



Bradenton Preparatory  
Academy

 Curriculum: US

Overall Rating:



"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	Dubai Sports City
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2009
Website	www.dubaisportscity.ae
Telephone	04-4251111
Address	Dubai Sports City
Principal	Dan E. Young
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	22 to 26 January 2017

Teachers / Support staff	
Number of teachers	68
Largest nationality group of teachers	USA
Number of teaching assistants	23
Teacher-student ratio	1:11
Number of guidance counsellors	3
Teacher turnover	30%

Students	
Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	4-18
Grades or year groups	KG1-Grade 12
Number of students on roll	776
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	5
Number of students with SEND	45
Largest nationality group of students	US

Curriculum	
Educational permit / License	US
Main curriculum	US (AERO) / MOE
External tests and examinations	SAT, PSAT, AP, MAP
Accreditation	NEASC Candidate
National Agenda benchmark tests	MAP



## 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.

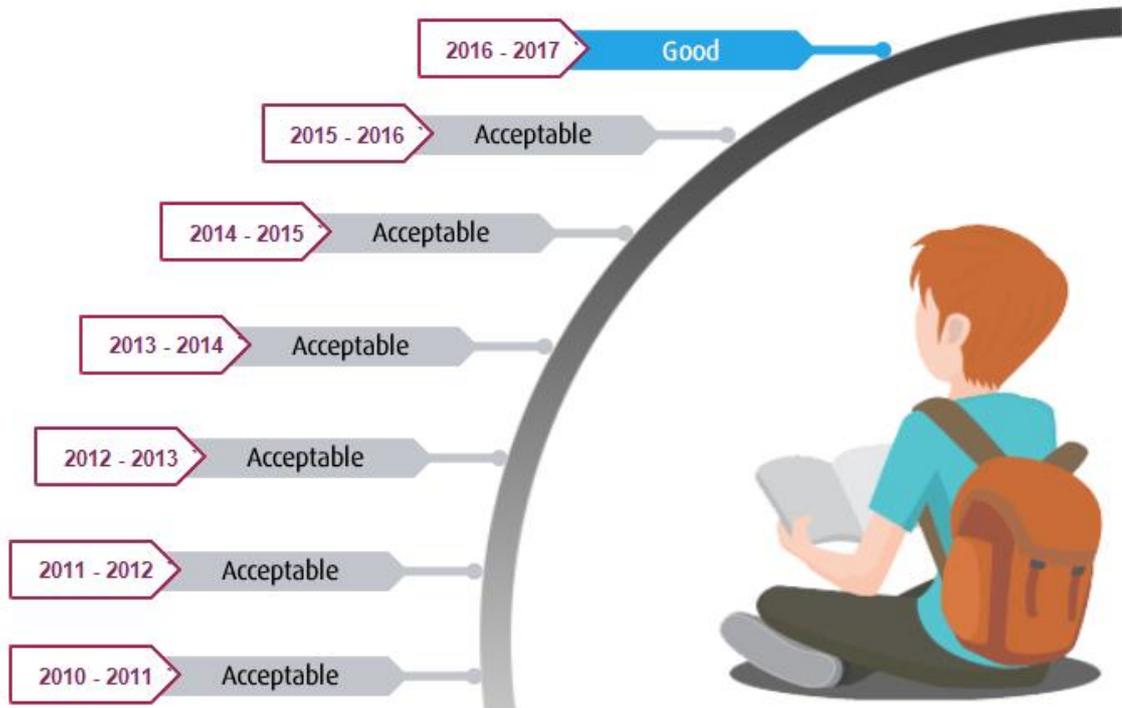
Inspection judgements are drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observation of students’ learning in lessons, review of their work, discussions with students, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and review of surveys completed by parents, teachers and students.

### 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 Bradenton Preparatory Academy



- Bradenton Preparatory School opened in 2009 and changed ownership in 2012. A new principal, experienced in US curriculum, has been in post since the last inspection. The school population has decreased slightly from 824 to 776 students this year. Thirty per cent of teachers are new to the school this year, about the same percentage turnover as in the previous year.
- Over three years, students' positive behavior and attitudes were recognized as strengths. Over the same period, improvements in the curriculum and in the learning environment have led to steady improvements in attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science. The arrangements for students' health and safety have been consistently outstanding.
- The key subject not showing adequate growth in the last three years has been Arabic. Inspection also identified the need to improve the quality of teaching by using assessment information to increase the challenge and expectations for all students. School leaders were also required to evaluate the impact of school improvement on outcomes for students.

