

# Inspection Report



**Universal American School**

**2014-2015**



إكسبو 2020 دبي  
دبي، الإمارات العربية المتحدة  
DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

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## School information



### General information

Location	Ras Alkhori
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2005
Website	www.uasdubai.ae
Telephone	04-2325222
Address	Dubai Festival City, P.O Box 79133, Dubai
Principal	Mr. Andrew Torris
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	12 <sup>th</sup> -15 <sup>th</sup> January 2015



### Students

Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age range	3-18
Grades or year groups	Pre KG - Grade 12
Number of students on roll	1475
Number of children in Pre-K	50
Number of Emirati students	105
Number of students with SEN	88
Largest nationality group of students	US



### Teachers / Support staff

Number of teachers	144
Largest nationality group of teachers	US
Number of teacher assistants	22
Teacher-student ratio	1:10
Number of guidance counsellors	5
Teacher turnover	25%



### Curriculum

Educational Permit	US
Main Curriculum / Other	US / IB
Standardised tests / board exams	SAT, MAP, PSSS
Accreditation	CIS, PYP, MSA, DP

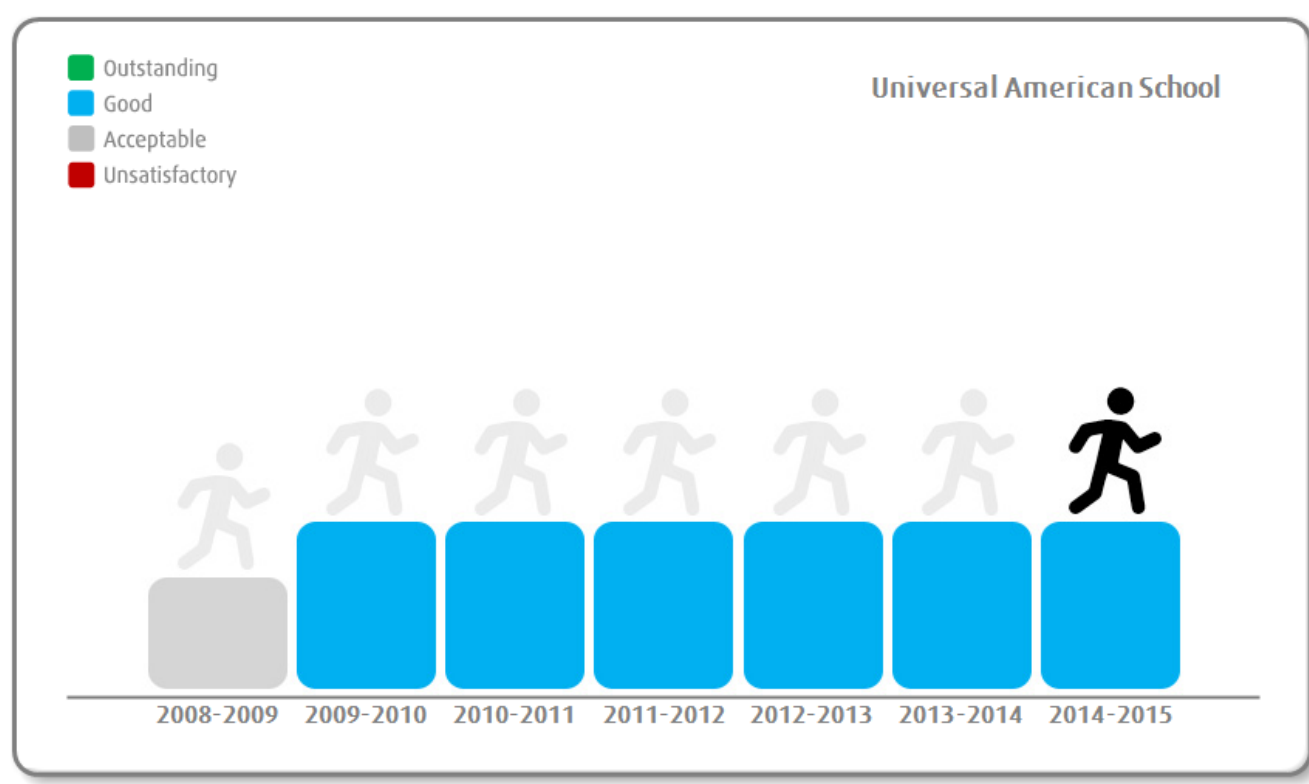




Dear Parents,

Universal American School was inspected by DSIB from 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> January 2015, and the overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **Good**

