



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational  
needs and disabilities



Innovation

## Inspection Report 2015-2016

Dubai International Academy

Curriculum: IB

Overall rating: Outstanding

Read more about the school →



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“The race for  
excellence has  
no finish line”



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

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## School information

### General information



Location	Emirates Hills
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2005
Website	www.diadubai.com
Telephone	04-3684111
Address	PO BOX 118111 Emirates Hills, Dubai
Principal	Pratibha Rao
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	21 -24 March, 2016

### Students



Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	3-18
Grades or year groups	Kindergarten 1 to Year 13
Number of students on roll	2,072
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	150
Number of Emirati students	23
Number of students with SEND	86
Largest nationality group of students	Indian

### Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	156
Largest nationality group of teachers	UK
Number of teaching assistants	33
Teacher-student ratio	1:13
Number of guidance counsellors	3
Teacher turnover	29%

### Curriculum



Educational permit / License	IB
Main curriculum	IB
External tests and examinations	IBT, GL, CAT4, SAT1, SAT2, PSAT.
Accreditation	CIS, NEASC, IBO
National Agenda benchmark tests	GL, IBT

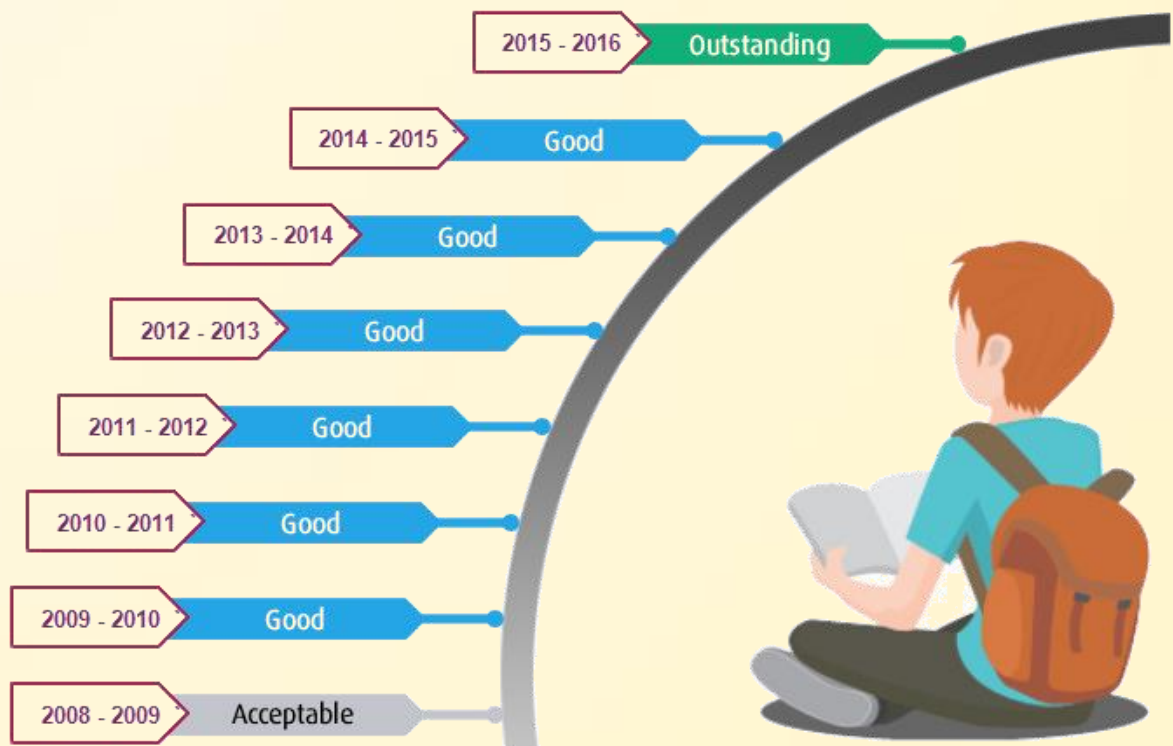


## Summary for parents and the community

**Dubai International Academy** was inspected by DSIB from 21 to 24 March, 2016. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **outstanding**.

In order to judge the overall quality of education provided by the school, inspectors considered six key standards of performance. Inspectors looked at children's attainment and progress in key subjects, their learning skills and their personal and social development. They judged how effective teaching and the assessment of learning were across the school. Inspectors considered how well the school's curriculum, including activities inside and outside classrooms, 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 evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observing children learning in lessons, looking at their work, talking with children, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and reviewing the parents', teachers' and senior students' surveys.





### How well did the school perform overall?

Overall, Dubai International Academy provided an **outstanding** quality of education for its students.