## Summary of inspection findings 2016-2017



**Bradenton Preparatory Academy** was inspected by DSIB from 23 to 26 January 2017 . The overall quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The section below summarizes the inspection findings for each of the six performance indicators described in the framework.

- In all four phases of the school, students' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science are at least good and very good in KG in English and mathematics.. Attainment in science in the elementary school is also very good. Islamic education reflects mostly acceptable attainment and progress. Attainment and progress in Arabic as a first language are acceptable in the elementary phase and weak elsewhere. In Arabic as an additional language, attainment t in the middle school is weak. Students' learning skills are very good in the KG and good in each of the other phases.
- Students' personal development is very good throughout the school. There are some inconsistencies in their understanding of Islamic values and local culture, although most students have a better understanding of wider world cultures. Students show good social responsibility in all phases, and innovation skills are developing well.
- Bradenton provides very good teaching for effective learning in the KG, and consistently good teaching throughout the rest of the school. The quality of the teaching and the effective use of assessment in the KG is evident in the positive results achieved. In the other phases, teaching is good overall and the use of assessment is improving. The weakest teaching is in Arabic.
- The established US curriculum is enhanced further by the adoption and transition to the American Education Reaches out (AERO) international schools standards. The KG implements very well a varied and integrated curriculum for young children. Curriculum adaptation for all students is underdeveloped in the upper phases, particularly for students with gifts and talents and those new to Arabic.
- The school's record of outstanding protection and safety of students is enhanced further, with modifications to the infrastructure. They receive very good care and support in the KG and good care and support in other phases.
- The leadership team consists of individuals with proven high-quality experience of American curricula. They are leading the school effectively by improving communication, establishing a clear and collective vision for growth and by introducing sustainable systems for improvement. Their secure knowledge of the school and the school community with regard to governance, parents' views and students' learning needs, is used to identify priorities for further improvement.

### What the school does best

- A particular strength of this school is the ethos of a positive learning environment with the distinctive features and character of an American curriculum in an international setting.
- In KG, a motivated and qualified leadership and teaching staff have a very positive impact on the quality of children's learning, through the use of reliable assessment data, a wide range of resources and a positive partnership with parents.
- There is an effective programme of learning for students with SEND. The highly qualified staff work efficiently as a team to improve the school's capacity to address and meet the academic and emotional needs of students.
- The school analyses and uses data increasingly well to monitor progress and set students' targets for future learning.
- The arrangements for ensuring students' health and safety are outstanding.

### Recommendations

- Governors and leaders should take steps to monitor regularly and improve the attainment and progress in Arabic by:
  - ensuring that the Arabic curriculum is planned and modified to allow students to develop their language skills from their existing starting points
  - modifying the teaching practices to ensure the planned curriculum is effectively implemented, with a focus on students' learning
  - developing accurate assessment processes linked to the curriculum standards, and using these to monitor and evaluate students' progress
  - providing specialist expertise to support and develop the teaching faculty, with the goal of high quality provision and raising student outcomes.
- Further develop teaching strategies at all grade levels to provide additional opportunities, matched to the needs of all students, for active learning, purposeful use of technology, dynamic pacing and the inclusion of higher order thinking skills.
- Systematically include aspects of Emirati history and culture and the UAE national priorities in the wider curriculum in all phases.

## National Agenda Parameter



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

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

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

- Attainment in mathematics, English and science meets expectations in the National Agenda Parameter tests.
- The school meets the registration requirements for the National Agenda Parameter
- The school analyses data from the National Agenda Parameter tests in order to identify specific areas for improvement. An action plan is produced to target any weaknesses in student performance. Students, parents, teachers and governors are well aware of the findings of the tests and appropriate training is given to teachers.
- The school reviews and aligns its mathematics, English and science planning based on the outcomes of the data. Appropriate modifications are made to the subject-based curriculum in order to strengthen any areas of need.
- Teachers make adjustments to teaching strategies to meet the needs of all the students. The content, as well as the skill aspects of the curriculum, are addressed in small group or whole class learning opportunities.
- Students understand well their own results on the National Agenda Parameter. The students are able to talk about their learning, and they have a very good understanding of their targets and next steps. Effective use of resources, particularly technology, helps them develop their research skills, although this is not consistent.

