purposes. A large majority have a very good understanding of spelling, grammar and sentence structure, and they use that to produce high-quality work.

- Students' attainment according to the latest IB examinations is weak, and only few students reach a good level. The picture over the past years is mixed with no clear trend of improvement or deterioration. Internal assessment data show acceptable attainment in Grade 11 and very good attainment in Grade 12. In lessons, most students demonstrate knowledge, skills and understanding that are in line with IB expectations, and the majority make better than expected progress. Students with SEND and low achievers also make good progress when measured against their individual starting points.
- Students' attainment and progress are above international curriculum standards in science. This is consistent with the levels demonstrated over the previous years. Students can extract key scientific ideas from a range of sources and present their findings in considerable detail. The majority of students, for example, can relate sound waves and energy to explain harmonic motion. Their progress in biology and physics is better than in chemistry.

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Learning skills	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good

- Students enjoy learning and have positive attitudes in lessons. In the KG, children routinely work and play independently and can sustain interest in learning without adult intervention. In some lessons in MYP and DP, students don't get the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning. Students are increasingly able to reflect on what they have learned and what they need to do to improve.
- In most lessons, students interact very well with their teachers and with each other. They work readily with their peers by listening to them, sharing their ideas with them, and challenging them. In the KG, children develop language and social skills and happily share space and resources in formal and informal activities.
- Students can relate their learning to the outside world but this is not as strong in mathematics in MYP and DP. In the KG and PYP, the thematic approach and relevance to the outside world in planning ensure that these are integral parts of learning. Students' connections between different areas of the curriculum are less developed in the other phases of the school.
- Students in the KG and PYP are increasingly developing their critical thinking and enterprise skills although these are not used as routinely in PYP. Students' skills in using technology to do research and to enhance their learning are well developed, especially in science and mathematics. Most students can solve problems of varying difficulty when given the opportunity to do so.

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


	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
<b>Personal development</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding ↑	Outstanding ↑

- Students contribute to a very purposeful learning environment and respond very positively to their teachers. They participate in class discussions and engage enthusiastically in school activities. They work well in groups and independently when carrying out individual research. They are responsive to their teachers, particularly when discussing ways to improve their work.
- Students follow very closely the school's behaviour policies. They know who to contact when an incident occurs or an issue arises and believe the school responds very well. Students engage very strongly with the increased roles and responsibilities created through the introduction of a house system this year.
- Relationships are very positive throughout the school. Students are respectful to each other and to adults. They are sensitive and responsive to the wide range of student backgrounds. They contribute positively to the inclusive nature of the school and celebrate the diverse nature of the student population.
- Students adopt healthy lifestyles and can explain the positive impact these have on their lives. They make healthy choices and are eager to participate in sporting activities. They have an elevated level of understanding of how to stay safe at school and online. They feel very safe, cared for and listened to.
- Students' attendance has improved significantly and is very good this year. Students have responded positively to the strategies the school has introduced to improve punctuality and attendance.

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
<b>Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures</b>	Outstanding	Very good	Very good	Very good ↑

- Students across all phases have secure and age-appropriate knowledge of Islamic principles such as the Five Pillars of Islam. They can discuss very confidently the values of Islam in the UAE contemporary society and participate with enthusiasm in competitions, trips and events that develop their experience and understanding of the wider community of the UAE.
- Students are highly knowledgeable about the UAE. They know about initiatives such as the 'Year of Giving' and are aware of UAE's past and plans for future expansion. They speak enthusiastically about cultural activities such as National Day celebrations and charity events. Younger students can identify UAE cultural items, such as dress and food and symbols, such as the camel and the falcon.

- Students understand and appreciate their own and other world cultures. They can compare their cultures and explain the benefits of the multiculturalism in a city like Dubai. They appreciate the multicultural environment of the school, respect other cultures and are proud of their own culture.
- Children in the KG demonstrate very high levels of appreciation of the UAE culture and other cultures in their work and displays.