In order to judge the overall quality of education provided by the school, inspectors considered six key aspects of the school's performance and standards. Inspectors looked at children's attainment and progress in five key subjects, their learning skills as well as their personal and social development. They judged how effective teaching was across the school. Inspectors considered how well the school's curriculum, including activities inside and outside the classroom, met the educational needs of all children. They judged how well the school protected and supported children. In addition inspectors judged the effectiveness of leadership and governance, including management, staffing, facilities and resources.



The inspection judgements were drawn from a range of evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observing children learning in lessons, looking at their work, talking with children, meetings with staff, parents and governors, and reviewing the parents' and teachers' surveys.

The key strengths and areas for improvement to be made by the school leaders, governors and owners are:

### Strengths

- Good teaching led to students' good attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science across the school, and also in Arabic in the elementary phase.
- Students showed excellent attitudes and behavior and had a very strong understanding of Islamic values, local and world cultures, and exemplary awareness of environmental matters.
- The school provided very high levels of care and welfare for all its students.
- There was a highly effective partnership between school and parents, which enabled students' learning to be well supported in the home.
- The school was an attractive environment, and resources were plentiful, of a high quality, and supported learning effectively.

### Areas for improvement

- Improve students' attainment and progress in Islamic Education and Arabic so they are at the standards found in other core subjects in the school, through sharing the good practice with each other.
- Ensure a high level of challenge provided to students in all lessons through the use of high level questioning and providing interesting activities that extend students' learning.
- Improve leaders' monitoring of what is happening in the school and the self-evaluation processes in order to improve the accuracy of their understanding of what needs to be improved in the school.
- Ensure that whole school practices are applied consistently by class teachers in order to improve the progress of students with special educational needs.

We warmly encourage you to read the full school inspection report.

The school is required to submit to DSIB an action plan identifying the steps they will take to address the areas for improvement. We have advised your school leaders to share this with you.

We trust that the information provided will help you understand, and encourages you to support, your child's school.

Yours sincerely,

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau  
Knowledge and Human Development Authority

## A closer look at Universal American School



### How well does the school perform overall?

Overall, the Universal American School provided a 'Good' quality of education for its students.

- Students' attainment and progress were good or outstanding in English, mathematics and science across all phases, and good in Arabic in the elementary phase. Students were keen to learn, took responsibility for improving their own work, and collaborated purposefully. This was a consistently strong feature of Kindergarten.
- Nearly all students had excellent attitudes to school and behavior. They had a very good understanding of Islamic values, local culture and most students were active not only in the school but in the external community as well.
- Most teachers had strong subject knowledge and created a learning environment where students were encouraged to take risks. The majority used a range of teaching strategies which met the needs of most students and gave them opportunities to develop their independent learning and critical thinking skills. A wide range of assessment took place regularly. This was used to track the progress of each student over time and to monitor the performance of the school.
- The curriculum was designed to meet the needs of most students. Most students were given opportunities to learn through active participation and projects. Across the whole school there was a good plan for what students would learn, with extra activities to make subjects interesting.
- The school was a safe and caring environment. Relationships between staff and students were very strong. Students with special educational needs were admitted to the school but their academic progress was often only acceptable.
- School leaders and Governors were highly committed and worked well with parents and the community to the benefit of the students. The school ran very smoothly and a wide range of specialist learning spaces and high quality resources supported students' learning.