- Progress in all subjects and phases was at least good, except in Arabic as an additional language in MYP, where it was acceptable. In English, mathematics and science, across the school, it was outstanding. Attainment was acceptable in Arabic in all phases as was Islamic education in the PYP. The development of learning skills across the school was outstanding.
- Most students were extremely self-disciplined, had excellent attitudes to learning and very strong relationships with each other and the adults in the school. They had extremely well developed personal and social skills, a commendable knowledge of the local heritage and Islamic values and very strong sense of social responsibility in the community and wider society.
- Most teachers were inspiring and created a vibrant environment in which students could learn. They made excellent use of the comprehensive assessment systems to provide activities in the classrooms that successfully built on prior learning.
- The curriculum was extremely well designed, offering choice and enrichment. It was carefully modified to take account of the needs of the students, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) context and National Agenda priorities.
- All students were provided with a safe environment. Care and welfare was given the highest priority. Students with special educational needs and disability (SEND) were identified early and given excellent support to enable them to succeed in their lessons.
- This excellent provision and these admirable outcomes were a result of outstanding leadership at all levels, skillful teachers, hardworking support staff and informed governance. Leaders had successfully committed themselves to partnerships with parents and the community to further improve the education of all students.



### What did the school do well?

- Outstanding development of students' learning skills, high quality teaching, accurate assessments and a very well designed curriculum all led to at least good progress; outstanding in English, mathematics and science in almost all phases.
- Outstanding care and support in the school had produced students with extremely well developed personal and social skills, a commendable knowledge of the local heritage and Islamic values and very strong sense of social responsibility in the community and wider society.
- Outstanding provision for health and safety allowed students to fully focus on their learning.
- Outstanding facilities and staffing, especially an excellent provision for training for teachers, facilitated high quality learning.
- Outstanding governance and leadership at all levels was the key reason for all the above outcomes.





### What does the school need to do next?

- Improve progress to at least very good in Arabic as first language and Islamic education by raising teachers' expectations, improving opportunities for independent learning, critical thinking and collaboration and ensuring that assessment rubrics were better aligned to the MoE curriculum.
- Increase the expectations and expertise of teachers to develop students' skills in Arabic as an additional language, with a special focus on speaking and writing, particularly in the MYP phase, to better meet the varied needs of individual students.



### How well did the school provide for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)?

- Students with SEND made good progress in Islamic Education and Arabic. They made very good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Parents received reports regularly from the teachers. Email was used frequently to keep parents informed on an ongoing basis. Parents often visited the teachers and the SEND coordinators for updates on their child's progress.
- There were very good communication procedures in place to keep parents informed. The parents, who were interviewed, praised the school for the information that was supplied.
- Parents were very involved in the drawing up of Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Parents had a central role in making sure that their children were following the IEPs and using the strategies for learning that were set out in them.
- The school provided some support and guidance to parents through workshops and social events. School leaders acknowledged that this was an area to be developed further.

### 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 intent 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. This academic year, KHDA introduced 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.

#### Main points:

- The school met the registration requirements of the National Agenda Parameter.
- Progress towards meeting the National Agenda targets was above expectation.
- The school had promoted awareness and understanding of the National Agenda vision and the National Agenda Targets among its staff and community through regularly discussion at staff meetings, assemblies, and newsletters. Students were able to talk knowledgeably about the National Agenda. However, parents were less aware of the National Agenda and its implications for school practice.
- Analysis of PISA and TIMMS assessments had informed curriculum review. The skills that were tested in international assessments had been identified and additional subject content had been included. Senior staff in MYP and DP had ensured systematic planning for students' progression and continuity in relevant subject skills and knowledge.
- Changes to teaching practices were supported by training. For example, senior staff led sessions to develop teachers' questioning skills to deepen students' learning. Students, throughout the school from a very early age, had regular opportunities to investigate, solve open-ended problems and apply their learning to real life situations.
- The school had embraced the use of digital learning. Staff was well trained and the 'Bring Your Own Device' (BYOD) policy was very effective. As a result, students' efficient use of digital technology was the norm. For example they communicated with each other and their teacher through 'Edmodo'. And teachers used Plickers App to immediately view students' answers.

## Innovation in education

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

Innovation is driven by a commitment to excellence and continuous improvement. It is based on curiosity, the willingness to take risks, to experiment and to test assumptions as well as questioning and challenging the status quo. Being innovative is about looking beyond what we currently do well, identifying the great ideas of tomorrow and putting them into practice.



## Promoting a culture of innovation:





- School leaders were committed to Innovation as a national priority and innovative practices and approaches were implicitly embedded within the school's strategic planning. They had begun to explore, as a school community, what innovation meant to the school, and how it was to be implemented into the curriculum. Teachers received training on developing inquiry skills and critical thinking in lessons. The school made innovative use of internal and external spaces to maximise opportunities for collaborative and investigative learning, sport and recreation. The school was very well resourced to support learning through inquiry. Technology was effectively used to support the development of students' learning skills and assessment practices.



Overall school performance

Outstanding ↑

1. Students' achievement

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

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
<b>Learning skills</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding ↑	Outstanding ↑	Outstanding

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

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

## 3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Outstanding ↑	Outstanding ↑	Outstanding
Assessment	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Outstanding

## 4. Curriculum

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

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

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

## 6. Leadership and management

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



## Main inspection report

The Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) is responsible for inspecting and reporting on the standards reached by students and the quality of education provided in Dubai's private schools.

