



The Winchester School

🇬🇧 Curriculum: UK

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



Contents

School information.....	3
The DSIB inspection process.....	4
Summary of inspection findings 2016-2017	6
Main inspection report	12
1. Students' achievement.....	12
2. Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills.....	16
3. Teaching and assessment	18
4. Curriculum	20
5. The protection, care, guidance and support of students.....	20
Inclusion	22
6. Leadership and management	23
The views of parents, teachers and senior students	26



School information



General information

Location	Jebel Ali
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2003
Website	www.thewinchesterschool.com
Telephone	048820444
Address	P O Box 38058
Principal	Meenakshi Dahiya
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	13 to 16 February 2017

Teachers / Support staff

Number of teachers	214
Largest nationality group of teachers	Indian (Asian)
Number of teaching assistants	49
Teacher-student ratio	1:30
Number of guidance counsellors	2
Teacher turnover	16%

Students

Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	3-18
Grades or year groups	FS1-Year 13
Number of students on roll	3650
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	NA
Number of Emirati students	50
Number of students with SEND	64
Largest nationality group of students	Indian

Curriculum

Educational permit / Licence	UK
Main curriculum	UK / NA
External tests and examinations	IGCSE A LEVEL
Accreditation	NA
National Agenda benchmark tests	GL CAT4



The DSIB inspection process



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

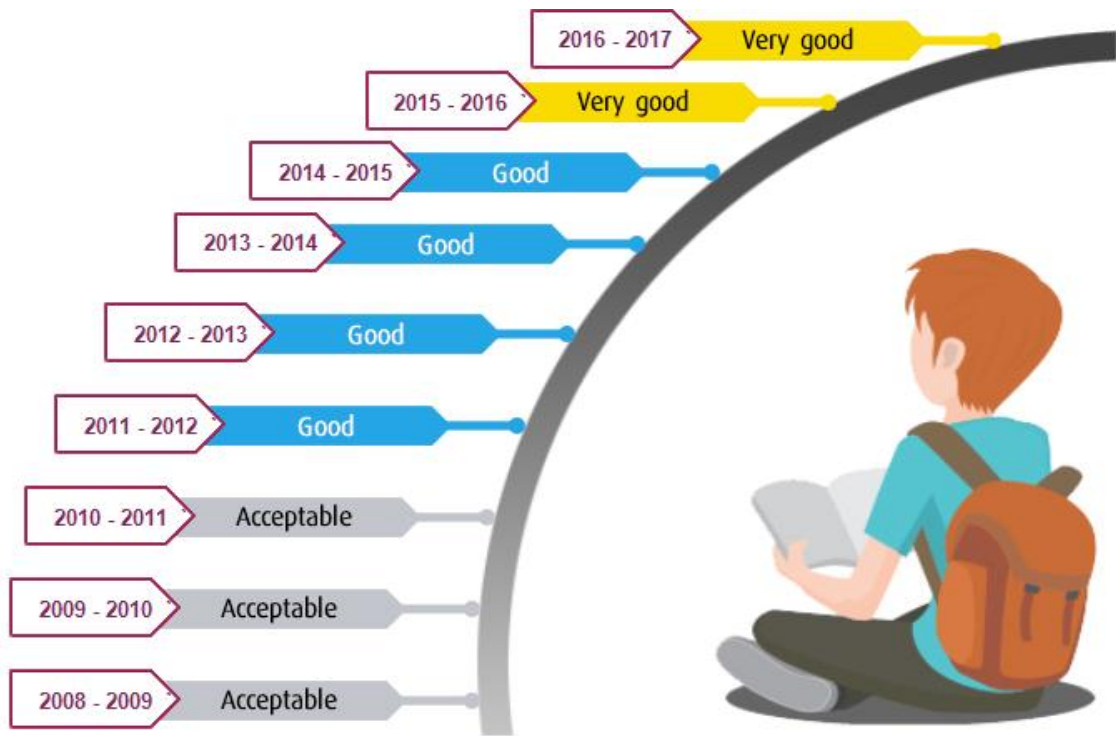
Inspection judgements are drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observation of students' learning in lessons, review of their work, discussions with students, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and review of surveys completed by parents, teachers and students.