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



Overall school performance

Good

1 Students' achievement

		KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Islamic education 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Weak
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Weak	Weak
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable	Weak	Weak
Arabic as an additional language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Weak	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
English 	Attainment	Very good	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Very good	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics 	Attainment	Very good	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Very good	Good	Good	Good
Science 	Attainment	Good	Very good	Good	Good
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Very good	Good	Good	Good

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Personal development	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good ↑	Acceptable	Good	Acceptable ↓
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good	Good	Good

## 3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Very good ↑	Good	Good ↑	Good
Assessment	Very good	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good ↑

## 4. Curriculum

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Good	Good	Good
Curriculum adaptation	Very good ↑	Good ↑	Acceptable	Acceptable

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Care and support	Very good ↑	Good	Good	Good

## 6. Leadership and management

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

# Main inspection report



## 1. Students' achievement

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

- Assessment data indicate that a large majority of children attain above the curriculum's grade-level standards in all areas of literacy. Evidence in lessons and their daily work shows that the integrated curriculum allows children to use their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in all content areas. This approach results in very good progress during lessons. The children consistently use their vocabulary and writing strategies to label and write stories with meaning and purpose.
- The knowledge and skills of the large majority of children are above the expected curriculum level in mathematics. Their ability to use these skills in real world applications results in very good progress from their starting points and as measured against the learning objectives of the lessons. Assessment information and children's work show the large majority of children have above grade level understanding of number and operations, and are able to demonstrate their understanding of measurement, geometry and addition and subtraction in various contexts and across subject areas.
- In science, the majority of children are proficient in their understanding of the world. For their age they have well-developed enquiry and problem-solving skills. They make notable gains in lessons. They are able to explain their ideas well. For example, they can create a structure for a pet and explain why animals need shade from the sun. Assessments show that progress against learning objectives and over time is good.

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

- In Islamic education, most students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of Islamic concepts and key Islamic beliefs and values in line with curriculum expectations. They read and memorize short Suras from the Holy Qur'an. They can name the Five Pillars of Islam and explain what is expected from each one. In lessons and in their recent work, most students make the expected progress for their grade level.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students' attainment level is broadly in line with the MoE curriculum standards. Students display adequate listening skills. Their speaking skills are improving at an acceptable rate. However, students' writing skills are slightly weaker. Students' progress over time is acceptable in Grades 1 to 4 and slightly slower in Grade 5. In lessons, students make steady progress in developing their vocabulary and reading comprehension.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students demonstrate knowledge, skills and understanding in line with curriculum expectations. Students are able to understand and respond to basic questions in single words. They can ask and answer simple personal questions. They have adequate knowledge about basic vocabulary on topics related to things in their environment. Writing is mostly in the form of copying from textbooks and is underdeveloped. In lessons and their recent work, most students make the expected progress against their starting points.
- In English, the majority of students attain levels that are above curriculum standards. Their listening and speaking skills enable them to be effective communicators who can explain, discuss and present topics well. They listen and draw meaningful conclusions. Student writing develops well over time. Grade 2 students write persuasive essays, and Grade 5 students use books and technology to research and present topics of interest. Most students are capable of accelerated work. Overall, the majority of groups of students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) make better than expected progress from their starting points.
- In mathematics, the majority of students work above grade level standards. External evaluations in MAP assessments also indicate better than expected progress, and above expected grade level standards for the majority of students. In their written work, students demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of number, capacity, shape and measurement, and apply these to solve problems during practical activities. They make good progress against their individual starting points and have maintained good progress over time.
- The large majority of students exceed curriculum expectations in their knowledge and understanding of topics in science. . Students often learn new concepts through investigations that connect well to real-life situations. The progress students make in the lessons is good because they are consistently provided with opportunities to use an 'engineering and design' approach to find solutions to problems.