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



Using this scale, the *Main inspection report* contains the judgements about the different aspects, phases and subjects that form the work of the school.

It provides the reasons for the answers to the questions in the *Summary for parents and the community*:

- How well did the school perform overall?
- What did the school do well?
- What does the school need to do next?

## 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 ↑	Outstanding
Mathematics	Very good ↑	Outstanding
Science	Good	Outstanding

- In English, children attained very well against the expected curriculum standards. All, including those for whom English was an additional language (EAL), made excellent progress from their start in school. They listened attentively to teachers and each other. Almost all were very confident speakers, asked questions and conveyed their ideas clearly. In KG1, most children knew letters and their symbols and could blend them to make simple words. By KG2, most wrote words and labels and had started to write simple sentences with capitals and full stops. They were at an early stage of developing their independent story writing. The progress of children with SEND was very good.
- The large majority of children had achieved beyond what was expected in mathematics. They had developed their knowledge, skills and understanding of concepts very well. They were confident counting and matching numbers and symbols. They used their skills in different situations, such as reading numbers on measuring jugs or counting how many children were at activities. Most were able to build a two- or three-pattern sequence with colours, shapes and objects. Many made complex patterns from building blocks. In role-play, children enjoyed organising play materials in their shops or Internet cafe and serving customers. Children with SEND made very good progress.
- Across the phase, almost all children had gained good scientific inquiry skills. They made very positive progress in lessons and from their start of the year. In KG1, they explored habitats of mini beasts and identified the differences between them. They had studied what plants needed to grow and knew the correct terms for different parts of flowers. By KG2, they predicted the capacity of different vessels in water play. Overall, children had strong knowledge and skills but were less able to explain their findings. The progress of children with SEND was very good.

PYP

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

- In Islamic education, most students' attainment was in line with curriculum standards. In lessons and their recent work, they demonstrated knowledge and understanding of Islamic concepts that were in line with curriculum expectations. In Year 6, for example, students could compare between minor and major signs of hypocrisy. The majority of students were making better than expected progress against their starting points. In particular, students' progress in recitation and memorization of the Holy Qur'an, especially among Arabic speaking students, was strong.
- The attainment of most students in Arabic as the first language was in line with curriculum standards. Of all the language skills, listening and speaking were the strongest. The use of standard Arabic was developed and students showed acceptable confidence and fluency when expressing their ideas and opinions. Most students were developing their reading for comprehension skills at a slower rate. Students could accurately write sentences, however their extended writing was limited. The majority of students were making better than expected progress with their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in relation to their starting point and learning objectives. Their progress tended to accelerate towards the end of the phase.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students were able to follow the teachers' instructions and answer questions related to familiar topics they had learned previously. They were able to use associated vocabulary to form correctly structured short sentences in answer to direct questions. Most students understood short texts about common topics. They read with accurate pronunciation and intonation. Writing skills, for the majority of students, were in line with expectations. A significant number of students were able to construct a number of sentences independently with a few common mistakes. In nearly all the lessons observed, the majority of students made better than expected progress in relation to stated learning objectives. However, the more able students were not always sufficiently challenged.
- In English, by Year 6, most students demonstrated articulate speaking and attentive listening skills. These contributed to well-written pieces for a wide range of purposes and audiences. Students' writing benefited from their increasingly wide reading. Year 1 students could re-tell familiar stories, whilst in Year 6 students explored poetry composition. These skills had consistently enabled a large majority of students to reach attainment levels above curricular norms and above international standards. Girls attained more highly than boys across all years. Most students, including those with SEND, made better than expected progress from their starting points. There was scope to develop further the progress of boys to help them attain more in line with girls.



- In mathematics, most students attained levels that were above the average in the International Benchmarking Test (IBT). In lessons and in their workbooks, a large majority of students demonstrated an above age understanding of number, shape and data handling. Their ability to solve problems was extremely well developed. This was because teachers used a variety of activities and strategies that ensured students' confidence, fluency and versatility were nurtured. Problem solving as an integral part of learning within each unit. Progress, both over time and in lessons, was rapid.
- The addition of a Primary science laboratory enhanced the hands-on approach in the PYP. Scientific method and critical thinking were features of almost all classrooms. Most students in Year 1 could demonstrate how friction worked, by Year 4, most could use microscopes to find micro-organisms, and students in Year 6 researched environmental issues. Most students could also make real-world connections with their science knowledge, had very strong practical skills and were able to plan their own experimental investigations. Older students were also required to write essays and make very successful presentations in response to conceptual questions. A good example was the studies of the solar system by students in Year 5. As a result students achieved exceptionally well.