Judgements are made on a six-point scale

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

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

Inspection journey for The Winchester School



- The Winchester School opened in 2003. At the time of this inspection there were 3650 students, on roll, aged three to 18 years old. The principal has been in post since September 2016. Teacher turnover was 16 per cent at the time of this inspection.
- In the three previous inspections, the school was recognised as having strengths in senior leadership, students' personal development, provision in the Foundation Stage (FS), and students' attainment and progress at post-16.
- Recommendations over the same period focused on the need to improve students' progress in Islamic education and Arabic, and to improve the consistency of teaching for effective learning.

Summary of inspection findings 2016-2017



The **Winchester 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.

- In the Foundation Stage (FS) and at post-16, attainment and progress are outstanding in English, mathematics and science. Across other phases, students' attainment and progress in Arabic and Islamic education are mostly good. In English, mathematics and science, students' attainment and progress vary between good and outstanding.
- Students' personal and social development are outstanding. They thoroughly enjoy school and demonstrate very positive attitudes towards learning. Students are self-reliant, disciplined and appreciate the opportunity to interact with peers whose families originate from many cultures. As a result, relationships throughout the school are harmonious.
- Teaching mostly results in very effective learning. Teachers have a thorough knowledge of their subjects and most understand how students learn effectively. In Foundation Stage (FS), teachers provide a stimulating learning environment in which children develop, exceptionally well. Assessment is used very effectively to influence teaching, students' progress and to make suitable adaptations to the curriculum.
- The curriculum has a very clear rationale and is aligned well to the school's values and vision. It provides breadth and balance, with care taken to include creative, physical and practical experiences in all phases. Personalisation, choice and opportunities for innovation in all subjects are all strong features of the curriculum.
- There is a rigorous system for the maintenance and safety of the school building. The school is an attractive and inclusive environment. The premises and resources are excellent and are constantly reviewed and updated to better support curriculum implementation. Staff give very good support and guidance to the students.
- The principal provides very high quality leadership and together with senior leaders sets an ambitious strategic direction for the school, based on high expectations and continuous improvement in all aspects. Governors make a considerable contribution to strategic direction and planning and significantly, positively impact on the school's performance.

What the school does best

- Students' impressive personal development, nurtured by highly effective procedures for their protection, care, guidance and support.
- The opportunities for students to take part in creative, aesthetic, physical and technological learning activities.
- The highly effective partnership between the school, parents and the community
- The outstanding provision and outcomes for children in the Foundation Stage (FS)
- Students' attainment and progress at post-16, in most subjects.
- The very high quality educational leadership, and the ambitious drive for excellence in all spheres of school life.

Recommendations

- Ensure all teaching is consistently high across the school, so that all students' attainment and progress is accelerated by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what students can do
 - sharing the successful teaching approaches in all year groups and subjects, widely among staff.

National Agenda Parameter



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

In response to this, each participating school was issued a report on their students' performance in these international assessments and, in addition, they were provided with clear targets for improving their performance. In 2015, KHDA launched the National Agenda Parameter, which is a method for measuring and monitoring schools' progress towards achieving their individual National Agenda targets through the use of external benchmarking assessments.

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

- The school meets the registration requirements for the National Agenda Parameter.
- In English, mathematics and science attainment, in the National Agenda Parameter, is below expectations.
- The school makes effective use of the CAT4 data to include students in target setting and to inform teachers' planning. The school website is very informative and provides some very useful information on the National Agenda for parents. Training is provided for teachers on the interpretation of all data.
- The school adapts its curriculum based on their analysis of all the data. As a consequence, the mathematics department has prioritised problem solving as an area for improvement. The English staff have dedicated more time to reading and comprehension work. The science department is focusing closely on the interpretation of data graphs.
- Teaching is adapted to best meet the needs of the students. For example, the mathematics department has adopted a different approach to problem solving by focusing on a key word in the problem and getting students to link that word with the appropriate mathematical operation they need in order to solve that problem.
- Students are aware of their National Agenda Parameter results, and those who need extra support understand why GAP sessions are being put on to reinforce their understanding. In English, good use is made of texts to construct inference and extract meaning, using a variety of genres.

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

Innovation in Education

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



Promoting a culture of innovation:

- The school has set an ambitious agenda to ensure innovation is embedded across a wide range of initiatives, intently focused on improving student learning. The promotion of innovation is carefully planned at whole-school level. All leaders show a clear understanding of how to innovate and improve the part of the school for which they are responsible. Well-planned and frequently student-led projects and entrepreneurial activities help them to acquire and develop wider key skills. Students observe lessons to provide feedback to leaders and teachers on how their skills of innovation can be developed further.

