



Deira International  
School

Curriculum: UK / IB

Overall Rating:

Very 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	Ras Al Khor
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2005
Website	www.disdubai.ae
Telephone	00971-4-2325552
Address	Dubai Festival City PO BOX 79043
Principal	Jeff Smith
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	13 to 16 February 2017

### Teachers / Support staff

Number of teachers	160
Largest nationality group of teachers	UK
Number of teaching assistants	49
Teacher-student ratio	1:10
Number of guidance counsellors	3
Teacher turnover	20%

### Students

Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	3-18
Grades or year groups	FS 1-Year 13
Number of students on roll	1606
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	220
Number of students with SEND	133
Largest nationality group of students	Arab

### Curriculum

Educational permit / Licence	UK
Main curriculum	UK/IB / MOE
External tests and examinations	IGCSE/GL/IBDP/CEM
Accreditation	BSO/IBO/CIS
National Agenda benchmark tests	GL



## 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.

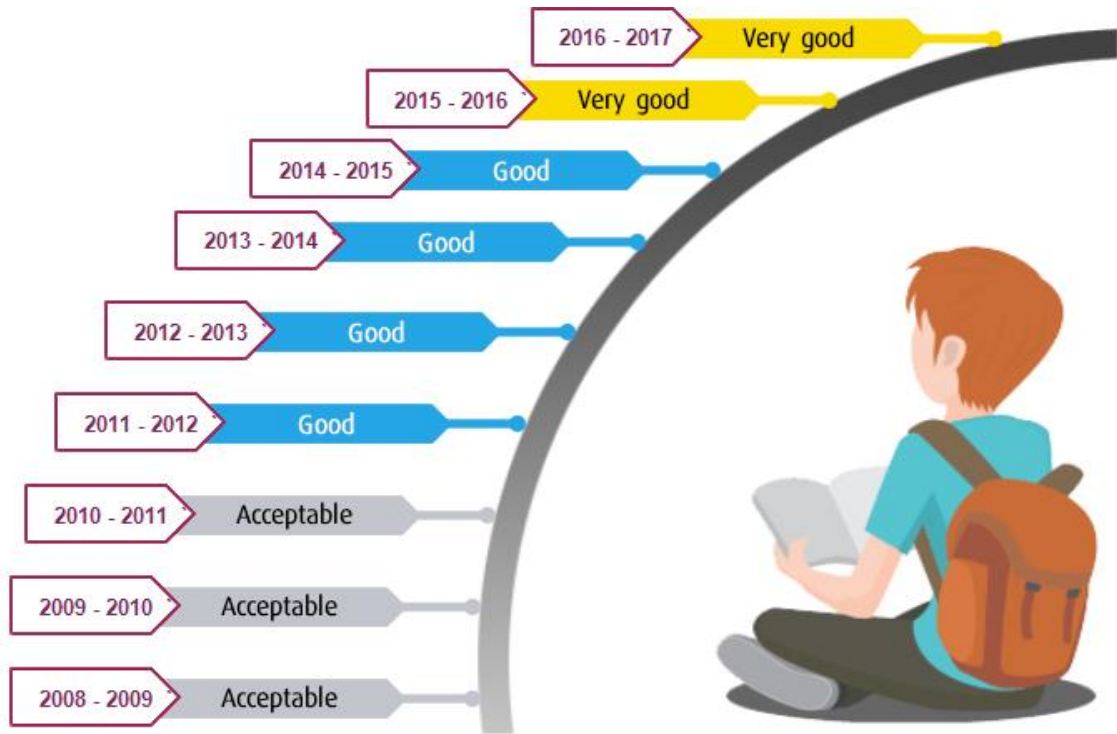
### Judgements are made on a six-point scale

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 Deira International School



- The school opened in 2005 and provides education for students from age three to 18. The number of students in the school has increased steadily in the last three years. The principal joined the school in January 2012. Teacher turnover in recent years has been approximately 16 per cent and has risen slightly in the last year to 20 per cent.
- Last year, the school improved its overall rating from good to very good. Notable strengths over the last three years of inspection have included, the outstanding attitudes and behaviour of students and the high quality provision for health and safety. Significant improvements over this time have been observed in how well the school carries out assessment of students' attainment and their rate of progress.
- Inspection recommendations have repeatedly focused on improving the quality of teaching and attainment in Arabic, raising teachers' expectations of what students can achieve in Islamic education and aspects of provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). At the previous inspection, recommendations continued to focus on most of these recurring areas which continued to require improvement.

## Summary of inspection findings 2016-2017



**Deira International School** was inspected by DSIB from 13 to 16 February 2017. The overall quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. The section below summarises the inspection findings for each of the six performance indicators described in the framework.