#### MYP

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students developed knowledge, understanding and skills levels that were above curriculum expectations. They could memorize prescribed verses and apply recitation rules appropriately. Year 9 students demonstrated a well-developed understanding of benefits of Zakat, ways to pay it and the implications for social justice. Strong links were made to real life and local contexts. In lessons and in their recent work, students made better progress than expected, in particular, in Qur'an recitation. This resulted in good attainment and progress overall.
- The attainment of most students in Arabic as a first language was in line with curriculum expectations. Most students were able to demonstrate a basic competency in their language skills. In speaking, most students could express their ideas and opinions. The use of standard Arabic was developing and students showed appropriate confidence and fluency when expressing their ideas and opinions. The skills of most students in reading for comprehension were in line with expectations. The majority of students were making better than expected progress in all language skills. However, progress in developing speaking and listening was faster than in writing.
- In Arabic as an additional language, the attainment of most students was in line with curriculum expectations. Most students were able to respond reasonably to their teachers' questions. Students could take part in simple conversations, talking about daily routines, likes and dislikes, purchasing items, and weather conditions. In reading, most students had emerging decoding skills and could read shorter sentences and understand the main idea presented in a given text. In writing, most students were beginning to apply learnt grammar rules. When supported with picture prompts, word logs or sentence patterns, students could write a few extended sentences. Progress in all language aspects was in line with curriculum expectations for all groups of students.

- In English, the well-developed reading comprehension skills of most students enabled them to attain above expected levels in internal examination, and against curricular and international standards. On entry to MYP, most students built well on their fluent speaking skills, critical listening abilities, and increasing facility in writing. As a result, most could express, in increasingly cogent and often insightful terms, their responses to the literary texts that they read. A minority of students had yet to develop the precision required in their writing. Across the phase, most students made better than expected progress from their individual starting points, both over time and in lessons. All groups of students made similar progress.
- In mathematics, the school's internal tests showed that the attainment levels of most students were well above the school's curriculum standards. International benchmark tests results were not quite so strong. In lessons, students demonstrated a very strong understanding of mathematical concepts and were able to apply them to real life situations. They were able to make excellent use of technology in order to solve mathematical problems. Most students made better than expected progress from their starting points in relation to their curriculum expectations as well as against the learning objectives of the lessons.
- A large majority of students, in science, were able to explain in depth their learning and how it related to real life issues. In Year 11, students investigated corrosion not only from the viewpoint of chemistry, but also related to associated social and economic perspectives. Practical studies and other hands-on activities were a feature of MYP science; Year 10 students examined bird manure to determine the birds' diets, Year 8 students delved into the structure and function of leaves and Year 7 students tested acid-base indicators they had made at home. Technology was used very effectively for research, recording information and preparing presentations. These factors led to very good attainment and progress for all groups of students.

**DP**

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students had good knowledge, understanding and skills. In lessons and in their recent work, they demonstrated standards that were above curriculum expectations. The majority of students had a well-developed knowledge of Sunnah and Shari'a law. For example, Year 12 students knew that marriage was a way to chastity, supporting their view with evidence from Qur'an. They could also identify the role and importance of Sunnah and how it was related to Qur'an. They were able to apply their skills to their personal lives. The majority of students, including those with SEND made good progress against curriculum expectations.
- Attainment in Arabic as a first language was in line with curriculum standards. Most students were able to demonstrate a basic competency in their language skills. In speaking, most students could express their ideas and opinions. The use of standard Arabic was developed and students were confident expressing their opinions and ideas. Most students had appropriate levels of reading for understanding. Their writing was building well on the skills that they had acquired in early learning. However, speaking, listening and reading skills were developing the quickest. The majority of students made better than expected progress.

- In English, most students were highly articulate speakers and focused listeners who confidently and capably tackled the reading of a demanding range of literary texts. They explored their ideas in creative activities such as debating and this led to well-crafted essays. Accordingly, most students attained above expected levels in their IB diploma, although there was scope to improve Standard Level of students' performance. Most students made better than expected progress from their individual starting points, both in lessons and over time. All groups of students made similar progress.
- In mathematics, the large majority of students attained above curriculum and international standards. Students had a very secure knowledge of statistics, functions and basic calculus. They could confidently apply their skills to solving real-life problems. An analysis of students' work showed that a large majority of students made better than expected progress. Students were very adept at using various technologies to support and often extend their learning. Independent learning was a notable strong feature of learning in this phase. From their starting points students made rapid progress in their learning.
- Intellectual rigour was a feature of all science learning, exemplified by discussions about dark matter in Year 13 physics and about genetic modification of crops in Year 12 biology. High-level practical work was integral to their studies and students were expected to design their own experiments; for example, to investigate the effects of temperature on tennis racquet strings or how sand affected solar panels. The use of learning technology was intrinsic to research, recording information, revision and preparing presentations. All students were able to talk about and write about high-level scientific concepts in real-world contexts. Progress for all groups of students, over time and in lessons, was exceptionally quick.