Overall school performance

Very good

1 Students' achievement

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

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

4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum design and implementation	Outstanding	Very good	Very good	Outstanding
Curriculum adaptation	Outstanding 	Very good	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	Very good	Very good	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	Very good
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Very good

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	Outstanding	Outstanding
Mathematics	Outstanding	Outstanding
Science	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Attainment and progress in English are outstanding. Most children are skilled in writing unaided by the time they are in Foundation Stage 2 (FS2). They compose extended pieces of writing related to stories and topics they know well. They express themselves very clearly, writing legibly and using their improving phonetic skills to write words which are not familiar to them. Their rate of progress is similar in reading as they are fluent and confident readers, who already have a very secure sight vocabulary. Speaking and listening skills are very well-established.
- Attainment and progress in mathematics are outstanding. The wide programme of enquiry techniques adopted means children can explore numbers, consider the relationships between these and work out simple problems, sometimes by themselves. During the course of a day, many incidental opportunities are used extremely well for children to count, share and distribute toys and equipment amongst their friends. Activities lend themselves to children discovering for themselves, and exploring the environment and then making highly relevant links to their everyday experiences. This means that they are developing very quickly as informed mathematicians.
- Children's attainment and progress in science is outstanding. Children are learning rapidly about the world around them and making sense of what they observe. They can explore, investigate and predict outcomes, because they have the language skills. Children can conduct their own experiments for example on how to speed up the process of melting ice. They nurture growing plants and present the result of their observational work on natural materials. They use what they have learned in mathematics to record their findings and their literacy skills also aids this process.

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students demonstrate knowledge, skills and understanding which are above curriculum expectations. Students have a strong understanding of Islamic concepts and Islamic values. They are able to recite short Suras from the Holy Qur'an and make short Duaa. In lessons and in their workbooks, the large majority of students make better than expected progress. For example, Year 4 students can explain the importance of the concept of abidance during prayer and how to achieve it.
- The large majority of students in Arabic as a first language attain above curriculum expectations. Internal assessment results are very high but do not always accurately reflect standards observed in lessons. Students have strong listening and reading skills but many are not yet confidently using classical Arabic. Most students make better than expected progress in lessons and over time as seen in their most recent workbooks.
- In Arabic as an additional language, the majority of students achieve above curriculum expectations with respect to their years of study. Most students express themselves confidently and accurately when giving a short, pre-prepared talk. They are beginning to exhibit confidence and understanding when reading extended text. Students' listening and speaking skills are less secure. Progress for the majority of students is good in handwriting, spelling and writing. They would benefit from greater opportunities to write at length.
- In lessons, and in their recent work the majority of students in English attain above expected curriculum standards. Students' listening and speaking skills are a relative strength. Their phonics skills are improving, resulting in increasingly accurate spelling. In lower primary years writing is often at word and sentence level but by upper primary most students are regularly writing at length and to the expected levels. The large majority of students make better than expected progress. Student outcomes in the international benchmark tests are below the expected level.
- In mathematics, despite the wide ability range, the majority of students attain at levels that are above curriculum standards. The school is using international benchmark tests to measure attainment. These tests show that the students are stronger in the mathematical domain of space and shape. In lessons, students' attainment is good. Their progress, against individual starting points is very good. Students demonstrate an understanding of how to solve problems and they are confident when it comes to explaining their work. Levels of attainment, over time, are showing steady improvement.

- In science, a large majority of students demonstrate levels of scientific knowledge and practical skills that are above age-related, curriculum standards. Practical investigative work is a regular feature of many lessons in the primary phase and students are adept in the classic scientific approach to inquiry. Students are confident when making predictions, investigating and drawing conclusions and their level of conceptual knowledge and understanding sometimes belies their actual stage of development. Consequently, a large majority attain well and make better than expected progress when measured against lesson objectives and over successive grade levels.