- Students' attainment and progress are mostly very good or outstanding. They are not as strong in Islamic education and Arabic, especially in the secondary and post-16 phases, where progress in Arabic is not better than acceptable. Almost all students are very keen to learn and work independently without constant teacher intervention.
- Students' personal and social development continue to be a strength of the school. Students' attitudes to learning and their behaviour in and out of lessons are outstanding. Their understanding of Islamic values and social responsibilities towards others and the environment are consistently excellent.
- Teaching is often very good and in a minority of lessons outstanding. Almost all teachers have very good knowledge of their subjects. In all phases and most subjects teachers use a range of teaching strategies to engage students in learning. This is less consistent in Arabic lessons particularly in the secondary phase. Systems of assessment are outstanding.
- The curriculum is designed to support progression in learning as students move through the school from Foundation Stage (FS) to Year 13. Careful consideration is given to adapting the curriculum to broaden students' knowledge and understanding of the UAE and to be successful in international tests.
- Security, health and child protection is given high priority and understood by everyone in the school. Throughout the school, staff show high levels of care and concern for their students. In the secondary and post-16 phases students are provided with excellent support in making choices for their future lives.
- The experienced leadership team knows the school very well. Leaders are aspirational and continue to make improvements. Systems to evaluate the schools work are very good but the school use of the analysis of data to identify weaknesses requires further development. The work of the governing board and the engagement of parents make an outstanding contribution to school effectiveness. The management, staffing, and resources are of a high standard.

### What the school does best

- Consistently outstanding progress in the FS in English, mathematics and science.
- Outstanding provision for health, safety, care and support of students, which results in their outstanding personal and social development.
- The outstanding vision of the governing board delivered through excellent systems of assessment and day-to-day management, high quality facilities and resources and the full confidence and engagement of parents.

### Recommendations

- Leaders should continue to ensure that self-evaluation processes are robust, rigorous, and better informed, particularly in the secondary phase, by:
  - ensuring that students' attainment is accurately measured against age-appropriate curriculum expectations in all subjects
  - rigorously using the benchmarks from the Dubai supplement to accurately compare the outcomes of the analysis of internal and external data
  - using data analysis in the identification of key priorities for improvement in students learning skills, the quality of teaching and the curriculum, especially in Islamic education and Arabic.

## 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 based on the National Agenda Parameter tests meets expectations in English and mathematics and is not secure in science.
- The school appropriately analyses the data from National Agenda Parameter tests to identify areas of strength and weakness. It does not, as yet, have access to a full set of data across required year groups. It does, however, have considerable expertise in the use of value added assessments.
- The school gives a high priority to TIMSS and PISA assessments and has an appropriate and effective action plan to develop the knowledge and skills required to meet their National Agenda Parameter targets. It has identified and implemented appropriate changes to the sequence, content and approach across the subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- Teachers in lessons effectively focus on developing students' critical thinking skills through, for example, timed comprehension exercises in English and investigations in science. In mathematics, students are effectively developing the skills to solve problems. The use of real world examples and applications is well established in some subjects but less often seen in mathematics lessons. Students have very well developed independent learning skills.
- Students know the outcomes of their National Agenda Parameter tests but do not consistently use the outcomes to further their learning. They are very skilled at using ICT to research for information, although for younger students this is often restricted to short tasks.

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:

- Leaders are fully committed to providing the resources needed to pursue the innovation agenda and develop students' 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. The curriculum is innovative, with a broad range of extra-curricular activities and a wealth of opportunities for students to be enterprising and creative. In lessons, teachers plan activities, which include the regular use of modern technologies. As a result, students are enthusiastic learners who relish the chance to be creative and enterprising. They have excellent attitudes to their work and readily extend their ideas through research and critically thinking.

Overall school performance

Very good

1 Students' achievement

		Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Islamic education 	Attainment	Not applicable	Good	Good	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good	Good	Good ↑
Arabic as a first language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Very good ↑	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as an additional language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Good	Good	Not applicable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good	Acceptable ↓	Not applicable
English 	Attainment	Very good ↑	Very good	Very good	Outstanding ↑
	Progress	Outstanding	Very good	Very good	Outstanding ↑
Mathematics 	Attainment	Very good	Very good ↑	Very good	Very good
	Progress	Outstanding	Very good	Outstanding ↑	Very good
Science 	Attainment	Outstanding	Very good	Very good	Very good
	Progress	Outstanding	Very good	Very good	Very good

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Learning skills	Outstanding	Outstanding	Very good	Outstanding




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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

## 3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Very good	Very good	Very good
Assessment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

## 4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum design and implementation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Very good	Outstanding 
Curriculum adaptation	Outstanding	Outstanding 	Very good	Outstanding 

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
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	Very good
Parents and the community	Outstanding
Governance	Outstanding
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding