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
<b>Social responsibility and innovation skills</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding 	Outstanding

- Across the school, students demonstrate high responsibility towards the school, the UAE and the international communities. This is demonstrated by the range of projects and initiatives that allow them to volunteer locally and abroad. They especially like to volunteer in initiatives that show their care and support for those who are less fortunate.
- Students have a highly-developed work ethic. They regularly demonstrate their creativity and innovation in a range of projects, such as making toys using recycled material. The Student Council comes up with innovative ideas for projects and implements them. Students can discuss the impact of their projects on themselves and others in the community.
- Students across the school demonstrate outstanding environmental awareness. For example, in the KG, children know about conserving electricity and about the impact of oil spills on sea life. Students in the other phases regularly initiate a range of activities that are directly linked to caring for the environment and protecting it.

### 3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
<b>Teaching for effective learning</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good

- Most teachers make effective use of their subject knowledge to plan lessons that engage students' interest. In the KG and PYP, teachers use their knowledge of how students learn to adapt approaches and to provide them with a range of activities for their different learning styles. However, not all teachers of Arabic fully understand how to support students effectively in learning the language.
- Most lessons are planned well and organised with an appropriate balance between whole class, individual and group work. Attractive displays of students' work in the classrooms and corridors contribute well to the learning environment. Resources for teaching and learning are plentiful and used well. However, occasionally in mathematics, when students finish a task, they are not kept engaged with sufficient work to extend their learning.

- In the better lessons, teachers' enthusiasm inspires students to do their best and their questions are effective in challenging students' thinking. This gives students the opportunity to engage in thoughtful discussions. In few lessons, however, teachers' questions require students to only recall information.
- Teachers are generally aware of the range of students' attainment levels and in many lessons, they use a variety of strategies to meet their different needs. However, there is inconsistency in how well teachers adapt their teaching strategies to meet the needs of higher and lower attaining students especially in MYP and DP.
- Teachers across the school are extending the range of strategies to develop students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In the KG and PYP, students are given regular opportunities to learn, investigate and explore independently. In the other phases, work does not routinely involve problem-solving and research activities for students to gain sufficient confidence in their own abilities and to be innovative.

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Assessment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good

- The school's internal assessments are very well aligned to the curriculum standards in the KG and PYP. In the other phases, they are less aligned. Teachers' judgements of the quality of students' work are highly developed in the KG and PYP. In the MYP and DP phases, teachers focus more on assessing and monitoring individual students' progress.
- The school compared student outcomes internationally by using external tests in the PYP and MYP. Students' results from international benchmarking are less positive than that from internal assessments. DP assessments are benchmarked against the International Baccalaureate Diploma. While this is useful to the school, it only provides a partial picture of students' performance because Grade 11 and 12 data are often combined.
- The school monitors students' progress using an improved assessment management system. Information is shared widely with teachers and the majority use data to evaluate the quality of their own teaching. Analysis of assessment information is stronger in the KG because teachers follow a well-established assessment system. In the other phases, external assessment data are not fully analysed to monitor students' progress or modify the teaching.
- Teachers in the KG and PYP are very skilled in using assessment data to align the curriculum and adjust approaches to teaching. Teachers identify students who need support or further challenge and adjust the curriculum to sustain high levels of progress, particularly for children in the KG. This is less developed in MYP and DP particularly when comparing internal assessments against baseline and external measures.
- School leaders provide teachers with a wide range of assessment information that enable them to know their students' strengths and weaknesses. In the KG, assessment information is used to provide children with appropriate challenge and support. Nevertheless, not all external assessment results are used rigorously to ensure a precise understanding of students' outcomes.