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

- In Islamic education, the attainment level of students is broadly in line with MoE curriculum standards. Students have a basic understanding of Islam, main worships and the concept of faith. However, their understanding of the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah is underdeveloped for their age. In lessons and over time, students make acceptable progress in acquiring knowledge of the values and manners in Islam.
- In Arabic as a first language, less than three-quarters of students attain the expected levels of the MoE curriculum. Progress over time is minimal. Students do not extend their current skills sufficiently, which restricts the rate of their overall progress. Consequently, their speaking, reading and writing skills are below the expected levels.
- In Arabic as an additional language, less than three-quarters of students attain the levels of language skills expected for their years of study. In lessons, students make better progress. Overall, however, students' reading and decoding skills are not developing at the pace or depth that is required. The quality of writing is weaker than other skills.
- Progress in English lessons and in students' work is good, which is reflected in their external assessments. Most students are adept in research and can use technology effectively to support their learning. For example, Grade 7 students research Elizabethan life and society in preparation for reading Shakespeare's play, 'The Tempest'. The majority of students work above grade level curriculum standards, and have a breadth of secure English skills.
- In mathematics, there is a wide ability range in this phase but the majority of students are working above the grade level curriculum standard. This strength is particularly noticeable in their understanding of space and shape. External MAP assessments show that the majority of the students are making better than expected progress over time. They are making good progress in developing mathematical skills and applying their learning to solving problems.
- Students' attainment and progress are good in science. The majority of students demonstrate better than expected understanding of scientific concepts such as hereditary traits and molecular structures. This is supported by their most recent MAP data that point to good levels of attainment. Students make good progress in lessons, although their MAP growth data does not show this. They consistently learn constructively through open-ended, hands-on activities. All students make similarly good progress.

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

- In Islamic education, the attainment level of many students is below the MoE curriculum standards. A significant number of students are new in this phase and many of them have little or no previous experience of Islamic education. They display gaps in their knowledge and understanding of key concepts, prayers and the Holy Qur'an. In lessons, students make adequate progress in acquiring knowledge of Islamic values, manners and laws. They make slower progress in developing their knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Hadeeth.
- In Arabic as a first language, the attainment levels of students are below the curriculum standards of the MoE. As in previous years, attainment remains weak. Overall, students have low starting points, and many students have limited exposure to Arabic prior to their admission to the school. Listening skills are generally adequate but their speaking, reading and writing skills are below the expected standard. Progress in lessons and over time is weak.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students attain language skills and knowledge that are in line with curriculum expectations according to their years of study. Students can ask simple questions and give answers. They are able to write new sentences using a variety of verbs related to hobbies. Their listening skills are adequate in the classroom environment. In lessons and their recent works, they make expected progress.
- The majority of students make better than expected progress and attain levels in English that are above curriculum standards. External assessments also reflect their good attainment. Students are sophisticated learners who have strong oral and written communication skills. Technology is a dominant feature as students' research, write and present using good English skills. They incorporate their personal experience to comprehend literature better. As an example, Grade 12 students apply their own understanding of a tragic hero to analyze characters in classical literature.
- In algebra, geometry and other mathematics courses, the majority of high school students attain above grade level standards. In their external MAP assessment, students' attainment and progress results are good. In lessons, students' use of number sense, and depth of understanding of algebraic concepts, data, and key mathematical domains are developing well. They can apply their knowledge and reasoning to solve problems. Attainment and progress have been consistently good for the past two years.
- Students demonstrate good attainment and progress in the science courses. They develop a good understanding of scientific concepts through well-designed virtual and actual investigations that allow them to draw conclusions using data they obtain. This understanding is reflected in their most recent MAP status data. The progress all students make over time is affected by the number of students who enter at different stages. However, the progress they make in lessons is good. Students benefit from activities that challenge them sufficiently and enable them to develop scientific knowledge and skills quickly.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Very good ↑	Good	Good	Good

- Most students across the school are engaged in, and take responsibility for their learning. This is especially evident in the middle and high schools, where students often ask the teacher for clarification and pose some challenging questions. Elementary students direct their learning through role-play. Most students are self-motivated and can work for relatively long periods of time on projects and activities without teacher guidance or intervention.
- Students in most subjects can work very well in groups when given the opportunity. They know the benefits of collaboration, listen well to each other and support each other's learning. Students communicate their understanding to their classmates and the teacher using clear and correct English. In Arabic and Islamic education, however, students rarely have the opportunity to engage in purposeful group work.
- Students' often make connections between their current and prior learning as well as with the real world and across subjects, such as science and mathematics. In English, students make some connections with the support of their teachers. KG children enjoy connecting new ideas to their own experiences, as in their shopping trip to the market, and can apply their knowledge in other contexts throughout the day.
- Students across the school develop enquiry and research skills well. This is especially evident in science through the application of the scientific method, engineering and design. In mathematics, students often demonstrate their problem-solving and reasoning skills. In most subjects, students use learning technologies to conduct basic research. KG children regularly and very effectively discover things for themselves, often using tablets and the Smartboard.