# Main inspection report



## 1. Students' achievement

Foundation Stage		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Not applicable	Not applicable
Arabic as a first language	Not applicable	Not applicable
Arabic as an additional language	Not applicable	Not applicable
English	Very good ↑	Outstanding
Mathematics	Very good	Outstanding
Science	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Children start school with very limited English skills. They make rapid progress. As a result a large majority attain standards above curriculum expectations. This is demonstrated in their wide vocabulary when they confidently speak to their teachers and friends. They begin to write with a specific purpose, such as describing an imaginary alien, or making a poster about "Goldilocks." although not all their letters are formed correctly. The increasing knowledge of phonics helps the vast majority of children to read simple books. A minority are not able to use phonics at the expected level.
- In mathematics, most children make rapid progress from their starting points to reach standards of attainment that are above the curriculum expectations for their age. A minority of children who are at an early stage of learning English do not reach the same high standards due to their difficulty in understanding mathematical language. Most children competently make comparisons of shape and size. They link their knowledge about number to real life situations such as buying fruit in a shop. They confidently use numbers in different ways such as doubling them and can use this knowledge to solve simple problems.
- In science, most children attain levels above curriculum standards. They use their extensive knowledge and vocabulary to communicate their understanding about their science activities. Children know what plants need to grow and that chicks hatch from eggs. They frequently use their senses to describe changes in growing beans, or how to recognise mini beasts. Most make outstanding progress and can make simple predictions, observe and record investigations, such as what happens to a jelly sweet in water. Children use technology confidently as a tool to record their learning, find information and talk about how things work.

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students' attain standards above those expected in the MoE curriculum. Internal assessments indicate that most students reach high standards but this is not evident in lessons or students work. In lessons, students memorise prescribed verses from the Holy Qur'an with correct pronunciation and apply appropriate rules of Tajweed. Students' knowledge of Hadith and Seerah of the Prophet (PBUH) are well developed. In recent work, the majority of students show good progress in gaining knowledge and understanding of Islamic concepts, principals and Hadith. Progress is less evident in Articles of Faith.
- In Arabic as a first language, the school internal assessments show that attainment is above curriculum standards for the majority of students. Class observations and students' work; indicate that the listening, speaking and reading skills of students are particularly strong. Writing skills are less well developed. Student are confident and fluent in the use of familiar, target language. The majority enjoy reading a variety of stories appropriate for their year group. Student progress is very good with the strong development of language skills over time.
- In Arabic as an additional language, internal assessments indicate that the attainment of the majority of students is above curriculum standards. In lessons, students' listening and speaking skills are strong, with appropriate responses to familiar topics. Reading is in line with expectations, although students often need assistance in comprehending the text. A majority of the students are developing their vocabulary well but only a minority are able to use newly acquired language in complete sentences without support. From their various starting points, progress in writing is good, as students are able to write short texts on a range of familiar topics.
- In English the large majority of students exceed curriculum standards with writing results slightly behind those of reading. Students in Year 5 did not reach the same high standards in international benchmark tests. In lessons, students across the phase can apply their knowledge, skills and understandings to support effective communication. They use a range of text types and grammatical structures when speaking and writing. Evidence from individual English profiles and external tests indicate that large majority of students make better than average progress from individual starting points.
- In mathematics, over the last three years attainment for the large majority of students has been above curriculum standards as a result of very good progress. This is reflected in lesson observations where a similar proportion of students are consistently able to reach and exceed the lesson objectives. Whilst indicators provided by international benchmarking show less impressive attainment, current internal assessment data and work samples show stronger achievement.




- School assessments indicate that a large majority of students make very good progress to attain above expected curriculum standards. These levels of attainment and rates of progress have been stable over time. This is not fully supported by external benchmark tests, however, it is evident in written work and in lessons. Students in lower years demonstrate good skills of enquiry and observation. These skills develop progressively over the phase with older students effectively planning and carrying out fair tests. Students are less skilful at using knowledge and understanding to explain reasons for predictions.

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students attain above MoE curriculum standards. This is confirmed by the schools internal assessments. In lessons and in their recent work, students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of Hadith and Seerah. They memorise prescribed verses of the Holy Qur'an and adhere to recitation rules. The majority of students make better than expected progress in analysing the Holy Qur'an and identifying the components and classification of Hadith. However, progress overtime as demonstrated in students' work books is not consistent.
- In Arabic as a first language, students' listening skills are at the expected level. The speaking skills of the majority of the students are not as secure. For example, students are not confident to engage in extended speech or dialogue. Reading with understanding is limited and lacks independence for the majority of students. Students writing skills are improving over time, but at times grammatical and spelling errors hinder their fluency and engagement. Overall, most students make acceptable progress.
- In Arabic as an additional language, internal assessments and evidence from lessons show students' attainment is above the curriculum standard for the majority of students. Students' listening skills are secure, although speaking skills are still developing with a few students only able to answer oral questions or engage in genuine dialogue with confidence. A majority of students show confidence in reading extended texts. They are able to use simple sentences to construct short written texts based on familiar contexts. Progress overall is acceptable. This is due mainly to the lack of development with speaking and writing skills over time.
- The large majority of students attain above national and international standards in English. Students speak articulately and engage in active discussions during lessons, using persuasive language and genre appropriate to the audience. When engaging with poetry and drama, such as works from Shakespeare, students share perspectives on literary functions, and the impact they have on the transfer of meaning. All groups, including those with SEND and those from multilingual backgrounds, make very good progress in lessons and from individual entry points.