### How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?

- There was a range of systems to monitor the learning of students with special educational needs and they made acceptable academic progress across the school.
- A large team of specialist teachers, assistants and counselors provided strong support for students, especially for their personal development. Each student had an individual learning plan identifying his or her goals.
- Most classroom teachers were aware of their students' special learning needs but did not always adjust the lesson content or teaching well enough to ensure that individuals made maximum progress.



## 1. How good are the students' attainment, progress and learning?

		KG	Elementary	Middle	High
 Islamic Education	Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
 Arabic as a First Language	Attainment	Not Applicable	Good ↑	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
 Arabic as an Additional Language	Attainment	Not Applicable	Good ↑	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
 English	Attainment	Outstanding	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Outstanding	Good	Good	Good ↓
 Mathematics	Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good
 Science	Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good
		KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills		Outstanding	Good	Good	Good

↑ Improved from last inspection


↓ Declined from last inspection



## 2. How good is the students' personal and social development?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Personal responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Community and environmental responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding





## 3. How good are teaching and assessment?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Good 	Good	Good	Good
Assessment	Good	Good	Good	Good


## 4. How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Good	Good	Good	Good

## 5. How well does the school protect and support students?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Health and safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of support	Good 	Good 	Good 	Good 

## 6. How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	All phases
The effectiveness of leadership	Good 
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good
Parents and the community	Outstanding
Governance	Good
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding



# School Inspection Report

## Overall school judgement

Good

## Key strengths

- There was good or better teaching leading to good attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science across the school and in Arabic in the elementary phase.
- Students demonstrated outstanding attitudes and behavior, combined with a very strong understanding of Islamic values, local and world cultures and exemplary environmental awareness.
- Very high levels of care and welfare were provided for all students.
- A highly effective partnership with parents, enabled students to be well supported in their learning at home.

## Changes since the last inspection

- The school had appointed a new Director and some new members of the leadership team, most notably the Kindergarten (KG) coordinator and the Principal designate for the middle school phase.
- Senior leaders and teachers were using a different international benchmark assessment programme called Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) to test students' achievement.
- There had been a teacher turnover in school of 25% with 50% teacher turnover in the Kindergarten.

## Recommendations

- Improve students' attainment and progress in Islamic Education and Arabic to the standards found in the other core subjects through sharing the expertise of existing staff in the school in order to:
  - establish consistently good teaching
  - ensure a better match of activities to the needs of all students.
- Increase the levels of challenge in lessons for all students through:
  - raising teachers' expectation of what students' can achieve
  - increasing the use of high level questioning
  - ensuring consistent use of extension activities that engage and excite students
- Improve self-evaluation and improvement planning by:
  - synthesising the many and diverse action plans in order to determine a manageable number of school improvement priorities.
  - Giving renewed focus to the school's systems for evaluating teaching and learning so that a more accurate and informative picture of individual teacher's strengths and areas for development can be identified.
- Improve provision for students with special educational needs and the impact of the learning support team and the counsellors.



Improved from last inspection



Declined from last inspection





## 1. How good are the students' attainment, progress and learning?

### KG

Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic Education	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as a First Language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as an Additional Language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
English	Outstanding	Outstanding
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science	Good	Good

- Children's excellent communication skills enabled them to express themselves precisely in discussions. They made extremely rapid progress in reading and writing which supported their development across the other curriculum areas.
- Mathematical skills developed rapidly, especially in number, recognizing shapes and making patterns. Children demonstrated their abilities well when using and applying mathematics in other contexts. However, occasionally the progress of the most and least able children was slower than that of the others in the class.
- Children quickly developed good scientific skills in Kindergarten. They observed closely and carefully, formulated sensible hypotheses and recorded their results accurately. However, progress was inconsistent across classes.