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

- The majority of students attain knowledge and skills at a level above curriculum expectations. Students understand the importance of following key Islamic teachings such as prayer, Hajj, and Zakat and acknowledge the impact of these on their lives. For example, Year 9 students can explain the fruits of justice in different areas of life. Most students can read relevant Holy Qur'an verses in Arabic, but their understanding of the meaning and their ability to use them as references is still developing. In lessons and in recent work, the majority of students make better than expected progress.
- In Arabic as a first language, the majority of students reach levels that are above curriculum expectations. In students' workbooks, standards are good but are below those identified in internal assessments. Students have good listening and reading skills but do not consistently speak classical Arabic to express views or retell stories. Students express ideas creatively when writing. Extended writing is more limited and they lack sufficient awareness of genre and styles of writing.
- The majority of students achieve above curriculum expectations in Arabic as an additional language. The very high internal assessment results do not reflect students' actual standards. Students have good reading and writing skills but their listening and speaking skills are less well developed. For example, Year 7 students are not yet able to engage in long conversations in Arabic. Progress in writing is good but it is slower when there is lack of differentiation.
- The majority of students follow the English second language curriculum. Consistently, a large majority attain levels above national and international standards in these examinations. A minority of students follow the English first Language curriculum and most attain levels above international standards. Student outcomes over time are improving. In lessons and their recent work, the large majority of students make better than expected progress and demonstrate skills that are above curriculum standards for second language learners. Student outcomes are below the expected level in international attainment benchmark tests.
- In mathematics, the large majority of students, over the phase, are working above curriculum standards and most are making outstanding progress. Results at IGCSE are above international standards and this is an indicator that as students move through the phase they make outstanding progress. In lessons, students are articulate when communicating their understanding and

application of mathematical skills. This level of understanding also transfers into their written work. Over the last three years the overall trend has been one of improvement.

- In science, the large majority of students, including students with SEND or who are gifted and talented demonstrate levels of knowledge, understanding and practical skills that are above curriculum expectations. They achieve outstanding iGCSE results and this represents excellent progress given their starting points. Students display very strong skills in scientific methods of investigation and they use these highly effectively in practical science lessons. Students actively develop problem solving and critical thinking skills as a direct result of very good teaching, and subsequently they become highly reflective learners and go on to make outstanding progress.

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills above curriculum expectations. Students understand why and how they should practice the value of patience in their lives. They demonstrate strong skills in applying their learning to real life. However, students' ability to understand and use references in Arabic is less secure in the case of non-Arabic speakers. In lessons and in recent work, the majority of students make better than expected progress.
- The majority of students attain above curriculum expectations in Arabic as a first language. Internal assessment results are very high but do not reflect actual standards as seen in lessons which although good, are generally lower. Year 12 students develop their reading comprehension well. However, they do not show an ability to write sufficient, reflective pieces on personal experiences or research papers in depth. The progress of students is slower when lessons have a slower pace and is mainly teacher-led.
- A very small number of students study English at post-16. Most of these students attain levels above curriculum standards. Student outcomes in these external examinations are high. At AS Level, most students achieve results that exceed both national and international standards. In lessons and in their recent work, the most students make better than expected progress and demonstrate skills that are above curriculum standards.
- In mathematics, most students attain levels above age-related curriculum standards. They make better than expected progress against their starting points. In both AS and A level examinations, most students attain levels that are above national and international standards, reflecting the progress they make over the previous two years. In lessons, students are impressive in the way in which they approach their work and apply their knowledge to the application of mathematics in the real world. Over time, student outcomes are improving.

- In science, most students demonstrate scientific knowledge and skills to levels above curriculum standards. Teachers promote independent learning and research skills on the one hand and collaborative working on the other. Through such a variety of learning experiences, students go on to become highly effective enquirers, with excellent skills in theoretical and practical problem solving and investigation. They think critically even when the conceptual demand is high. Students' attainment in A level examinations across the three sciences combined is outstanding.

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

- Most students are eager to learn, sustain concentration and work productively on their own. They increasingly take on more responsibility for their own learning and the assessment of it. Students from the primary phase onwards, use 'Learning Menus' to select their preferred level of challenge. They regularly use assessment rubrics to evaluate their learning outcomes and students respond well to feedback from their teachers and peers.
- Students interact and communicate purposefully and productively in groups. They listen to others' views in discussions and when working together. Most students communicate their thinking effectively when describing their learning. Children in the Foundation Stage (FS) collaborate well when they plan what they are going to do together and then negotiate effectively to reach a mutual conclusion.
- Students make connections between in-class learning and real life scenarios. In Islamic education in particular, links are frequently made to students' personal lives. Students confidently apply skills, knowledge and understanding acquired in one lesson to new learning contexts. For example, in Grade 9 English lessons, students used their knowledge about the First World War from history lessons to better understand the poetry of Siegfried Sassoon.
- Children in the FS, use technology effectively and frequently, skilfully engage in shared, sustained and critical thinking. Students in other phases of the school use basic technology to support their learning. For example, students find Holy Qur'an references in support of Islamic values such as justice or respect for parents. Critical thinking, innovation and problem-solving skills are strong features of learning in lessons, particularly in the post-16 phase.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Across the school, students and children and students enjoy their learning and have very positive attitudes towards others. They show independence, confidence and respond well to opportunities to take leadership responsibilities.