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Personal development	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good

- Throughout the school, students display positive attitudes towards learning and respond well to feedback. They are eager to participate in class work and extra-curricular activities. They are self-reliant and set their own learning targets, reflecting their independence and motivation to lead their own learning.
- Students are self-disciplined and monitor one another, resulting in very good behavior throughout the school. In classrooms and during other activities, students demonstrate a strong sense of unity and collaborate well on projects. Students resolve differences in mature ways and bullying is rare.
- Students are respectful of each other and the adults in the school. They are sensitive to the needs of others, particularly students with special educational needs. All new students are made to feel welcome and helped to settle into the new school environment. Teachers and students share a good rapport.
- Students are aware of and adopt healthy life styles. They respond well to health promotion lessons and programmes that are delivered by the school nurse. They participate in physical education classes at school and understand that a balanced diet and exercise are necessary for good health and reducing chances of illness.

- Students respond well to the school’s promotion of good attendance and punctuality. As a result, attendance is very good in the KG and good in the rest of the school. Students arrive at school ready to learn and are punctual to classes throughout the day.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures</b>	Good ↑	Acceptable	Good	Acceptable ↓

- Children in the KG display appropriate knowledge of Islamic values. In the upper phases students have sufficient knowledge of Islamic values and can talk about the key features of Islam.
- KG children show appreciation and admiration for the UAE and Dubai. They enjoy living here and enthusiastically talk about their favorite places. Students in the middle school display a secure knowledge of the UAE and its history, while students in the elementary and high school have a basic knowledge of the UAE heritage and culture.
- Many students are new to the school and Dubai. They feel appreciated and well accommodated by their peers. They are happy to share information about their own culture and to learn of the cultures of their friends and classmates.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Social responsibility and innovation skills</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Students have a strong understanding of their responsibilities in the school. They participate regularly in activities and events which enrich their school experiences. They show care for their community through fundraising for charity and through community service. Students in high school enjoy being part of the student council and taking part in the musical theatre.
- Students have positive attitudes to learning. They link the values of discipline and hard work to achievement. They are keen to improve their lives by learning new skills. As part of the science fair, high school students work on interesting projects, such as enquiring into the correlation between smell and emotions.
- Students are well aware of important environmental issues such as global warming and the importance of conservation and sustainability. Through participating in the Deca challenge at the school, students design environmentally friendly appliances such as a water filter and a light bulb. Students’ actions for the environment include participating in a clean-up field trip to Al Ain city.

### 3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Very good ↑	Good	Good ↑	Good

- In most subjects, teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and skill. However, their understanding of how students learn is variable in Arabic and Islamic education. In the KG, most teachers very effectively apply their knowledge of how young children learn.
- Teachers prepare detailed lesson plans in line with the curriculum standards, and most use time and resources effectively. Most lessons are interesting and have a positive environment that is conducive to learning. In the KG, teachers plan lessons that are highly engaging and matched to the developmental stage of the children. They are aligned to curriculum standards and allow children to lead their own learning.
- Teachers' questioning techniques vary across the subjects. In the better lessons, teachers ask effective open-ended questions that promote critical thinking. Consequently, students get involved in fruitful discussions that allow them to deepen their understanding of concepts. In the KG, effective questioning techniques are used regularly to encourage critical thinking and problem-solving and further promote children's independent learning skills.
- Teachers' knowledge of their students' assessment information enables them to understand their students' different learning needs and styles. They adapt their approaches well to ensure students make good or better progress. In most lessons, teachers challenge their students appropriately to keep them involved and motivated. However, this is not consistent practice across all subjects.
- Across the school, teachers provide students with a good range of hands-on activities to promote independent thinking and take responsibility for their own learning. In science and mathematics, teachers plan activities for students to explore and find solutions to real life problems. They also provide plenty of opportunities for shared learning, especially in the upper phases.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Assessment	Very good	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good ↑

- Internal assessment processes in all phases are mainly consistent and are linked to the curriculum standards. However some differences are evident when comparing internal to external assessments. In the KG, the tracking and assessment information of individual children is very effectively used to plan for different children's abilities.
- The school effectively uses external assessments linked to the curriculum standards in order to assess current students' attainment to monitor progress and to identify gaps in learning for all students.
- The school analyzes the assessment data in considerable depth, to identify any significant inconsistencies between actual and potential attainment. Teachers use this assessment information well to identify the next stages of learning and to set individual targets.
- Most subject leaders use the assessment data to identify the strengths and weaknesses in students' performance and to make appropriate adaptations to the curriculum and to teaching

strategies. A major focus of the school is to make learning more personalized in order to meet the needs of all students.