- Internal mathematics attainment data shows most students reaching levels above curriculum standards. External IGCSE scores and attainment in lessons is not quite to this standard. This pattern continues over time where only a majority of students achieve a grade above the expected standard. Most, however, exceed international benchmarking predictions. This represents outstanding progress with almost all students exceeding targets during 2016. In lessons most students, across all groups, make both better than expected attainment and progress in terms of curriculum standards and their own starting points.
- School assessments show a large majority of students attain science levels above expectations and this is reflected in IGCSE results, over a three-year period. Similarly in lessons observed and students' written work they show above expected progress. Students develop a very good range of knowledge and understanding, which leads to excellent outcomes for the most able studying three sciences in restricted time. However, performance against double award is not as strong. Through the phase students progressively develop their understanding with older students using very strong skills of investigation both to plan experimental work and to research scientific topics.

 Post-16		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Acceptable	Good ↑
Arabic as a first language	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as an additional language	Not applicable	Not applicable
English	Outstanding ↑	Outstanding ↑
Mathematics	Very good	Very good
Science	Very good	Very good

- In Islamic education the majority of students make good progress, with most attaining levels that are in line with MoE expectations. In lessons and in their recent work, students demonstrate adequate knowledge, understanding and skills in Islamic concepts, principles and etiquette. In lessons, the majority of students make better than expected progress in understanding and analysing Hadith and the Holy Qur'an. They can support their views with verses from the Holy Qur'an. They successfully make links to real life contexts and to other areas of the curriculum.
- In Arabic as a first language, internal assessments indicate that attainment is in line with curriculum standards. Listening skill are secure with students demonstrating an understanding of the main points and opinions from various perspectives. Speaking skills are not as advanced. Most students are able to give a short prepared talk but few can elaborate or engage in more advanced debate and conversations. The majority of students require support in helping them to understand longer, more complex texts. Writing skills are still developing. Overall, progress with all communication skills in Arabic is acceptable.
- Most students' attainment in English is above those expected in school and international curriculum standards. During lessons this is affirmed when students analyse texts, such as the poem "Tulips" by Sylvia Plath, by considering the impact of literary devices on the audience. They think analytically and share perceptions through persuasive debate. They write eloquently, considering purpose and audience. Most students reflect on personal writing resulting in consistent development of writing skills. Having choices of English courses supports all students to make outstanding progress commensurate with their individual language backgrounds.

- Over recent years the International Baccalaureate (IB) examination grades in mathematics have remained consistent with most reaching the curriculum standard, and this year a large majority exceeding that standard. All groups of students are progressing at approximately equal rates with a large majority exceeding their benchmarking targets. In lessons, knowledge, skills and understanding above the minimum curriculum requirements are demonstrated by at least three-quarters of the students. In recent work samples a similar proportion show progress beyond expectations in relation to lesson objectives and their individual starting points.
- Most students across the International Baccalaureate Diploma programme (IBDP) achieve success with a large majority achieving above expectations in biology and environmental science, although performance is less strong in physics and chemistry. The 2016 outcomes were lower than the pattern over time in which most achieve above expectations. However, in lessons and written work a large majority make progress above expectations from their starting points and show exceptional conceptual understanding alongside impressive research skills.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Learning skills	Outstanding	Outstanding	Very good	Outstanding