### Elementary

Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic Education	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a First Language	Good 	Good
Arabic as an Additional Language	Good 	Good
English	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science	Good	Good


- Most students knew and understood the characteristics of a Muslim. They could apply the ablution steps correctly in preparation for praying. They showed appropriate knowledge of concepts and morals such as seeking forgiveness. The majority of students made acceptable progress in applying Islamic etiquettes.
- Most students studying Arabic as a first language, could gain meaning as they listened and could clearly retell details of events and characters. They also could read different texts fluently and write at an age-appropriate level. They were active participants in their learning and, consequently, the majority made good progress.
- The majority of students learning Arabic as an additional language, were able attain levels that were above curriculum expectations. They could formulate sentences to express the meaning of pictures. Their comprehension skills were well developed and writing was of a good quality.

- Most students read age-appropriate English literature with sound comprehension and the majority were developing their writing skills across a range of genres. Most spoke confidently using wide vocabulary and correct structure.
- In mathematics, the majority of students were able to measure accurately using different instruments. Data-handling skills were very well developed, even in the youngest students. The development of a range of strategies to mentally manipulate numbers was less rapid.
- The majority of students continued to build their scientific knowledge and vocabulary well and they were able to conduct age-appropriate experiments. Younger students could identify healthy foods and explain why a balanced diet was necessary and, by the time students reached Grade 5 they were beginning to understand and apply Newton's laws.

Middle		
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	Good	Good

- Most students showed acceptable understanding of the Islamic vocabulary used during the lessons, for example, they could explain the difference between Halal and Haram food and drink. They knew and understood 'Supplications' and the best time to say them. Their understanding of how these concepts applied to real life were developing at an appropriate level.
- Most students studying Arabic as a first language had acceptable speaking skills. Their conversations were a mix of classical Arabic with local dialects used at times. Their reading skills were developed at faster a rate than their writing skills.
- Speaking and reading skills in Arabic as an additional language, for most students, were developing at an age-appropriate level. Students understood and responded to short questions about learned topics. However, students writing skill was still below expectations.
- In English, the majority of students read, wrote and spoke about a range of topics that was relevant, engaging and challenging. The majority made good progress within lessons and over time.
- In mathematics, the majority of students demonstrated a sound understanding of the skills of pre-algebra and they were able to explain their thinking, using mathematical vocabulary. Most students were still developing the ability to apply mathematics to everyday situations.
- By the end of the phase, the majority of students were thinking more like scientists and conducting more sophisticated experiments. They were able to record, draw conclusions, and evaluate the experiments as well as reflect on what they had learned.

High		
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	Good	Good

- In Islamic Education, most students showed an acceptable understanding of the rules and ethics of giving 'Zakat' and 'Saddaqah'. Their knowledge of morals and values such as modesty was acceptable. Students knew how to use Tajweed rules correctly and their ability to explain the meaning of related vocabulary was progressing at an appropriate pace.
- In Arabic as a first language, most of students had acceptable language skills and their speaking was mixed with local dialects and some English and they were able to describe the difference between poetry texts. Writing skills were developing in line with what was expected.
- Most of students attained levels in Arabic as an additional language that were in line with curriculum expectations. Listening, speaking and reading skills were developing better than most students' writing, which was still in the form of clear, simple, short sentences.
- In English, the majority of students showed high levels of knowledge, skills and understandings in reading, writing and speaking. They used extensive vocabulary and well-structured language making consistently good progress over time, especially in the breadth and depth of writing.
- The majority of students had a strong theoretical understanding of higher mathematics and had developed a sound understanding of how these concepts were proven or connected. Almost all students had high level graphing and calculation skills across the different areas of mathematics.
- In science, the majority of students were able to design their own experiments, test hypotheses and apply mathematical formulas. Students' progress accelerated as they reached the upper grades.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Outstanding	Good	Good	Good

- Most students were highly motivated, as shown by their high levels of engagement and their obvious enthusiasm in lessons. From the youngest ages, they were eager to take responsibility for their own learning, for example through working independently and self-assessing their progress to see what they could improve.
- Most students interacted well with their peers and with school staff and were confident in presenting to audiences. They worked together purposefully, assuming roles and responsibilities. Collaboration was a particular strength in the Kindergarten phase, where children's communication skills were high and where it was the norm for children to support each other's learning.
- Most students consistently applied their learning to the real world, drawing on their own experiences to make connections. They also made connections with other subjects, for example using their skills in skimming and scanning in history lessons, recognizing and discussing 3D shapes in science and raising environmental issues in Arabic.
- Most students undertook inquiry and research with confidence, using a range of resources. The use of technology by students was developing and the extent depended on the subjects being studied.