## 4. Curriculum

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Curriculum design and implementation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The school complies with MoE regulations in Arabic and Islamic education, and all IB requirements. The curriculum has an excellent balance among knowledge, skills and understanding across the school. The school is working to integrate the UAE National Agenda into the curriculum. Each of the programmes offers challenges to students of all abilities and encourages innovation in teaching and learning.
- The curriculum is planned at the subject and grade level and across each programme to ensure a logical progression and to meet all students' needs. Transitions across the three IB programmes have become more seamless, especially from MYP to DP. The needs of students with SEND are more closely met, particularly in the DP.
- A wide range of choices is offered to students within the constraints of the three IB programmes. Older students can select course offerings that generally match their needs, abilities and interests. The school is working to enhance the choices for students by enabling them to take online DP courses, not available within the main curriculum.
- All units of inquiry in PYP embrace a wide range of cross-curricular opportunities. Cross-curricular links are exploited in the MYP and DP wherever they occur. One inter-disciplinary unit has been established in each MYP grade level. Offering the theory of knowledge (TOK) course in the DP helps develop the cross-curricular nature of the programme.
- The three IB programmes are regularly and actively reviewed in line with curriculum and UAE requirements. The structures put in place in the school, such as the 10-day timetable and the provision of support for all students including students with SEND, have improved the effectiveness of the school's curriculum.
- The school partially complies with the MoE social studies curriculum. Grades 1 to 9 have opportunities to cover most, but not all, of the standards. Changed sequencing, and redesigned units, in PYP and MYP, have enabled greater coverage of these standards. In addition, some aspects of the curriculum are addressed through assemblies and during advisory time.

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Curriculum adaptation	Outstanding	Very good	Good	Good

- The school is highly successful in adapting the curriculum resulting in very high outcomes for KG and PYP students. The curriculum provides a range of interesting activities in the MYP and DP. The increased focus this year on supporting students' different learning and developmental needs is driving curriculum modifications.



- The KG curriculum provides highly stimulating learning activities and the PYP provides a wide range of experiences. Students' enterprise, innovation and creativity are developing in the PYP and DP. Activities such as the 'Souk' fashion initiative, 'Week Without Walls' and the 'Service Action Programme' support students' commitment to serving the community and helping those who are less fortunate.
- Humanities classes enable students to develop a clear understanding of the UAE. This is supported by assemblies that focus directly on aspects of both the UAE culture and society. Emirati culture is embedded in activities linked to Arabic language and literature. Some examples include students' participation in the Emirates Literature Festival, their meeting with visiting writers, and going on field trips that promote their cultural understanding.

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

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The school has clear procedures and policies to support the care, welfare and safeguarding of all students. Staff are fully aware of these policies and follow them closely. The revised approach to behaviour management is having a positive impact on the school environment. Staff are highly effective in dealing with issues regarding students' behaviour at school and on the social media.
- The school environment is extremely safe and hygienic. Safety checks are regularly conducted on all aspects of the school. Students are supervised at all times in all areas of the school. The doctor and the nurses play a very active role in ensuring students' health and safety.
- All areas of the school are maintained regularly and kept in excellent condition. The schools' maintenance records are detailed and up-to-date. These include students' medical records, attendance records and school evacuation records. Samples of students' current work are displayed in different areas of the school, creating a highly stimulating and attractive learning environment.
- Learning areas across the school are exceptionally well resourced, very well managed and appropriately modified to accommodate students with SEND. There are access ramps in all areas of the school and access chairs for use in case of evacuation.
- The school is very successful in promoting safe and healthy lifestyles. This is evident in the wide range of available sports facilities and sporting opportunities. The range of healthy options in the canteen and including healthy living topics in the curriculum encourage students to adopt healthy lifestyles very well.