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Learning skills	Outstanding	Outstanding ↑	Outstanding ↑	Outstanding

- The enthusiasm of students and their ability to take responsibility for their own learning were a very strong feature in all phases of the school. Genuine, targeted reflection, through the use of rubrics, visual thinking tools and regular discussion, was intrinsic to students' experiences in most classrooms. Students routinely set their own learning targets.
- Effective and purposeful collaboration was a key feature of nearly all classrooms. Students had a range of different opportunities; with friends, with students of similar ability or interests and in groups with a range of abilities and interests. Almost all students could articulate their learning very clearly orally, in writing, visually or through performance.
- Making connections between areas of learning or with the real world, facilitated by purposeful planning of opportunities in every classroom, began in KG1 and continued through until the end of DP. Most students could demonstrate a deep understanding of the world that transcended the learning of factual subject matter. Most could employ a range of communication strategies very effectively.
- Lessons were planned so that students could learn independently and collaboratively, and almost all students relished these opportunities. They could find out things for themselves; from exploring through play in KG through to planning sophisticated investigations in DP sciences. Learning technology was an integral aspect of nearly all classes. Students were expected to use critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

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

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

- Students were highly responsible, independent and self-motivated learners. They showed excellent caring attitudes and respect towards their peers and the adults in school. They were reflective learners and very critical on their own progress. Almost all students in MYP and DP completed 'what next' self-reflection sheets and received valuable feedback from their peers. They responded positively to teacher feedback and took account of the suggestions.
- Students were self-disciplined and required little adult intervention. They responded very well to teachers, student council members and senior prefects when required. Students' behaviour in class, between lessons and during break-time was exemplary. Students demonstrated a strong understanding of cyber bullying and were well aware of how to keep themselves safe online.
- Students had an excellent relationship with peers and adults in school. As a result, they were confident to take risks in their learning. In all phases, children and students supported their peers in a very respectful manner. This was a very evident in Arabic and French. The Buddy programme was very effective, building students' leadership skills as well as supporting younger students.
- Healthy living was an integral part of the school culture. Students had a very clear understanding of dietary choices and the importance of exercise for health. Year 4 students could explain the links between poor diet and an inactive lifestyle to obesity. Most students enjoyed the physical activities during the regular school day and many sought out additional opportunities after school.
- Students' attendance was excellent. Students were punctual to school and when moving between lessons. They respected the need for lessons to start on time and arrived promptly to their classrooms after break.

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

- Students demonstrated an excellent understanding of Islamic values. Non-Muslim students were fully aware of the impact of Islam on the lives of Muslim students. Young students understood, for example, that Muslim women must dress conservatively in public places and that Muslims prayed five times a day. Older students were knowledgeable about the call to prayer (athan) and the Five Pillars of Islam.
- Students, in all phases, had an advanced understanding of the culture and traditions of the UAE and were able to make appropriate comparisons with modern day Dubai. They spoke in detail about Arabic dress, Arabic art, calligraphy and local foods. Students in MYP were able to compare the benefits of the growing modern city with the loss of valuable habitats and ecosystems.
- Students could talk in detail about the cultural activities in which they have taken part. Students fully appreciated and celebrated their own customs. They showed experience and knowledge of cultural diversity and breadth, including music, art, and literature from around the world. From the experiences learned from their friends and from multicultural Dubai, students were very aware of common elements between cultures.



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

- Across the school, students took their responsibilities seriously. In KG, children learned about the jobs of people who helped in the local area. All students helped with fundraising events for a wide range of charities, including local and international causes. At each phase, students were extremely proactive in suggesting which causes they wanted to support and what events they could organise to do this.
- Students' attitudes to work were exemplary throughout the school. They were eager to learn, open to new ideas and experiences and readily took part in enterprising events, which they helped develop. For example, older students had helped set up more sports activities and coaching. Their cultural awareness was very strong. They talked about their responsibilities as members of society now, and when they left school.
- From KG to DP, children and students helped to look after and enhance their school and local environment. KG children had developed very good understanding of their local community and how to save and recycle materials. All students pioneered conservation through their class work and the numerous ECO-school initiatives, such as 'water for life' and 'roof over heads'.

### 3. Teaching and assessment

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

- Across classes and subjects, almost all teachers were very experienced and had high levels of knowledge of their subject. Most understood clearly how students learned, especially the best ways to develop the learning of children in KG and students in the early Primary phase. They used inventive approaches to tasks and activities to meet students' different styles of learning.
- Teachers' planning was strong across the school. It was very detailed and took account of the needs of almost all individuals and groups of students, including those who had SEND or were gifted and talented. Teachers provided stimulating environments to engage and interest students. They planned very effective use of learning technologies to enhance students' experiences and link their learning across subjects.
- Interactions between teachers and students were consistently very positive across the school. Nearly all teachers encouraged students to be critical thinkers and answer open-ended questions. In Year 6, for example, students responded very well to the challenge by taking on the role of the teacher to lead the learning. In mathematics, teachers used students' misconceptions to very good effect as a further learning and reflection opportunity.
- Almost all teachers and support staff ensured students' needs were very well met. Teachers planned experiences carefully to suit the interests and capabilities of all students. Students' learning pathways were organised to match their personal and academic goals. KG children responded eagerly to the stimulating learning activities their teachers organised, indoors and outside.
- Critical thinking and innovation was strongly embedded in most teachers' approaches. As a result, students had developed as independent learners, confident in tackling problems and taking responsibilities in their own learning. These skills were present in most subjects in the four phases.