- Teachers have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of their students, gained through continuous assessment in class, through written work, and from test results. Self-assessment takes place and students are aware of their individual targets. They are very clear about what their next steps are and what is expected of them.

#### 4. Curriculum

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Good	Good	Good

- The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant. It has a clear rationale and is compliant with statutory requirements. It is increasingly aligned to the American Education Reaches Out (AERO Plus) standards, adopted to reflect the school's emphasis as an international school. Arabic and Islamic education follow Ministry of Education standards.
- The curriculum incorporates a broad range of courses, including Advanced Placement (AP) in high school. There is a good balance between knowledge, skills and understanding. The spiraling curriculum revisits key ideas, strengthening understanding of increasingly complex topics. The AERO Plus standards facilitate continuity and stability in learning for the international student population, allowing access to the same curriculum followed in schools worldwide.
- Student choice is embedded. KG and lower grade students choose interest-based learning centers in English and mathematics during the 'Daily 5'. Older students have a range of electives that add breadth to their learning. Grade 8 students may take high school algebra. High School students take electives including technology, arts, French, Spanish, Advanced Placement science and mathematics courses, and physical education.
- In English, mathematics and science, cross-curricular links are planned but are not always fully developed when left to teachers' initiative. Literacy skills are promoted and reinforced well across all subject areas, and reading is a hallmark of the school. Successful links across subjects foster the development of critical thinking, independent learning and research skills.
- The schools' commitment to the continuous development of the curriculum is embodied in the recent adoption of the AERO Standards, which resulted from a well-considered review of the curriculum and the particular needs of the student body. Annual reviews develop and refine the curriculum to meet the needs of the schools' diverse and changing learning community.
- UAE social studies is fully integrated into the KG, elementary and middle schools. Following the MoE social studies standards provides for continuity and progression in this nascent developing curriculum. Most students have an appropriate, grade level knowledge of UAE culture, geography and history. In class, they learn to make connections between the UAE and the wider world. Almost all students come from other countries. They share and compare information about politics, geography, traditions and history with their home countries, and they develop an appreciation and understanding of the UAE and the world. Students' progress is tracked against lesson objectives and at the end of a topic.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Curriculum adaptation</b>	Very good ↑	Good ↑	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Although teachers plan lessons to meet the learning needs of all students, their implementation is not effective in some classes. Curriculum modification does not take sufficient account, for example, of the needs of students who are new to the school, nor of the range of students' needs in Arabic and Islamic education. The SEND specialist teachers provide successful modifications in lessons and when students are withdrawn from the classroom.
- Students engage in enhanced and innovative activities across the school in core subject areas, in technology, during Golden Time, and in a weekly innovation class for Grades 4 to 8. The innovation plan aims to provide more opportunities for project work focusing on design solutions that address personal, global, and environmental issues.
- The KG integrates the UAE culture and society successfully into the curriculum and includes age-appropriate Arabic lessons. Some good practice is also evident in elementary school classes. However, older students are not benefiting from these curricular adaptations to the same extent, and high school students in particular have many missed opportunities.

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The school has rigorous procedures to safeguard, care and protect students including written policies on child protection and bullying. Teachers, staff and students are aware of, and follow these policies and procedures. The school deals very effectively with students concerns when they arise.
- There are effective policies and procedures to ensure students are safe in school and on the buses. Fire drills and risk assessments are regular. All entry and exit points are monitored throughout the day, with effective systems to identify visitors and parents. All areas of the school are supervised at all times, creating a highly secure and safe environment.
- All buildings and facilities are in excellent condition. The school maintains detailed records of all maintenance issues and contracts. Potential risks are reported immediately via an electronic system. The clinic conducts annual check-ups of students' health. It keeps records of chronic cases with charts and medicines available in case of emergency. All medications are stored safely.
- School facilities and premises provide an excellent and stimulating environment. Science laboratories are safe, with all chemicals safely stored. There is a full time lifeguard for the swimming pool, access to which is locked when not in use. All facilities and buildings throughout the school are accessible for wheelchair users.