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Care and support	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Staff have very positive relationships with students. Students' behaviour is managed very consistently and effectively. Staff and students are aware of the new school policies and believe they are fair and consistent. Staff take appropriate action when required, and families understand what makes expected behaviour according to the new policies.
- The school keeps accurate records on attendance and punctuality and has very effective systems for following up unauthorised absences and lateness. Students and parents understand the importance of attendance and its impact on academic performance. These effective systems have resulted in improved students' attendance and punctuality.
- The school has detailed and informed procedures to identify students with SEND. A strong SEND department oversees the identification process and ensures information is shared with class and subject teachers. The school has adopted a new intervention model that seeks to identify 'hidden' students with SEND. The high attaining students are also being identified to meet their needs.
- The school provides highly effective support for students with SEND. It is comprehensive and well-focussed. The available facilities and resources support the diverse range of special educational needs in the school. The individualised planning and effective review and oversight ensure that students' needs are fully met. Consequently, the large majority of students with SEND make good or better progress.
- The school has a new, highly-effective, pastoral care system that supports students' academic progress, health, wellbeing, and future careers. Students have access to professional advice and guidance. The outstanding counselling department ensures that older students receive personalised advice about subject choices, higher education pathways and future careers.

## Inclusion

### Provision and outcomes for students with SEND

Very good

- The school offers very good support and commitment to improving the learning outcomes for students with a broad range of SEND. All special needs staff are highly qualified and experienced. The new structure ensures stability that supports the policies and practices to meet the needs of most students with SEND.
- Staff ensure accurate identification and support processes are promptly put into place to ensure students receive appropriate support and intervention inside or outside the classroom. However, internal, external and predictive data are not used effectively enough to measure the impact of the support provided on students' outcomes.

- Parents receive regular detailed communication, guidance and support from the school. This enables their active involvement in the education of their children. They are appropriately involved in the development of their children's Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and think that staff respond very positively to their requests and concerns.
- Modification and support at all levels are well designed to meet the personal and learning needs of most students with SEND. Ongoing training for all teachers on the use of assessment data to differentiate instruction has improved consistency in modifying the curriculum.
- When considering their starting points, the majority of students with SEND make good or better progress and are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Very good

- The principal and school leaders actively promote the school's values by encouraging a powerful sense of community and support for students' personal development, within an inclusive school environment. They have identified key priorities for school improvement that are linked to the UAE National Agenda and have a clear strategy to promote the use of digital technology across the school.
- School leaders support students' achievements by promoting and rewarding students' positive behaviour and attitudes towards learning. The school is implementing an enhanced pastoral care and support system that has a very positive impact on students' learning, particularly in MYP and DP. The restructured school timetable is beginning to allow the provision of more student-centred learning opportunities.
- School leaders, including staff appointed this year, are increasingly collaborating to enhance the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum. This has made a positive impact on the lower PYP building on the existing high quality provision in the KG. However, this is not consistent across the rest of the school.
- School leaders demonstrate a shared commitment to school improvement. They meet formally and regularly to make decisions. They are increasingly involving parents and students in a range of innovative activities such as reading support schemes and the use of digital communication between home and school. However, they do not evaluate the impact of these initiatives.
- The school has enhanced arrangements to hold staff accountable for their work. School leaders have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are playing a very positive role in developing staff's leadership roles across the school. They support the new leadership roles through a peer review system that allows the sharing of best practices among new leaders.

## School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Good

- School leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. They are less effective in identifying variations in students' attainment and progress within year groups and across the school. The significant amount of assessment information available is not synthesised and disseminated well enough to help form a highly accurate picture of students' attainment and progress over time.
- An enhanced programme of teacher appraisal is increasingly linking the evaluation of teaching and learning to professional review and development. Lesson observations and discussions on the quality of teaching and learning across the school enable the sharing of best practices and enhance students' learning experiences. However, these have not led to consistently high quality of teaching in the MYP and DP phases of the school.
- School and departmental improvement plans identify well-focused goals, targeted actions, resources, and staff roles and responsibilities. Expected outcomes relating to students' attainment are not well-defined. This restricts the ability of the senior leaders and heads of departments to agree on measurable targets to evaluate the improvement in students' attainment.
- The school has responded well to the recommendation that students need to follow the school's code of conduct to improve their attendance and behaviour. Improvements in teaching and learning in the MYP and DP phases are not leading to consistently higher attainment and progress. Students' experiences in Islamic education and Arabic are better, although their attainment and progress levels have not improved substantially.