- In Arabic as a first language, most teachers demonstrated good knowledge of their subject, which was best used where students inquired and discussion was facilitated. Most used resources beyond the textbooks to enhance lessons particularly in upper grades of each phase. Student-teacher interactions were mutually respectful. Teachers shared lesson objectives. Differentiation and challenge were offered, however the level of their effectiveness was inconsistent in lessons.
- In Arabic as an additional language, the quality of teaching was good in the PYP phase of the school while it was acceptable in MYP phase. There were strong relationships between teachers and students. In PYP, teachers' knowledge of how to use a range of activities was well planned to meet the needs of different groups of students. This was less developed in MYP.

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Assessment	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Outstanding

- The school had rigorous assessment systems aligned to the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum standards. A wide range of assessment strategies was effectively and efficiently used across the school. There was scope in Islamic education and Arabic to improve the accuracy of assessments by aligning them more closely to the challenges of the MoE curriculum.
- A variety of external examinations were used. Combined with the school's internal assessments and school leaders' evaluations of progress in lessons, they gave an accurate baseline for student performance. Furthermore, they provided an excellent means by which the school could compare itself to schools in other parts of the world as well as measure its progress towards National Agenda targets.
- School leaders made detailed analyses of all assessment information. The data was used to compare the progress of different groups of students and attainment trends over time and was regularly monitored. Teachers used the analysis, in collaboration with the students to set individual student targets for monitoring future attainment as well as guiding students' next steps.
- Teachers in most curriculum areas made skillful use of the assessment information in order to plan activities for the different groups of students, successfully building on their prior learning. Leaders used the analysis to ensure that curriculum content had been well covered and that skills had been sufficiently developed. Well-structured self and peer-assessments were integral parts of almost all lessons.
- Teachers had detailed knowledge of their students' strengths and weaknesses. A very good range of assessment strategies was used to provide challenge, support and feedback to students. Marking generally provided good written response and students often reflected and acted upon the teachers' comments in their workbooks. Rubrics of expected outcomes were used effectively to monitor and measure progress.

#### 4. Curriculum

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

- The curriculum was based on a clear rationale, was consistent with the U.A.E. National Agenda vision and compliant with statutory requirements. The inclusion of critical thinking, investigations, open-ended problems, inquiry and application to real life situations resulted an excellent balance of knowledge, skills and understanding. There were opportunities to embed science further in more units of inquiry in PYP and KG.
- Each IB programme was designed to build on the one before. Cross-phase meetings of teachers every eight weeks checked the continuity in each subject. Dedicated software enabled tracking and mapping of concepts, attitudes, profiles and trans-disciplinary skills across phases. Consequently, students were very well prepared to transition from one phase to the next.
- The comprehensive nature of IB programmes provided students with extensive choices appropriate to their talents, interests and aspirations. Spanish has been added to Years 3, 4, and 5. Students had the opportunity to study an extra science in both the MYP and DP. The school had identified the further increase of the breadth of subject choice in DP as an area for improvement.
- Cross-curricular links were a feature in all phases and were embedded through the elements of the IB programme. DP teachers had all received internal training to incorporate theory of knowledge and creativity and 'action service' into their subjects. Teachers in every classroom planned for cross-curricular and real-world links to be integral to student learning.
- Teachers in each phase met monthly, at least, to rigorously review the curriculum and continuously develop it to ensure that the academic and personal development needs of all students were met in full. All teachers were required to reflect at the end of each unit about ways in which learning could be improved. The recently amended IB MYP was being followed by the school.
- In KG and PYP the school taught UAE social studies integrated with other subjects. Some units from MOE curriculum were seen. From year 7 to 13, units from UAE social studies were taught as part of humanities (UAE history and geography). Due to the nature of IB curriculum, the school used the local context in daily bases in almost all lessons.

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Curriculum adaptation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding


- Modifications of the curriculum to meet the needs of all students, including students with SEND and gifted and talented, were of a very high order. Modifications often took place as a result of a review of test scores. For example, analysis of English results had resulted in a greater emphasis being placed on the development of reading skills.
- The school continued to expand its range of subjects and extracurricular activities. It offered a very wide range of subjects including mathematics studies in the Diploma Programme. The school provided tuition in nine different 'home' languages. Students had a number of opportunities to engage in activities that promoted enterprise and innovation. Units of inquiry enabled students to personalise their investigations.

- All units of inquiry began at the local and community level. This resulted in links with Emirati culture and the U.A.E. society being embedded throughout all aspects of the school's curriculum. Fieldwork in geography, science and visual arts was undertaken on local sites. This year the school had designated specific Arabic days and PYP students had created Arabic video clips to improve speaking skills.
- The school offered two lesson of 40-minutes of Arabic and Islamic education, per week, for 300 children in KG. The curriculum that was used was designed by the school to support children as they transferred to Year 1.