- Most students enjoy school, are motivated and often take responsibility for their own learning. FS children eagerly take part in activities and enthusiastically explain their knowledge and understanding. Other students consistently use a variety of self-assessment techniques to reflect on their work and how they might improve and develop. Occasionally in the secondary phase students are passive and teachers have to work hard to elicit answers to questions.
- Across the school collaborative learning is a common feature. FS children interact very well with their 'talking partners', or in group activities. Older students are able to explain their science work to each other very clearly and reach agreements in a mature way. Confident learners are seen leading whole classes through problems in mathematics lessons.
- Most students regularly make meaningful connections between subjects and can apply their skills to problems solving. For example, in English Year 6 students use knowledge from lessons in history, science and technology to write about survival from the Titanic. Students' ability to make links to real life situations particularly in the secondary phase are not as strong.
- Students use technology successfully to record, assess and share information about their work. They check vocabulary in language learning, or practise problem solving challenges in mathematics. Students are creative and use their research when discussing problems. IB students' work reflects their ability to think critically about topics such as the effect of industrialised food production on the physical environment.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Personal development</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The overall school ethos encourages children and students to take responsibility for their own learning. There is considerable evidence that almost all students enjoy the challenges it brings. Students respond exceptionally well to the school's extra-curricular programme. They respond positively to critical feedback and thrive on developing their own creativity and innovation skills.
- Almost all students are very well behaved; in classes, during school events, and when moving around the school. They confirm that there is very little bullying and are happy with the systems to deal with any incidents. Almost all students respect each other in and outside the classroom, maturely resolving any disputes. Their exemplary behaviour makes a strong contribution to learning in most lessons.
- Student-staff relationships are friendly and respectful across all phases. It is evident that students feel valued and supported and this, in turn, leads to effective relationships among all students. They show genuine concern for others and are always ready to extend help to those in need.
- Students appreciate the range of healthy lifestyle programmes that are in place, some of which have been initiated by students themselves. Students have a very secure understanding of how to make healthy choices and they apply this knowledge to their everyday lifestyles.
- Overall attendance is high. Students are punctual when arriving at school and for lessons throughout the day.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students have a well-established understanding and appreciation of Islamic values. They are aware of how these values influence life in the local community. They demonstrate understanding and respect of Muslim practices and the importance of mosques to Muslims. Muslim students actively contribute to Islamic assemblies to increase the awareness of others.
- Students are highly respectful and appreciative of the UAE culture and heritage. They speak with confidence about the geographic and economic development of the UAE and the impact of the oil industry and the leaders' vision in building the modern UAE. They actively participate in various national festivals to celebrate the UAE culture.
- Students across all phases demonstrate a sense of pride in their own culture. They appreciate being part of an international school in a multicultural society. They strive to learn about other cultures in lessons and during celebrations such as International Day.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Social responsibility and innovation skills</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students demonstrate a strong sense of responsibility and are actively involved in school life. The students' council offers a representative voice and contributes to positive changes. Prefects effectively support and mentor younger learners to improve their social skills. Students willingly contribute to various charitable appeals such as the campaign to collect blankets for Syria.
- Students display an excellent work ethic. They demonstrate the characteristics of successful IB learners. They show pride in contributing to the Model United Nation in Qatar. Students' innovation skills are increasingly developed. They are very confident in using different technological applications with a few students very confident to design their own for use in school in support of their own and others learning.
- Students in all phases are well-informed about environment issues, locally and globally. FS children know about the importance of saving water. Students, in all phases, contribute to numerous projects mostly initiated by students and led by the Eco-committee. For example, can collections, solar energy and suspending water bottles in toilet tanks to reduce water consumption.

### 3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Teaching for effective learning</b>	Outstanding	Very good	Very good	Very good

- Most teachers have secure subject knowledge and know how to adjust their teaching so that it is presented in a meaningful context for students. In FS, teachers include a wide variety of activities to meet the needs of younger learners. In other phases teachers successfully provide a wide range of examples to reinforce students' conceptual understanding.
- Students benefit from an attractive, stimulating learning environment. Lesson planning makes use of assessment data to provide interesting and appropriately differentiated activities that engage students well. Teachers make good use of resources. Where teaching is strong, time is used effectively. In the FS, classrooms are multi-sensory and visibly stimulating. In Arabic and Islamic education, some lessons are still too teacher-centered, limiting the active learning seen in other subjects.
- Teachers' thoughtful questioning inspires students' curiosity, promotes critical thinking and deepens their understanding in most lessons. This is a very strong feature of the theory of knowledge (TOK) lessons in post-16. It is more variable in other subjects such as primary science and Arabic as an additional language in the secondary phase, where challenging questions are often missing.