## 2. How good is the students' personal and social development?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Personal responsibility</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding


- Nearly all students showed positive attitudes to their learning and had developed high levels of independence. This was much valued by the parents who were interviewed.
- Levels of self-discipline were high in nearly all students. Parents confirmed that their children had the confidence and the skills to resolve most of their problems by themselves. Students' behavior was exemplary at all times during the inspection.
- Relationships between nearly all students and their peers and between students and adults were invariably polite, respectful and open. The diverse nature of the school developed students' sensitivities to the differences between them.
- Healthy living practices were highly evident. Most students were able to demonstrate their knowledge of what constituted a balanced meal and many engaged in the after school sports programmes on offer.
- Nearly all students had excellent attendance and punctuality records.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Across the school almost all students had a very good understanding of Islam and could talk about different aspects such as the call to prayer, the importance of mosques and the five pillars. Nearly all students were able to articulate the influence of Islamic values on the society of Dubai and expressed respect and appreciation for them.
- Almost all students were aware of the heritage of the UAE and Dubai and could make reference to cultural elements that were still to be found in modern day society. They understood the rapid growth from a rural, nomadic society to the UAE and Dubai of today and showed respect for that heritage.
- Almost all students had a mature appreciation for their own cultures and backgrounds but at the same time showed tolerance and understanding for those who were different. Most students had a fairly strong understanding of the world and their place in it.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Community and environmental responsibility</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Almost all students were involved in the life of the school and took responsibility for their actions as part of that community. Many students were active outside of school and worked on projects locally as well as abroad.</li> <li>Almost all students had an understanding of environmental issues and many supported the efforts of the Green Committee in raising environmental awareness and encouraging recycling and organic gardening.</li> <li>Most students were able to articulate, at an age-appropriate level, what conservation and sustainability meant to Dubai and the wider world. Nearly all students in the High School could explain the environmental problems that were caused by the climate and physical geography of the Emirates.</li> </ul>				

### 3. How good are teaching and assessment?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Teaching for effective learning</b>	Good 	Good	Good	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most teachers drew on their secure subject and pedagogical expertise to plan interesting lessons that motivated students to learn.</li> <li>They created a safe and stimulating learning environment, which encouraged students to share their views openly, for example by offering explanations to questions even when they were unsure of the correct answer. Teachers expected students to work hard and at a good pace. However, in a minority of lessons, especially for older students, this was inconsistent and, consequently, progress slowed.</li> <li>The majority of teachers stimulated students' thinking by asking open questions, encouraging them to analyse and develop their ideas further.</li> <li>Many teachers provided work that was challenging but achievable for students of all abilities, using a range of methods that made learning accessible. However in a minority of lessons the learning was not well matched to the right level for all students, especially the most and least able.</li> <li>The majority of teachers adopted an approach to learning that encouraged students to follow their own lines of enquiry and to solve problems. This supported the development of critical thinking and independent learning well. However, there was variability across the subjects and the phases.</li> <li>The teachers of Arabic as a first language, in the elementary phase of the school formed warm and respectful relationships with students. They engaged them in a range of challenging activities, which developed critical thinking skills well. Teacher's in-depth subject knowledge was used to develop challenging prompts for students. However, in the middle and high school phases, the narrow range of teaching strategies used meant that the needs of students were not well met.</li> </ul>				