- Students are consistently self-disciplined and respectful. They are courteous to adults and other students. Behaviour is excellent around the school. However, a minority of students in the primary and secondary phase can become distracted in lessons when teaching is not engaging enough or not teachers do not set behaviour expectations at appropriate levels.
- Students consistently show high levels of sensitivity and empathy to the needs of others across the school. Relationships amongst students and staff are humble and thoughtful. Students interact positively in class and are eager to respond to their teachers' questions and when working with others during group activities.
- There is a strong commitment to following a healthy lifestyle, as seen in students' participation in different programmes that focused on physical fitness and healthy food. Although students' understanding of healthy lifestyles is very strong, a few students do not always choose to eat healthy food.
- Attendance is very good overall. Students keenly attend school and are mostly punctual in arriving to school and their classes. This positively impacts on attainment and progress of the students.

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

- Students have an excellent appreciation of and frequently reflect on how Islamic values affect their lives in the UAE. For example, they link the harmony and peace in UAE to the Islamic values of tolerance, respect, and equality.
- Students fully respect and appreciate the UAE culture and heritage. Every morning they proudly sing the national anthem. Through field trips, they identify the significance of important landmarks in the UAE such the Grand Mosque and the historical Maliha heritage village. They show deep interest in learning Arabic language and literature as apparent in their excellent performances in Arabic during school assemblies.
- Students demonstrate an excellent understanding and appreciation of their own cultures. During international day students set up stalls to promote awareness of cultural artefacts and participate in dance, music, and cuisine demonstrations. They are fully aware of the many similarities between the different cultures represented in their school.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Across all phases, students present levels of maturity beyond their years and exhibit a strong sense of personal responsibility. They show a genuine commitment to a compelling school ethos. Students present and then lead a vast range of social, mentorship and volunteering initiatives, all of which have a positive effect in the school community. Older students are excellent role models to younger children.
- Students work hard and are dedicated to their learning. Beyond the classroom, the school places a considerable emphasis on encouraging innovation and enterprise learning and students respond accordingly. Well-planned and frequently student-led projects and entrepreneurial activities help them to acquire and develop wider key skills. The science and technology focussed STEAM initiative is an excellent, on-going example of the school's dedication to innovation in learning.
- Students of all ages actively look for ways to improve the environment of their school and local community. They lead a range of sustainability-focused recycling and other eco-clubs. Students have a secure awareness of national and global environmental issues, recognising that they are inheriting these problems and might play their part in solutions. Students enter competitions with this focus and are successful in them.

3. Teaching and assessment

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

- The quality of teaching varies across phases and subjects. It is especially strong in the FS, Post-16 and in science and mathematics across all phases. Almost all teachers have a thorough knowledge of their subjects and most know how students learn best. The large majority of teachers have well-established class routines and effective behaviour management strategies to support effective learning.
- Most teachers plan thoughtful, well-structured lessons to ensure a logic sequence of learning steps to support successful outcomes. Activities are designed to engage and motivate learners and resources are carefully selected to support learning. Occasionally teachers do not allow students sufficient time to complete the tasks effectively. In the FS, classrooms are stimulating and rich with print, contributing to children's' outstanding progress.
- Teachers' skilfully interact with students to engage them in learning. Questioning is often well focused and probing to help students reflect more deeply and precisely. The quality of questioning is particularly strong in the post-16 phase where it challenges students and promotes critical thinking. Teachers often modify questions for particular students and this supports them to make good and better progress in their lessons.

- Teachers use a range of strategies to meet the needs of individual students. Learning tasks are generally carefully planned to ensure that students work at appropriate levels of challenge in relation to their abilities. In mathematics differentiated learning is a strong feature but in other subjects, especially in the secondary phases, there are inconsistencies. Consequently, learning is not always sufficiently challenging, particularly for higher achieving students.
- Teachers encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning and provide increasing opportunities for students to think for themselves and reflect on their work. Teachers routinely require students to carry out research, use technology and work collaboratively. In mathematics and science teachers regularly plan opportunities for students to solve problems. This is less frequently promoted in other subjects.