- Teachers fully understand that students have different learning needs. Teaching strategies are adjusted to match the learning styles of different groups of students, but this is not yet consistently effective in all subjects across all phases. This is a strong feature in English and mathematics lessons in primary and post-16.
- In many lessons, teachers' use a variety of methods and resources to promote students' critical thinking and problem solving skills. Frequent individual and small group learning projects effectively develop students' independence and collaboration skills. Students enthusiastically participate in theme weeks and engage in enterprising activities that provide opportunities to develop their learning further.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Assessment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The school has developed a seven-point scale against which student attainment is measured. It is effectively aligned with the external examinations undertaken by students in the upper secondary and post-16 phases. In the FS, assessments are strongly linked to the early learning goals. Elsewhere assessments are not yet fully aligned to the revised English National curriculum requirements or set at appropriate age expectations in Arabic as an additional language.
- In upper secondary and post-16 phases, attainment is rigorously benchmarked against expected international examination standards. Elsewhere a number of international benchmarking tests are used which yield a variety of data. As yet, the school has not fully aligned outcomes of its internal assessment with these.
- Data from predictive assessments is used very effectively to support target setting for students. Assessment data is thoroughly analysed to determine whether students are making expected progress towards their targets. Analysis of assessments very effectively identifies individuals and groups of students requiring support and leads to appropriate and successful interventions. In the FS, assessments of children's work are regular and detailed ensuring that most children make outstanding progress.
- Outcomes of analysis of data are used very well to map and influence curriculum changes. Most teachers routinely and very effectively use data to monitor progress and to plan the delivery of lessons that meet the different needs of students. In the FS, assessment information is shared effectively between teachers and used to plan activities with clear objectives for individual children.
- Teachers across the school have an excellent knowledge of their students' strengths and weaknesses and routinely provide comprehensive verbal and written feedback. Work is marked to a high standard. This is less consistent in Arabic and Islamic education. Peer and self-assessment is a major strength of the school, students routinely and very effectively use rubrics for assessment to identify specific areas for improvement.

## 4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum design and implementation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Very good	Outstanding 

- The curriculum follows the requirements of the National curriculum in England together with the UAE MoE curriculum content for the teaching of Arabic and Islamic education. It is effectively designed to promote rigour and challenge with international perspectives added to reflect Emirate and national visions. In post-16, three International Baccalaureate programmes are followed. Knowledge, skills and understandings that transcend the subjects are explored through academic, creative, physical and practical components.
- Scope and sequence documents for each subject provide the framework for progression and continuity. A 'progress spiral' innovatively facilitates key content depth across more than one phase. A collaborative support programme ensures that transition between phases promotes academic challenge and the social development of students. IB students receive comprehensive assistance and guidance to facilitate their transition to life beyond school.
- In the FS and primary phases, a thematic approach provides opportunities for students to pursue individual investigations. In upper secondary a wide range of subject choices provides learning experiences that meet the diverse needs of students. Three different IB pathways in post-16 supports students in developing their talents, interests and aspirations.
- The thematic approach supports the transfer of skills and understandings across a range of subjects in the FS and primary phases. Theory of knowledge in the post-16 provides strong cross-curricular connections. In the secondary phase, identification of conceptual links to deepen learning is developing. Additional opportunities include special events when students can apply and expand the knowledge and skills gained from specific subjects to enhance critical thinking and collaboration.
- The curriculum is reviewed in response to student learning needs, external assessment results and current educational trends. In term 3, horizontal mapping of the curriculum themes for the following year are reviewed to manage resources, plan special events and to plan effective links between subjects. A structured process of on-going self-evaluation drives curriculum modification.
- The UAE social studies curriculum is skilfully integrated and closely aligned to the MoE programme. Students successfully learn about the culture and development of the UAE. Skills, concepts and knowledge are thoughtfully planned and previous learning taken into account. There is smooth progression across year groups. Teachers are very effective in planning interesting lessons. Throughout the study units, students acquire a broad range of personal and social skills as well as academic achievements. They are highly independent learners and show creativity in assignments. Teachers use assessment strategies, which target concepts and skills, and meet all learners' needs.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum adaptation	Outstanding	Outstanding ↑	Very good	Outstanding ↑

- The curriculum is purposefully modified in response to changing student needs, adoption of new teaching strategies and integration of new resources. All students complete an entry test and this informs curriculum modification and additional individual support where needed. In lessons, most teachers skilfully scaffold and adapt learning intentions and success criteria. This is less consistently evident in the secondary phase.
- The curriculum is enhanced by extensive additional activities. Enterprise is highlighted through the Community Action Service programme. Students develop leadership and entrepreneurial skills by organising activities and special events. An extensive extra-curricular programme provides opportunities for students to foster interests and passions through a range of academic, sporting and creative activities.
- UAE social studies and culture are innovatively mapped into thematic units. Examples include FS children exploring Arabian Adventures and Year 8 students investigating Dubai culture and traditions. Excursions and guest speakers further enhance provision. Emirati students and parents initiate and organise activities such as National Day celebrations and charity support, such as a recent blood drive.
- The school provides Arabic teaching for 68 out of 136 children in FS2 twice per week for 25 minutes in each lesson. Children are introduced to Arabic sounds and their different forms. Shapes, colours and numbers are covered within the topics through the year using songs, games and interactive activities.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The school keeps an accurate register of adults working at the school. Through comprehensive training, all employees understand the school's clear child protection policy. The content of the policy is effectively communicated to parents. There are clear and detailed procedures in place to protect students from all forms of bullying and abuse.
- The school premises are secure and the students are supervised effectively at all times. All indoor areas are kept clean and hygienic and the arrangements in specialist areas, such as science laboratories and the swimming pool, are organised to ensure the protection of students at all times. Both bus and car drop-offs and pick-ups are safe. Checks on safety and emergency equipment are carried out regularly.