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

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

- The school had revised its child protection policy and ensured all staff and students were aware of its contents. The policy was available to parents on the school website. The school was very successful in the measures that it took to protect students from all forms of abuse including bullying, wherever it occurred.
- A critical incident policy now supplemented emergency evacuation procedures. As a result, the school was very well prepared to react appropriately to wider threats to student safety. Supervision arrangements, including the arrival and departure of school buses, were very well organised. Parental drop-off and pick-up at start and end of school day was also orderly and well managed.
- The school buildings and facilities were in excellent condition and well maintained. Confidential records were kept securely. Maintenance records were up-to-date. Incidents and accidents and any follow-up actions were promptly recorded. The school provided an extremely safe and secure environment for its students.
- All areas of the school and its facilities were fully accessible to all users, including those with impaired mobility. The premises and facilities, both indoor and outdoor, provided a safe physical environment that effectively promoted students' learning and personal development across all phases of the school.
- The school took extensive measures to encourage children and students' well being. School canteen menus offered healthy meals, fresh drinking water was readily available and the contents of students' packed lunchboxes were monitored. A new fitness suite offered senior students additional physical fitness options. Annual health screening offered early identification of potential health issues.


	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Care and support	Outstanding 	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Excellent staff student relationships existed across all phases of the school. Teachers knew their students very well and mutual respect and understanding were evident in all classes. Implementation of detailed discipline and behaviour policies reinforced good behaviour. The school acknowledged the rights of the students and expected students to act responsibly at all times. Counsellors and teachers worked together to advise and support students.

- Well-designed systems for morning registration time were in place to ensure that students' attendance were carefully monitored. Effective procedures were in place, which engaged parents in reducing absences and in promoting punctuality. Students were also encouraged to return to classes and lessons in a timely manner.
- The school had improved its procedures to identify students with SEND. The initial identification occurred at enrolment through assessments, cognitive ability tests and reports. Throughout the school, students were also identified using assessment data, in-school screenings for literacy and numeracy and targeted observations. Gifted and talented Students were identified through teacher and parent nominations and supported by test results, samples of work and school reports.
- Support for students with SEND was well developed throughout the school. IEPs were of a suitable standard and clearly set out the parameters of support needed. In addition, a minority of students with SEND attended learning support groups for mathematics and English. All teachers were very cognisant of the needs of students and incorporated appropriate support within lessons. Gifted and talented students had personalised enrichment plans.
- High quality support was made available to all students across all of the phases by counsellors and teachers. A student Buddy programme was effective in assisting new students. The college counsellor advised on university placement with 100 per cent success. Career advice was available from Year 9 and the job-shadowing programme in Year 11 supported students in making appropriate subject choices.

#### Provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

The overall effectiveness of provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities

Very good 

- The governors had provided a very wide range of resources to promote the education of students with SEND, including the appointment of two new special education needs coordinators (SENCOs). The SENCOs had provided professional development for all teachers. The school had separate policies for SEND at PYP and at MYP and cohesion and consistency between the two phases was being developed.
- A very wide range of tests, including a specialised test for KG, was used successfully to identify students with SEND. Teachers also identified students who were displaying difficulties. These students were then referred to the SENCO for further investigation and observation. Both SENCOs administered a range of tests for dyslexia and dyscalculia and other educational agencies were used, when necessary.
- The school had developed a strong partnership with the parents of students with SEND. There was ease of access to the staff at all times. Communication with parents was effective. Parents were actively involved in the development of all areas of their child's IEP. The school had organised a number of meetings to support parents of students with SEND.
- Curriculum modifications were achieved mostly through the development of IEPs, which were drawn up in collaboration with parents. The IEPs were well focused upon skill development across all areas of learning. Appropriate strategies and the resources to be used were outlined in these IEPs. As yet, the IEPs did not include sufficient information of the extent of the difficulty, particularly with regard to social and emotional issues.
- A tracking system to record progress, using prompts, was established at PYP. In MYP teachers met four mornings a week to review progress. The recording of progress was more effective at class level in PYP but was less effective in MYP. Students made good progress in Islamic education and Arabic and very good progress across all of the other areas of learning.




## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Outstanding

- The school vision, created and shared by the school community, several years ago, was central to the school decision-making process. It was reviewed annually to ensure that it held still true. Implicit in the vision was the school's journey towards its National Agenda targets.
- The development of leadership, at all levels, was a key priority for the school. A successful strategy was the 'Leaders of Learning' programme, which involved two in every three teachers, at different levels. This externally, supported training was extremely effective in developing the quality of teaching as well as leadership skills.
- Relationships between all leaders were highly professional. Leadership was very effectively delegated to a strong team of middle leaders and their job descriptions clearly detailed roles, responsibilities and accountabilities. Meetings were effectively scheduled to enable all staff to contribute to the school decision-making process.
- The quality of leadership, at all levels was high and leaders had the capacity to improve further. Leaders could clearly explain their part in the school improvement process and morale was high. Leaders were reflective, understanding the school's key priorities and they demonstrated creativity in their planning to circumvent potential obstacles and build consistency of practice across the phases.
- Leaders were developing the school at an increasingly rapid rate, even in those areas, which in the past have been resistant to improvement. Some of the creative strategies were at an early stage, however progress could already be measured. The senior leadership team had ensured that the school was fully compliant with statutory and regulatory requirements.