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Assessment</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal assessments were systematic and well suited to the different curricula used in each phase. Effective and regular reporting of student progress was a positive feature of the school.</li> <li>External testing was effectively used to check student learning against the expectations of the IB, PYP or US curricula as well as against other schools internationally.</li> <li>A variety of assessment tools were used to provide a thorough overview of individual student progress. The information was used to support those students who were falling behind and to adapt the curriculum when areas of need were identified.</li> <li>School leaders had increased their understanding of how best to analyse data to plan for future learning. Students were increasingly made aware of their learning targets. However, better use of assessment by teachers was needed to modify lessons to help students achieve their learning goals.</li> <li>Through targeted questioning and use of assignments, most teachers had a good understanding of how well students were learning. Increasingly, this understanding was being developed in students through peer and self-assessment strategies.</li> </ul>				

#### 4. How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Curriculum quality</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The curriculum had a clear rationale, and included content knowledge as well as the development of skills. The focus across all year groups was on active learning, built around student interests, experiential and inquiry learning.</li> <li>The Kindergarten and elementary phases benefited from a close integration of the IB and the US curriculum. By the time that students had graduated from the High School, they were fully prepared for their next steps in education.</li> <li>Community involvement, enrichment and extra-curricular activities were strong features at every phase of the school, and younger students were involved in community service opportunities. Enrichment was an aspect of most units of study and the broader curriculum included access to the performing arts, sports and languages.</li> <li>Cross-curricular links were regularly created as students pursued independent inquiry and project-based learning.</li> <li>The curriculum was reviewed regularly and long-term plans were in place to ensure consistency with the requirements of both the IB and the US Curriculum.</li> <li>The curriculum for Arabic as a first language, in the elementary phase provided greater opportunities for student engagement than the corresponding curriculum in the Middle or High schools.</li> </ul>				



	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Good	Good	Good	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The design of the curriculum contributed well to meeting the academic and creative needs of each group of students. Even young students enthusiastically took on investigative projects and tasks that allowed them to explore the world around them and connect it to classroom learning. Further modification was needed to ensure stimulating opportunities for gifted students, and to provide additional challenge for all students.</li> <li>The curriculum provided a wide range of provision to meet the interests of students in each phase, with some element of choice. For example, some students chose to research animals they found fascinating, or parts of the world that they had visited.</li> <li>A strong majority of older students took part in extra-curricular activities. Students of all ages benefited from the rich and creative opportunities woven into the curriculum.</li> <li>The school offered five Arabic sessions, five times each week for its 37 native-Arabic speaker in the second year of the Kindergarten phase. The programme was based on the Ministry of Education's kindergarten curriculum.</li> </ul>				

## 5. How well does the school protect and support students?


	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Health and safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All members of staff were fully aware of the child protection procedures and students had been given good guidance on internet safety and cyber bullying. Appropriate filters were in place to safeguard students when accessing the Internet.</li> <li>There were detailed policies for monitoring the safety of the school site and these were carefully followed. Bus safety was a high priority. Nannies escorted students home. They kept accurate attendance registers with parent contact numbers.</li> <li>There was a generous allocation of security staff to cover all school entrances. Evacuation plans were well written and effective fire drills were conducted regularly. The school kept accurate and up-to-date records of all incidents related to students safety.</li> <li>The premises were very well maintained, clean and hygienic, providing students with an outstanding environment in which they could learn. All students, regardless of need, had equal access to the facilities. School doctor and nurses monitored students' health and kept detailed records.</li> <li>Senior leaders had developed a strong culture of healthy living and promoted this consistently across the school community. This was further enhanced by the availability of a wide range of healthy snacks and food choices in the cafeteria and the wide-ranging provision of physical education across the curriculum.</li> </ul>				