## Partnerships with parents and the community

Outstanding

- Parents are highly supportive of the school, the teachers and the senior leadership team. They participate in a range of school activities that support their children's learning such as, fund raising, careers guidance and school governance. Parents feel they are partners in their children's education and that their views are listened to.
- The school has highly effective and regular communication with parents to ensure they are well informed about their children's learning and development. The school is proactive in seeking parents' views to help guide its development. There are effective procedures in place for dealing with parents' concerns and complaints.
- The detailed electronic reporting on students' progress is regular and engages parents in their children's development. Teachers' comments identify students' strengths and weaknesses and provide them with their next steps in learning. The reports provide an accurate indication of students' achievements against curriculum and international standards. Parents of students with SEND appreciate the everyday contact with them and the regular reporting on their children's progress.
- The school is very active in the local, national and international communities through charity and community initiatives that involve parents, students and staff. These activities significantly enrich students' learning and personal development and raises their awareness of those who are less fortunate.

## Governance

Very good

- The governing board includes enhanced representation of parents and members of the community with educational backgrounds. Members of the board regularly gather parents' views and respond promptly to any issues or concerns. A recent investment in modern technology helps improve communication between the school and parents. This, in its turn, provides governors with in-depth information about the school.
- Governors hold the school accountable by applying a rigorous system of monitoring. They know the school very well and regularly scrutinise students' achievement scores. However, they do not have access to sufficiently-detailed attainment and progress data to allow them to discuss inconsistencies in those data with the senior leadership team.
- The governing body has continued to provide support to school leaders through increasing staffing levels, supporting staff's leadership roles and committing to a significant investment in technology resources. This is done through an overarching well-structured plan for the school.

## Management, staffing, facilities and resources




Outstanding 

- School procedures ensure that all aspects of school life run in a very smooth and highly-efficient manner. The reorganisation of the school timetable supports more effective teaching and learning. School leaders ensure that parents and students fully understand the nature of the structural changes. Students are clear about what is expected of them and parents are informed, through electronic means, about course content and their children's outcomes.
- Teachers are suitably qualified and the newly-hired teachers support the school's priorities and help the leadership team improve the school. A rigorous programme of professional development assists the school in developing teachers' skills, such as the use of digital technology in teaching and learning.
- The excellent school environment has been further enhanced by providing more study areas for Islamic education. The school regularly celebrates students' successes and achievements. The very stimulating specialist areas of the school, such as the music department and planetarium, enable students to experience learning environments that connect to the outside world.
- The very large and rich school library contains a wide range of books and electronic texts that support students' research and independent learning skills. The librarian collaborates with teachers to develop students' research strategies. Teachers use learning devices at varying levels to enhance students' learning experiences.

## 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	
 <b>Parents*</b>	2016-2017	332
	2015-2016	359
 <b>Teachers</b>	152	
 <b>Students</b>	204	

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

- Almost all parents who responded to the survey believe that the school is well led and that staff care for students and promote their literacy skills in English.
- Almost all parents who responded think that the school promotes creativity and most believe that teachers support independent learning and know their children's strengths and weaknesses. A minority believe that teachers' marking of their children's work help them improve, and a few do not think that academic reports keep them suitably informed.
- Most students who responded to the survey are positive about the school. Most think that the school is safe and welcoming, and that their teachers are helpful and supportive. Most parents believe that students are well behaved at school.
- Almost all teachers who responded are positive about almost all aspects of the school.
- A large minority of parents do not believe that the school promotes their children's love of reading and literacy skills in Arabic. A minority of teachers hold similar views, and a few do not think that students gain a good understanding of Islamic values. Most students do not believe they speak Arabic well.



## 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](mailto:inspection@khda.gov.ae)