### School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Outstanding 

- The school had created a very strong process for self-evaluation. It included some input from parents, through the focus groups and annual surveys. International benchmark data was used along with the school's internal assessment results and results of classroom monitoring. It was abundantly clear that the school knew itself very well. There were plans to share a summary of the self-evaluation with the school community.
- All leaders had a responsibility for monitoring the quality of teaching. They had an excellent understanding of the process and operated from a common rubric. Monitoring took the form of learning walks, focused discussions with teachers and targets being set for the next observation. Twice a year, formal performance management observations complemented the process.
- From this accurate picture of the school's performance, key improvement priorities were formed. They took full account of external recommendations and reviews and had some measurable success criteria. However, they did not make sufficient links to intended outcomes in terms of improved student performance. The school action plan was developed into appropriate actions at curriculum and year group level. Plans were regularly monitored at all levels.
- The school has been successful in improving all elements of last year's DSIB recommendations. Teaching had measurably improved, through the sharing of good practice. Although the attainment in Islamic education and Arabic still remained at its previous level, progress in the majority of phases had improved. The use of internationally benchmarked assessments informed self-evaluation, through the moderation of internal tests, and the modification of the curriculum.






Partnerships with parents and the community	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school successfully engaged parents in the life of the school and in the learning of their children. The Parents Association (PADIA) played an important function in bringing the school community together through the events that it supported. Parents' Focus Groups met regularly to discuss organisational matters relating to their children.</li> <li>Parents were informed through a wide variety of appropriate strategies. Parents had access to school information and policies through the Plus Portal. Although parents felt well informed, there were a few inconsistencies in communication across sections, year groups and phases. Parents of students in PYP reported that they benefited enormously from the school's 'open door' policy.</li> <li>Students' progress could be accessed by parents through the school's website as well as the summative student reports of attainment and progress, which had recently been reviewed. The summative reports contain valuable information about attainment, learning content and attendance. There was some variability across phases to the extent to which next steps in learning and personal and social development was reported.</li> <li>Partnerships with the community were a huge strength of the school. They gave all students increasing opportunities to develop academically and personally. Programmes such as the Job Shadowing for Year 11 students and the partnership with parents with regard to the Career Fair for Year 10 students provided much needed guidance for future choices.</li> </ul>	

Governance	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although governance was not inclusive of a wide representation of the school community, there was a clear mechanism for collecting informed opinion. The governors and the executive board of the shareholders, was regularly advised by the advisory council; a knowledgeable group of parents, educationalists and businessmen. Additionally, governors paid close attention to external reports and the results of international benchmarked assessments.</li> <li>The governors' detailed knowledge of the school was through the regular reports that it received from the advisory council. It had an accurate understanding of the school improvement priorities and potential barriers to progress. A programme of visits by Advisory Council members enabled them to see and evaluate the school in action.</li> <li>Consequently, decisions that were made by governors were well informed. Recent examples of the support that had been provided to the school include the introduction of salary increments in order to increase teacher retention and the provision of a broad range of measures to improve the quality of teaching in Arabic and Islamic education. These included additional personnel, resources and training.</li> </ul>	

Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The daily life of the school operated very smoothly. Lesson changeover routines quietly contributed to the school's calm and purposeful atmosphere. Timetabling was very effective and little time was lost. Students' movement around the school and in the outdoor learning areas was self-regulated.</li> <li>• All teachers were suitably qualified, and took part in a carefully planned programme of professional development during the school year. This programme had been very well linked to the school's priorities for improvement. Teachers and support staff were deployed in an exemplary way to support children and students' effective learning in class and on educational visits.</li> <li>• Since the previous inspection the school had commissioned additional classrooms and laboratories to support learning in the sciences, mathematics, and social subjects. A recently added fitness suite provided additional resources for senior students' optional courses. There were further plans to develop facilities for students studying art.</li> <li>• Information technology was integral to learning in classrooms across the school. Innovative interactive displays provided additional information at the touch of a button. The school supported students' use of their own devices. Whilst e-learning was a prominent feature of students' experiences, the quality of resources for Islamic education, Arabic and mother tongue language teaching had not been similarly developed.</li> </ul>	

## The views of the parents, teachers and 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> 	2015-2016	476
	2014-2015	445
<b>Teachers</b> 	152	
<b>Students</b> 	326	

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

- A minority of parents, nearly all teachers and most students took part in the survey.
- The school community was positive about most aspects of the survey.
- Parents believed that progress in English was the strongest of all core subjects and that progress in Arabic was least strong, although a majority of parents believed it to be good.
- Students were less positive about progress in Arabic as an additional language, with only a minority believing that it was good.
- Most parents and students appreciated the broad curriculum, the value of assessments and the development of a wide range of learning skills.
- Nearly all parents and teachers and most students responded that the school was a secure environment and that school transport was safe.
- Most students felt that behaviour was good, and there was no problem from bullying.
- Only a minority of students reported that the school listened to their views.
- Most teachers agreed that they were involved in school review, evaluation and that the last DSIB report had been shared with them.

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)