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Quality of support	Good ↓	Good ↓	Good ↓	Good ↓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relationships between staff and students were very strong. The care and welfare of students was a designated responsibility for some senior staff and all teachers. Students' behavior was exemplary and need minimal adult intervention.</li> <li>There were excellent systems for managing attendance and punctuality. Policy and procedures were clear and effective and attendance rates were high. A dedicated Attendance Office managed the system on a daily basis and unexplained absences were followed up promptly.</li> <li>Students with special educational needs were admitted into the school and their needs were broadly identified. However, targets on student learning plans were often not prioritized or measurable in classroom settings and, as a result, students with special educational needs did not always make progress in line with their peers.</li> <li>The school has invested in high levels of learning support staffing. However, there was a need for strategic oversight and clearer direction in order to maximize the impact on student learning.</li> <li>Through its team of highly committed experienced counselors, the school was very effective in securing and developing the personal, social and emotional growth of all students. Students were happy and very engaged in all areas of school life.</li> </ul>				

### How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?

	Overall
The overall effectiveness of provision for students with special educational needs	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school had invested in appointing a substantial number of learning support teachers, counselors and assistants, and there was generous provision for professional development. However, the impact on students was limited because, in the absence of a designated leader for the area of special educational needs, the team lacked structure, consistency, coherence and strategic direction.</li> <li>Students' needs were identified broadly using an appropriate range of tools. KHDA categories were used to create a register of students with special educational needs but the register lacked clarity and consistency. Most students had an individual learning plan but many contained goals that were not easily measurable in classroom settings.</li> <li>Parents were involved at each stage of the referral and support process. Communication was strong, parents were kept well informed of their child's progress and were very happy with the support provided.</li> <li>The special educational needs team provided strong support for students, especially for personal, social and emotional development. Student learning plans were used as the basis for an extensive withdrawal programme but classroom modifications and support were variable. Most classroom teachers were aware of their students' needs in a broad sense but there was no evidence of individual targets being systematically integrated into planning and teaching.</li> <li>The school had effective systems in place to regularly assess and monitor students, and the data presented showed sustained academic progress over time for the majority of students with special educational needs. However, students' progress in lessons observed, across all phases and across all key subjects, was only acceptable.</li> </ul>	

## 6. How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	Overall
The effectiveness of leadership	Good 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaders had a high level of commitment and most were effective. The new Director was decisive and single minded about improving students' progress and ensured that the direction of the school was maintained by placing the school's vision at the centre of all decision making. His appointment followed a period of interim leadership.</li> <li>Leadership was appropriately delegated and lines of accountability were clear in the elementary and secondary phases. Many effective teams operated with much autonomy in both of these phases and, at times, the full benefit of shared expertise was not felt.</li> <li>The leadership teams worked closely together towards school improvement. Channels of communication were open and relationships were professional and strong. Although not all job descriptions were current, roles and responsibilities were clearly understood.</li> <li>The school had recognized the need to restructure the school and was rebuilding the leadership teams. Consequently, some teams were more effective in raising standards than others.</li> <li>Senior leaders have been successful in developing aspects of teaching and learning in the recent past. Improvements to attainment in Arabic in the elementary phase were as good example of this.</li> </ul>	

	Overall
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There were comprehensive processes for gathering information from a wide range of sources including stakeholders. Systems for monitoring school performance were in place to measure standards against international benchmarks, modify the curriculum and support students. These systems included the analysis of student data and the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning.</li> <li>All staff, including teaching assistants and administrative support, were included in an annual appraisal process. As yet, school improvement initiatives did not form part of the objectives set for teachers. Systems for evaluating teaching and learning were in place but needed to be applied with greater rigor.</li> <li>School leaders conscientiously created action plans in response to the visits of the many external agencies. Plans were regularly monitored and reviewed but were not synthesized to produce a manageable number of improvement priorities. Data analysis, against international benchmarks, had developed from last year and accuracy of interpreting the abundant data was developing at a similar rate.</li> <li>There had been progress in addressing many recommendations from last year's report. Often extensive and varied resources had been provided in response to the findings. Even in the short timescale, it was possible to see emerging improvements to outcomes.</li> </ul>	