- Buildings and equipment are very well maintained. Thorough records of repairs and checks are stored centrally. Accurate records are kept of visitors entering and leaving the school and of fire and evacuation drills. Systems for collecting and sharing of appropriate medical information are excellent. The school provides superb medical coverage at all times.
- The school premises provide an excellent environment within which all students, including those with SEND, can learn, grow and thrive. There are no access issues for the current student population. The laboratories, physical education facilities as well as all classrooms throughout the school provide safe and productive spaces for learning.
- The school has put in place many initiatives to encourage healthy living, including having the school doctor serve healthy meals alongside healthy advice. Through newsletters, assemblies and aspects of the curriculum, such as skills for life, science classes and fruit being available on sports day, ensures making healthy choices is a high profile aspect of school life.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Care and support	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Staff are very aware of the academic, social, personal and emotional needs of all their students. Relationships between staff and students are very strong. Students are involved in creating positive codes of behaviour and there are high expectations for students to manage their own behaviour in and around the school.
- The school is very successful in promoting the importance of regular attendance and punctuality. Any unexplained absences are swiftly followed up. The school works closely with any parent who is persistently late in bringing their children to school.
- Robust systems are in place to ensure the early identification of students' individual special needs. Staff are skilled at diagnosing children's needs at an early age or soon after students join the school. The identification of gifted and talented students in the school has begun but procedures and policies are in the early stages of development.
- Specialist staff work very effectively with parents, students and teachers to plan support that is personalised to meet students' academic, personal and social needs. Focused intervention programmes successfully narrow the gaps in learning. In lessons, a minority of teachers are not skilled at adapting lesson plans to help students work on their targets. Gifted and talented students are progressively given good opportunities to take part in challenging inter-school activities.
- Staff show high levels of care and concern and carefully monitor students' well-being and personal development. Almost all students report that they feel confident about asking for help and advice if the need arises. Older students and their parents receive very good support in preparing them for their future schools or as they progress from the senior school to further education or the world of work.

## Inclusion

### Provision and outcomes for students with SEND

Very good

- The school has developed a very strong inclusive ethos, underpinned by a positive admissions policy. The two leaders of inclusion are well qualified, experienced and have a clear vision of further improvement. The school has been successful in providing additional training for teachers and learning support assistants, which is enabling swifter identification and more effective support for students.
- Robust systems are in place to ensure early identification of barriers to learning. This leads to timely interventions. Parents, students, specialist staff and external agencies, when required, are involved in devising and reviewing individual education plans (IEP) and student profiles. Teachers and their assistants, use these effectively to gain a good understanding of students' needs and to develop the strategies required to help students meet their targets.
- The school offers parents frequent opportunities to discuss their children's progress. Parents are invited to review the actions and targets in their children's IEP. A more formal process to involve them fully in the design, as well as the review, of their children's individual educational plans is something the school wishes to develop in the long term. Parents are highly appreciative of the work of the inclusion team.
- Individualised modifications of the curriculum are usually very successful, particularly in primary. Focused and intensive intervention programmes in both sections of the school contribute well to students meeting their targets. Interventions in a minority of lessons, particularly in the secondary phase, are not as skilfully made. This does at times slow progress.
- Overall, students' progress in meeting their targets is very good. The school makes good use of a variety of assessments tools to measure the progress of individuals and groups of students. School data indicates that almost all students make better than expected progress. Progress observed in lessons and in students' work is more variable.

## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Very good

- The vision of the school to 'To create an outstanding, multi-cultural learning community which empowers students to reach their potential, become life-long learners and responsible global citizens' is firmly embedded into the school's ethos. How this, and the UAE national priorities will be accomplished are clearly set out within the school's strategic plan for improvement.
- All leaders have a very good understanding of what constitutes effective teaching, and use this knowledge to share best practice in order increase student achievement. Most senior and middle leaders have a secure knowledge of the expectations of the school curriculum. In the main this is translated into high expectations of students work. An extensive knowledge of the curriculum for the teaching of Arabic has not been firmly established.



- Relationships between staff are excellent. Very good systems of communication share effective working practices between subjects and phases. All staff are fully aware of the responsibilities delegated to them and are firmly held to account for student outcomes through a revised system of performance management.
- Innovative solutions to remove potential barriers to improvement are sought and taken. For the most part, this is successful. For example, through the use of modern technology which inspires and fosters in students a love of learning. Occasionally, leaders are slow to recognise when actions taken have been less successful and student progress slows as a result.
- Leaders have been very successful in developing the school overtime. They share a collective desire to support students in reaching the highest possible standards. This is clearly evidenced, for example, in the outstanding performance of post-16 students in English and in the personal and social development of students throughout the school.