- A healthy lifestyle is embedded and visibly promoted around the school. Students have access to healthy food choices. Nurses promote healthy lifestyle choices through lectures and discussions with students. There are trees and shaded areas for recreation, relaxation and play.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Care and support	Very good ↑	Good	Good	Good

- The atmosphere in school is calm and friendly. Teachers show students respect and are shown respect in return. The clear, progressive discipline policy helps maintain a positive feeling on campus and encourages students to be responsible and self-monitoring.
- Good attendance is maintained through the close monitoring of students at the elementary and secondary levels, and through the high expectations of staff. Parents use an online portal to check the accuracy of postings for absences and lateness. Students are welcomed at the gate each morning and advised, when necessary, about their attendance and behavior.
- Students with SEND are identified at admission, while current students are initially supported by modification plans when found to be struggling in classrooms. Individual education plans (IEPs) are written and implemented when needed. The school welcomes students with the full range of additional needs. A handbook for students with gifts and talents, introduced this year, provides appropriate guidance on enrichment and support.
- Students with SEND receive additional support from classroom specialists and shadow teachers. Training and coaching equips teachers to address the learning needs of students with SEND, although adapted lessons are not always evident or matched well to need. Students with gifts and talents participate in competitions with other schools, for example in designing and building an escape room.
- Caring and supportive staff provide students with effective guidance and counselling throughout their school years. The school advises students applying to college or focusing on careers, starting in Grade 9, with increasing support through to their senior years. Workshops are recorded so that those who are unable to attend can access them on the school's website.

## Inclusion

### Provision and outcomes for students with SEND

Good ↑

- The leadership team has built an effective program of support for students with SEND. They maintain a highly-qualified staff of SEND teachers who work efficiently as a team. They are committed to improving further the school's capacity to address and meet the academic and emotional needs of students with SEND.
- Students are identified, if in need of support, on entry to the school when possible. Enrolled students are offered modified study plans or support if they make insufficient progress. If additional support and interventions are needed, an individual education plan is written.

- Parents express their appreciation of the frequent contact maintained with them by the SEND staff. The staff are proactive and reach out to alert parents of anticipated changes and with updates. Monthly coffee mornings are held to keep parents informed. However, parents do not have access to workshops and speakers to increase their knowledge and understanding of their children's needs.
- Lesson planning is individualized and curriculum modifications are provided by most classroom teachers and by the well-qualified SEND staff in response to individual needs. The SEND staff provide guidance and training to improve the skills of class teachers in addressing the needs of each student with SEND.
- Students with SEND make good progress as a result of the specialists' effective support and, increasingly, the class teachers' provision.

## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Good

- The new heads of school provide clear direction and are leading school improvement effectively. They are working with capable leaders at all levels to develop the best features of an inclusive, American international school. Their commitment to the UAE national and Emirate priorities is evident in the positive improvement towards achieving its National Agenda targets.
- The new leaders, each with a record of experience in high quality American schools, are establishing a positive ethos by building on existing strengths to address weaknesses. Responsibilities are distributed effectively. The strategic steps are measured and appropriate, and reflect the school priorities to improve students' outcomes.
- Communication channels are numerous and two-way. Relationships are positive and effective, enhanced by the common language and experience of the Professional Learning Community model; teachers work and plan together, ensuring consistency and clearly-defined targets. Consequently, teachers are growing in confidence and morale is positive.
- Leaders at all levels drive change, as evident in curriculum development, teaching innovations and students' personal development. The positive impact on the overall effectiveness demonstrates their good capacity for sustained improvement, as well as their pride in the growth of the school.
- Through well-developed strategic and action planning, important aspects of the school continue to show improvement; students' performance in external tests and their achievement in classes, and the clear definition and alignment to the newly adopted AERO curriculum standards. Innovative features and stability of growth define the steps taken this year. All statutory requirements are met.