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

- Internal assessment processes are consistent across all subjects and they are linked closely to the new National Curriculum of England and Wales. Students' progress is mapped to the new curriculum and the academic development of individual students is measured against these standards.
- The school compares its achievements against international expectations using the outcomes from the IGCSE and A levels. In the lower years, the recent introduction of GL benchmark tests is beginning to give the school a clearer picture of student attainment..
- The school analyses the data from the CAT4 tests very effectively. This is to create an individual student profile and to identify any significant inconsistencies between actual and potential attainment. Where inconsistencies are found, staff investigate the cause of the problem to ensure that all students fulfil their potential and make the best possible progress.
- The information the school gathers, particularly the CAT 4 data, is used to very good effect by the teachers to help them inform their planning and to adapt the curriculum if a specific weakness is identified. A large majority of teachers differentiate the work to meet the learning needs of most students, thus helping their progress.
- Teachers have a very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of their students and they plan accordingly to meet the needs of the individuals. In the FS, excellent and effective interventions are quickly put in place to support children's learning. Written feedback is a regular feature. It works best when the feedback refers the student back to the learning.

4. Curriculum

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

- The school follows the English National curriculum and meets all statutory requirements. It is a broad and balanced curriculum, including in Islamic education and Arabic. Topics and themes are chosen very carefully to ensure there is breadth, balance and relevance and a very clear rationale of what is to be achieved. The context of the school is considered very clearly with emphasis on UAE tradition, culture and heritage.
- The way in which the curriculum is designed and delivered means that there is a core purpose, with very effective continuity and progression across year groups and between phases. Effective progression is a key feature of the curriculum across most subjects and particularly in FS where it is used to develop children's skills towards mastery in mathematics.
- Choices for students include options for vocational courses such as business and technology. Year 10 can opt for accounting, business studies, travel and tourism. Students consider their choices carefully after consultation and this process starts in Year 9. By Year 11, options evenings support the selection of advanced level study from a broad range, such as art and design resulting in stunning and bold creative work.
- Work experience opportunities within the school environment help students explore cross-curricular links first hand. From Year 7 onwards they help with administration, resourcing and general office duties. In FS, the children have a very wide range of integrated studies which means scientific enquiry takes place alongside mathematics; for example, where they consider the size, scope and scale of what they observe and record.
- Reviews of the curriculum take place regularly. The school has addressed the changes in recent years to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and brought the curriculum in older year groups in line with new expectations. In older year groups, careful consideration has been given to offering a wealth of musical experiences and learning to play an instrument. Subsequent performances are of a high quality.
- The curriculum covers social studies from a UAE perspective. It is mapped across all year groups and linked to a range of courses. There is a very clear understanding of the framework requirements and clarity about the judgements in subject areas. Learning is characterised by an outcome driven delivery and links to the curriculum and workbooks for Year 7-9., Life and personal experiences are very much part of the learning process. Assessment is incorporated within the social studies provision.

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

- The school continues to be very successful in ensuring that teachers modify the curriculum to meet the needs of all groups of students; most notably in FS and Post-16. Programmes are well designed and carefully planned to provide stimulating and interesting activities, which challenge and engage students of all abilities and learning styles, including those with special educational needs and disabilities.
- The curriculum is imaginative and offers many opportunities for enterprise, innovation and creativity across all subject areas. A wide range of social, cultural, scientific, environmental extra-curricular clubs, competitions and stimulating activities such as the 'STEAM project' significantly enhance students' academic and personal development. Students plan and are frequently involved in several charitable events that support their own and wider communities.
- Students develop an excellent understanding of the culture and heritage of the UAE from learning experiences embedded across the curriculum. This is reflected in the many displays and students' work across the school. From an early age, they gain the knowledge and appreciation of the Emirati traditions and values, which influence the society of Dubai.