#### School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Very good

- The school has comprehensive and detailed school self-evaluation procedures, including the analysis of internal and external data. Data analysis is often used well to identify areas for further improvement. However, the rigour of analysis lacks consistency in the secondary phase. The questions that data should raise regarding the quality of provision and the impact on student learning are not fully considered. The benchmarks from the Dubai supplement are not always used accurately.
- Systems to monitor the quality of teaching on students learning are systematic, varied and consistent across most subjects. Leaders at all levels are involved in the process and this, in most instances, provides an in-depth evaluation of the impact of teaching on students' learning. Occasionally, monitoring becomes descriptive rather than evaluative nevertheless careful consideration is given to providing teachers with accurate points for further development.
- The school's improvement plans are comprehensive and for the most part clearly indicate measurable success criteria linked to improved outcomes for students. They include creative solutions to identified weaknesses, such as how to share best practice across subjects and how to integrate UAE national priorities across all curriculum areas.
- All the recommended actions from the previous inspection have already or in the process of being addressed. For example, actions taken to improve transition from FS2 to Year 1 have resulted in higher expectations and improved attainment and progress in most subjects at the beginning of the primary phase.

#### Partnerships with parents and the community

Outstanding

- The school has an open-door policy, which enables parents to ask questions and express their views at any time. Parents are confident they will be listened to and that they contribute to shaping the direction of school improvement. In discussion they provide numerous examples of changes that have been made at their request and the significant impact on how well their children learn and develop as outstanding young citizens.

- Systems of communication between parents and the school are comprehensive and regular. Weekly information regarding curriculum content, meetings to explain how subjects are taught and the virtual learning platform to name but a few ways in which parents are empowered as partners in their children's learning.
- Reports to parents provide them with clear information regarding their children's standards of attainment academically and personally. Strengths and weaknesses are shared. Parents value this information and explain how this helps them to share the school's vision to ensure that all students reach their full potential.
- There is a very wide and varied range of partnerships established to help the school remain at the forefront of best practice and consequently aim for the highest standards in students' achievement. For example, taking the lead in the formation of a cluster of schools delivering the 'Read Write Inc' programme and exploring how best to teach phonics to the young children in Dubai.

<b>Governance</b>	Outstanding
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- Since the previous inspection, the governing board has further developed in order to ensure that it maintains and expands the knowledge it has of the quality of education provided by the school. New board members who bring a wealth and varied expertise have been appointed representing a range of stakeholders.
- The board use their collective knowledge and experience of education and of the UAE priorities to challenge the school, acting as a highly effective constructive critics. They are central to the school's vision and fully involved in setting the strategic direction for school improvement. Through many systems and information gathering they routinely check the impact on student achievement of the actions taken by school leaders.
- Decisions taken by the board are at the centre of the success of the school in maintaining those areas of the schools work that are outstanding and developing those that need to improve further. Generous levels of staffing and high quality resources provide school leaders with every opportunity to strive for excellence in provision and to ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

<b>Management, staffing, facilities and resources</b>	Outstanding
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- The common timing for lessons helps the school run calmly and effectively. The weekly schedule ensures teaching spaces are utilised well and little time is lost during the day. Staff, students and parents are kept abreast of activities and events through a variety of effective communication channels.
- Teachers and teaching assistants engage on a regular basis in significant continued professional development. This covers a variety of important aspects of teaching and learning linked closely to the school's identified priorities, including the need to improve open-ended questioning. Academic staff are creatively deployed to cover the needs of all groups of students, providing specialist support and expert knowledge where it is most useful.

- Learning areas allow access for all and provide engaging spaces that promote students' learning. There are sufficient large spaces for assemblies and other large gatherings within the school. The cafeterias provide pleasant areas for eating. Corridors and classroom walls are used to attractively display student work. The overall impression given is one of a productive and creative learning environment.
- The school libraries are well-resourced. A wide range of science, technology and physical education equipment is provided. Computer technology is widely available to students through desktops or tablets and appropriate software, such as Nearpod, is effectively used. Classroom stationery, furniture, materials and equipment allow teachers to plan appealing activities for individuals, small groups or the whole class.

## 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	437
	2015-2016	390
 <b>Teachers</b>	106	
 <b>Students</b>	152	

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

- Almost all parents that responded to the survey are happy with the quality of education that the school provides for their children. They agree that their children enjoy school and are safe and well cared for.
- Almost all teachers confirm their positive views of all aspects of the school included in the inspection survey. With all teachers responding that they strongly agree that inspection has led to improvements in the school.
- All teachers and almost all parents agree that students are well behaved and get along well with each other.
- Almost 20 per cent of parents indicate that their children do not regularly read for pleasure at home.

## 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)