	Overall
Parents and the community	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents were very supportive of the school and the leadership team and were fully involved in school life; for example running the Fine Arts Booster Club. A Parent Teacher organisation existed, which currently served the school community and acted as a bridge between staff and parents.</li> <li>Communication channels between the school and parents were varied and highly effective. Parents reported that all members of staff were accessible and that parental concerns were dealt with expediently and efficiently.</li> <li>Electronic communication, through the parent portal, was an effective way for parents to promptly access students' grades. Parents were equally positive about receiving their children's regular report cards and the associated parent consultation meetings. They felt extremely well informed about how well their child was doing and what his/her step might be.</li> <li>There were many productive opportunities for students to engage in the life of local, national and international communities. Notable of these were the charity efforts of students in the elementary phase, the 'Week Without Walls' programme for middle and high school students and the Community Action Student Service element of the IB Diploma Programme.</li> </ul>	

	Overall
Governance	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The views of the school community were gathered through annual surveys and Governors sought to respond constructively to concerns and suggestions. The Parent Teacher Organisation was set up to be an advisory body to the Governors but this was not how it was operating and, as a valuable advisory body, its representation of stakeholders and the community would be too narrow.</li> <li>Governors had a very good knowledge of the school. The Board ensured accountability of the school's performance through the Director's appraisal system and the comprehensive reports that were submitted three times a year. The recent initiative of linking a Governor with educational expertise with the school will confirm the accuracy of the information received by the Governing Body as well as support school decision-making.</li> <li>The Governing Body has had considerable impact on school performance. Some good examples this year included allocating additional funding for extra leadership posts and preparing the learning technology infrastructure to allow all students access to the network with their own internet enabled devices. The Governing Body had ensured that all statutory requirements had been met.</li> </ul>	

	Overall
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of the day-to-day life was extremely efficient. There was a large number of support staff, which had been effectively deployed, and this ensured the smooth running of the school.</li> <li>• All teachers were suitably qualified and there was a healthy balance between recruitment and retention. There were rigorous procedures in place to appoint the best teaching staff and orientation and induction procedures ensured that they quickly became effective. There was strong evidence of the school developing its teachers from their starting points, in line with its aims for life-long learning.</li> <li>• Premises were clean, in good condition and accessible to all students. Student numbers were appropriate for the size of the classrooms, allowing a wide range of valuable learning activities to take place. Extensive grounds, with appropriate shaded spaces for students, were well suited for outside learning.</li> <li>• A wide range of specialist learning accommodation and good quality resources supported effective learning. This year, new resources included carts of laptops, which could be used to support research and to enhance learning.</li> </ul>	

## What are the views of the Principal, parents, teachers and students?

Before the inspection, the views of the Principal, 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		Percentage
 Parents*	This year	193	19%
	Last year	234	28%
 Teachers	100		65%
 Students	289		89%

- A minority of parents and a majority of teachers and students completed the surveys.
- Their responses were very positive. Most parents and students were satisfied with the school.
- Nearly all parents and most students were satisfied with progress in English, mathematics and science whereas, although still positive, they felt progress in Arabic, both as a first and an additional language, was less rapid.
- Nearly all parents and most students also believed that teaching was good, there was a wide range of resources and that learning skills were being developed.
- Most parents and students responded that there was a sufficiently wide range of subjects in the curriculum but only a majority of students were satisfied with the number of extra-curricular activities.
- All teachers and most parents and students felt that the school provided a good preparation for the next stages of education.
- Nearly all parents, teachers and most students felt that buses were safe and that the school provided an effective cyber bullying programme.
- Although only a majority of students felt that the school dealt with bullying effectively, most parents and teachers were more positive.
- Nearly all parents and most teachers and students believed the school to be well led. However a small majority of students believed that the leaders and teachers did not listen and respond to their views, in spite of the existence of a Student Council.
- Most teachers were very positive about the identification, support and good progress of students with special educational needs.

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

## 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

## How to contact us

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)