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 has outstanding procedures for ensuring the health and safety and protection of children. Staff are fully trained to effectively deal with any incidents. As a result, students feel very safe in school, protected against all forms of bullying, including via social media, as there are well-understood, effective procedures to prevent this.
- A very safe and secure environment is provided. Arrival and departure of school buses are extremely well organised and efficient. Regular checks of the school site are made to ensure it is safe and secure and any arising issues are addressed promptly. Risk assessments for educational visits are thorough. Additional safety measures such as a well-developed lockdown policy, are in place.
- Comprehensive systems and procedures for detailed recording of incidents are reported and tracked successfully. The medical clinics are well-staffed, dealing effectively with minor incidents and emergencies, when they occur. Medical records are detailed with equipment and medicines safe, updated and secure. The medical doctors and clinic serve as a model clinic for all other GEM schools, often sharing best practices.

- The premises and facilities are excellent. They provide a safe and inclusive physical environment and are very well suited to meet the educational needs of all students and the school community. For example, there are personalized evacuation plan (PEEP) for students with SEND.
- The school's promotion of safe and healthy living is systematically built into most aspects of school life. The school canteen encourages healthy foods, including vegetarian options, and ingredients listed on most food items. The school is very effective in the promotion of healthy lifestyles with a number of campaigns, such as diabetes management and how to recognise abuse.

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

- Across the school, in all phases, staff-student relationships are exemplary. They are based on trust and mutual respect. There are excellent, well-thought through systems and procedures in place for managing students' behaviour. These systems are effective, although they are not consistently applied in a few primary and secondary classrooms.
- Students arrive on time to school; only a few students arrive late for school, considering the large size of the cohort. Students also invariably arrive to lessons on time. All of this, coupled with very good attendance, is a direct result of the school's successful strategies for linking excellent attendance and punctuality to achievement and to quickly following up when any student presents an early concern.

The school has comprehensive systems in place to identify students with SEND alongside those who are gifted and talented. This is a real strength. The highly effective achievement centre (ACE) team works hard to ensure that the school remains highly inclusive and that teaching and learning support staff become and remain well-informed of the additional needs of students.

- Effective support for students with SEND is seen in many lessons and across all phases, and is a notable strength in the FS. Support and suitable challenge is in place for students who are gifted and talented but this is not a consistent feature in all classrooms. The quality of support nevertheless enables most students to make very good personal and academic progress.
- There is a well-designed curriculum and an impressive array of activity to promote the well-being and personal development of all students. Systems are in place to monitor impact and to inform effective personal and academic guidance and support. The induction of new children in the FS the careers' guidance for senior students are two strengths in this area.

Inclusion

Provision and outcomes for students with SEND

Very good

- Senior leaders and governors have successfully embedded an inclusive ethos which is evident across the school. The well-qualified co-ordinators of the special educational needs and disabilities department (SENCOs) provide high quality leadership.
- The identification of students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is very accurate and includes a range of assessments and reports from outside specialists. The school has a clear

understanding of the range of disabilities experienced by students and KHDA categories are used accurately.

- The school ensures parents are very well informed on the progress their children make. This is through a variety of formal and informal reporting methods. Parents particularly welcome the daily reports and personalised feedback, which includes advice on ways they can support their children at home. Parents are considered as valued partners who make a significant contribution to the school's high quality provision for students with SEND.
- Provision for students with SEND is well-organised and effectively modified in response to their academic and social needs. This ensures most students are actively engaged with a range of meaningful and relevant activities provided across most subject areas. In a very few lessons where teaching is not as effective, students with SEND do not receive sufficient support.
- Most students make very good progress in relation to their personal targets and starting points. Effective tracking, monitoring and evaluation processes provide accurate information about the progress of students with SEND and inform the next learning objectives. When working in the ACE with specialist staff, progress for students with SEND is of a consistently very high level.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Very good

- The principal's determined vision to provide the best education possible for all students in a safe and caring environment is shared by all members of staff. She is ably supported by senior leaders, who ensure the pursuit for excellence is enacted in all aspects of school life. They are committed to the UAE vision which is clearly communicated.
- There is a meaningful distributive leadership framework which ensures well-focused attention on key aspects of the school's performance, targets professional development for middle leaders and staff, ensures collective responsibility, in addition to building capacity in the school.
- Communication systems within the school are professional and effective. Middle leaders benefit from working with skilled senior leaders to improve the quality of teaching. As a result, most are monitoring teaching accurately in their area of responsibility. They identify what needs to improve and support teachers to develop their skills.
- Leaders at all levels have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to innovate and improve. Very good systems are in place throughout, and in particular the assessment processes. These have been established to quickly and accurately identify students who are achieving well and those at risk of underachieving.
- The school maintains consistently good or better standards in student achievements and has a very strong track record of enabling students to grow personally and work well together. This results from successful decision making by leaders. Compliance with statutory requirements is routine.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Very good