### School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Good ↑

- The new school leaders have got to know the school quickly. They have introduced new processes to evaluate the school's strengths and identify areas for improvement. They have a clear view of the skills of other leaders and their capacity to improve the quality of teaching. They are aware of the needs of parents and take a broad view of the school's needs.
- The processes for teacher performance review are increasingly effective; the quality of teaching in the KG and middle school and the impact on learning have improved. Incentive initiatives recognize positive contributions by teaching and non-teaching staff. Professional Learning Communities purposefully meet on a regular basis to work towards improvement goals, taking a realistic and current view of grade level and department needs.
- Improvement plans for the school are developed with both short and long-term goals in mind. The targets are defined, measurable and realistic, and focused on higher standards. Some improvements are already evident, especially in the KG and with regard to assessment procedures. Other priorities, such as changes to the curriculum, are still being developed. Staff are aware of, and involved in, development plans.
- The recommendations from the previous inspection report regarding school leadership has been successfully addressed. Teachers' expectations and challenge for all students are improving. However, the measures taken to improve students' performance in Arabic as an additional language have had limited impact except in the high school where attainment has improved.

### Partnerships with parents and the community

Good

- Parents are involved in the school's key events and celebrations. They are supportive of the school and are very pleased to be a part of the school community. The parents association acts as an effective facilitator between the school and other parents. However, not all parents feel engaged in shaping the school's priorities for improvement.
- Effective communication channels with parents are in place. Parents appreciate the accessibility of all staff and leaders and commend the open door policy. When concerns arise, they feel their views are taken seriously and their concerns are addressed promptly.
- Parents are pleased with the regular, comprehensive, formal and informal reports they receive on their children's academic and personal development. They are well aware of their children's strengths and areas for improvement.
- The school enjoys an appropriate range of partnerships within the GEMS network. Community service is a positive feature of the school. Through contact with entities, such as Dubai Cares, the school makes positive social contributions to the local community. Contributions to the wider community are made through international partnerships that foster volunteering.

**Governance**

Acceptable

- Governors, including parents on the advisory board and GEMS representatives, have a sound knowledge of the school. Their awareness of the demographics of the student body, its performance, outcomes and needs, and the journey of the school over the previous three years, provides a clear insight the needs of stakeholders and the priorities for further improvement.
- Governors are increasingly aware of the need to monitor the school’s performance more closely and to hold leaders and staff to account for their work. This is particularly important with regard to the long-standing concern about students’ performance in Arabic.
- The governing board is committed to developing the school further as an American community school, similar to those found internationally. Their appointment of high quality staff, well-suited to such a school, is paying dividends, evident in the improvements particularly in the KG.

**Management, staffing, facilities and resources**

Very good ↑

- The daily life of the students and the school schedule are managed well. Students have ample time for subject and enrichment classes as well as extra-curricular activities. The school's procedures and routines are very effective in maintaining a calm atmosphere.
- The members of staff are well qualified with relevant subject or phase expertise appropriate to their deployment. Professional development is ongoing for all staff. Teachers are involved in personalized training based on areas of interest and need. Staffing assignments and learning opportunities are well matched to the vision of the school and are having a positive effect on students’ achievement.
- The school premises are of high quality. Learning areas, including classrooms, are spacious and well equipped to meet the academic and social needs of all students. Technology is available in all classrooms and used by teachers and students to support learning. The campus lends itself to a community feel where students and teachers can socialize and build relationships.
- There is a wide range of quality resources available to students and teachers that support the vision of the school. A re-organized resource room and library allow teachers and students access to books and materials that positively influence teaching and learning. However, there is a lack of resources in Arabic and Islamic education to engage all students and support their learning.

## 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	155
	2015-2016	179
<b>Teachers</b> 	58	
<b>Students</b> 	227	

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

- Parent who responded to the survey are highly satisfied with the quality of education and teaching in the school. Parents are also pleased with the leadership of the school. Most parents feel their children are supported in all areas of learning, including their personal development.
- Although parents are pleased with their children's English literacy skills they do not feel this is as strong in Arabic language learning.
- There are positive comments about the good teacher support for learning and the quality of resources, including textbooks and technology. Parents also note the school has a strong culture of kindness.
- Almost all teachers are happy with their work in the school. They believe that the students are well-behaved and respectful, are motivated to learn, do their best and respond well to feedback.
- Teachers feel supported by school leaders through the professional development offered, and the time and resources provided for planning good quality lessons.
- A large majority of students believe their teachers care about them and support them in their learning. They are happy and involved in the school community, in lessons and in extra-curricular activities.

### 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)