- Systematic and rigorous self-evaluation processes are embedded into school's improvement planning. The school knows itself well and key priorities are accurately identified. The school makes very effective use of detailed analysis of a wide range of student performance data.
- Senior leaders regularly observe teaching and often undertake joint observations to validate their judgements. This quality check usefully judges teachers' work but is, on occasion, generous. Staff are very well supported in developing their skills and knowledge through the effective continuous professional development (CPD) programme.
- The school improvement plan is effectively detailed, has challenging targets and fully addresses the areas identified in the previous inspection. Actions are regularly monitored for impact and further development.
- The recommendations from previous inspection reports have been addressed and the school is showing sustained improvement in key areas. Leaders continue to plan strategically with governors to ensure the highest standards, as the school develops.

Partnerships with parents and the community

Outstanding

- The school has very strong links with parents. Volunteers happily give their time by joining the parent representative body. They provide excellent support in school activities, events and voluntary work in the school. Parents interviewed during this inspection are extremely positive about all aspects of the work of the school. Parents praise the very caring family ethos maintained by the school.
- The school has very effective communication strategies with parents. For example, the appointment of committed parent liaisons for every class is highly valued by parents. Weekly and monthly newsletters provide the school community with details of the curriculum, events and celebrate the success of students.
- Parents feel they are very well informed about their children's academic progress. Reports to parents provide detail, and teacher/parent conferences identify clearly how support can be provided. Any concerns are quickly addressed. Parents praise the school's open-door policy that allows access at any time to informally discuss any concerns with teachers.
- Partnerships with parents, various stakeholders and the local community are established and have a very positive effect on students' achievements. A parental engagement calendar is shared with parents and events are well attended.

Governance

Very good

- Governance is through a system of corporate governance, in addition to the Extended Development Group (EDG) comprising of parents and staff representation. Both groups meet regularly to discuss whole school improvement issues and seek the views of stakeholders.
- Strategic governance is highly effective in fulfilling its role in holding the senior leadership accountable for the quality of educational provision. External visits by GEMS representatives are used very effectively to support and check on targeted aspects of educational provision.
- Leaders and governors work closely together to ensure that they are effective in sustaining current standards of provision and driving improvement. They offer a wide range of skills and expertise that school leaders can draw on. Governors contribute to self-evaluation and track the progress of actions in the school development plan. Governors' assessment is, however, generous largely due to an overly positive view of teaching.

Management, staffing, facilities and resources

Very good

- Day-to-day management of the school is very well organized and distributed effectively between the principal, senior and middle leaders. Excellent communication and parent input has a positive impact on the overall planning of activities and the organization of the school, for example through improved canteen choices and healthy lifestyles for students.
- All teachers and staff are sufficiently qualified to fulfil the school's vision and mission. The teaching staff benefit from regular continuous professional development (CPD) that closely matches the school's priorities. The school empowers staff with pathways for professional development and growth for new and existing teachers to ensure their retention.
- The premises and facilities are of high quality, provide a stimulating learning environment and access is excellent for all users, including students with SEND. Indoor and outdoor areas are well maintained and well-resourced, with most areas covered outdoors.
- There is a wide range of high quality resources that match the needs of students and teachers, with the effective use of space, where students work independently in corridors, and a STEAM cafe where students are highly engaged. School leaders work together to ensure the effective implementation and development of resources across all areas of the school.

The views of parents, teachers and senior students

The views of parents, teachers and senior students

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

Responses to the surveys		
Responses received	Number	
 Parents*	2016-2017	440
	2015-2016	64
 Teachers	279	
 Students	225	

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

- A much higher number of parents participated in the survey than last year.
- Most parents and students are positive about all aspects of school provision. Nearly all agree on the high levels of care and support for students and staff.
- Almost all parents who responded to the survey believe their children enjoy school, are well behaved and are developing a good understanding of the UAE and other cultures.
- All parents who responded to the survey believe their children's SEN needs have been accurately identified.
- Responses from teachers were overwhelming positive about all aspects of the school's provision.
- The majority of the 225 senior students who responded to the survey were positive about most aspects of the school.

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