

Inspection Report



Our Own High School

2014-2015



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School information



General information

Location	Al Warqa'a
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	1968
Website	www.gemsoo-alwarqa.com
Telephone	04-2800077
Address	P.O. Box No 35519 Al Warqa'a 2, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Principal	Sanjeev Kumar Jolly
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	13 th – 16 th October 2014



Students

Gender of students	Boys
Age range	5 - 19
Grades or year groups	Grade1 - Grade12
Number of students on roll	4714
Number of children in Pre-K	0
Number of Emirati students	0
Number of students with SEN	69
Largest nationality group of students	Indian



Teachers / Support staff

Number of teachers	209
Largest nationality group of teachers	Indian
Number of teacher assistants	7
Teacher-student ratio	1:22
Number of guidance counsellors	3
Teacher turnover	8%



Curriculum

Educational Permit	Select
Main Curriculum / Other	CBSE
Standardised tests / board exams	CAT 4-11, CBSE 10, 12
Accreditation	



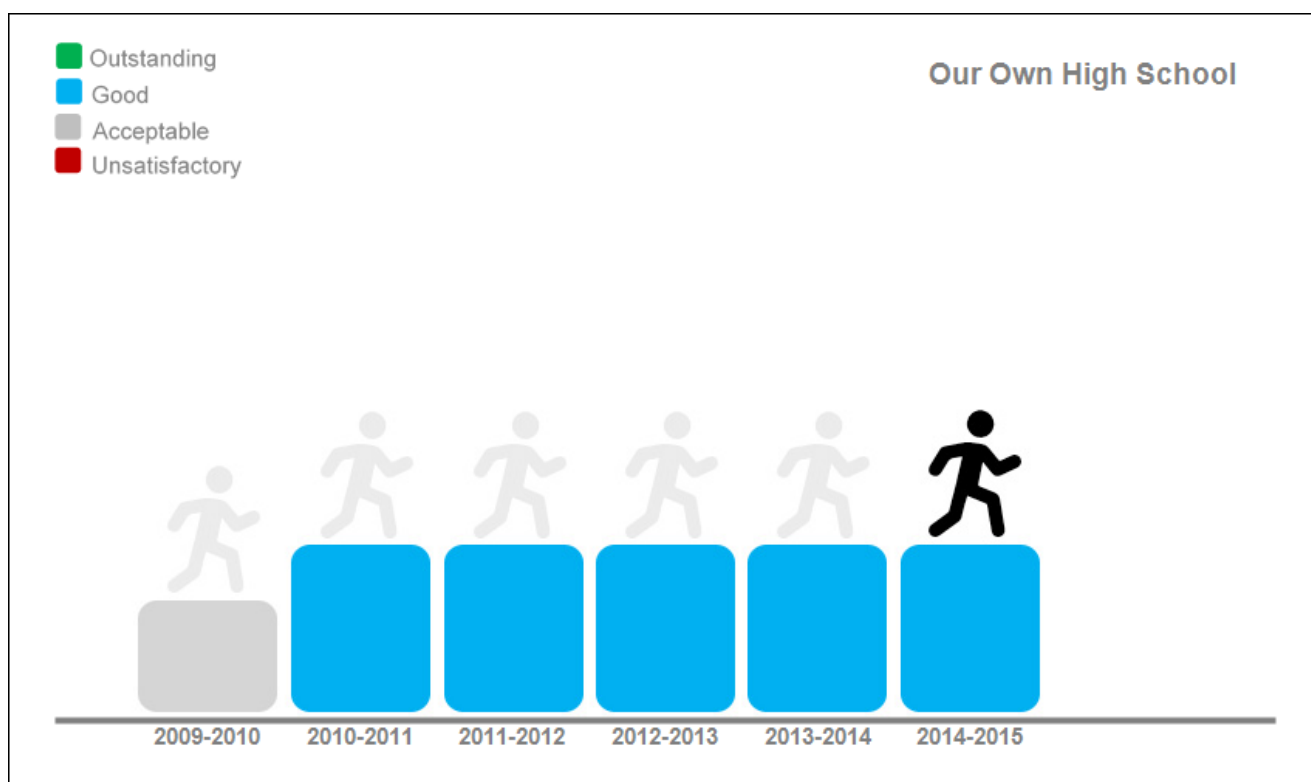
Parents' Report



Dear Parents,

Our Own High School was inspected by DSIB from 13th – 16th October 2014, 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

- Students' attainment and progress in most subjects was good.
- Students throughout the school had outstanding attitudes and behaviour.
- Teachers in the middle and secondary phases used information from tests and assessments well to guide the planning of their lessons.
- Relationships between staff and students were positive and caring.

Areas for improvement

- The teaching of Arabic as an additional language did not meet the students' learning needs.
- Teachers in the primary phase did not always have high enough expectations of students.
- The school's curriculum did not fully meet the needs of all students, especially those with special educational needs.
- The Governance committee should ensure that class sizes comply with KHDA guidelines.

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 Our Own High School



How well does the school perform overall?

Our Own High School provided a **'Good'** quality of education for its children.













- Students' attainment and progress were mainly good in most subjects.
- Students' personal and social development was a strength of the school. Students had an excellent understanding of values and global issues. Many were engaged in projects linked to the environment.
- Most of the teachers were qualified and used good methods that engaged the students in learning. However, the standards of teaching and student achievement in Arabic as an additional language needed improvement.
- The curriculum was focused on developing students' knowledge, understanding and skills, together with developing students' good attitudes and high moral values.
- The provision for students' health and safety was outstanding. Students were well cared for and supported in the school.
- Leadership, management, facilities and resources were good but class sizes did not comply with KHDA guidelines. Overcrowded classrooms restricted teaching and learning methods and limited students' learning.





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

- Students with special educational needs made acceptable progress in their learning and development.
- The school had an inclusive ethos and a qualified, professional special educational needs team. All students who were identified as having special educational needs had individual education plans but teaching in lessons did not always match these plans.
- Parents of children with special educational needs were closely involved in their education.


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

		Primary	Middle	Secondary
 Islamic Education	Attainment	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Good	Good	Good
 Arabic as a First Language	Attainment	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
	Progress	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
 Arabic as an Additional Language	Attainment	Acceptable 	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable 	Acceptable	Acceptable
 English	Attainment	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Good	Good	Good
 Mathematics	Attainment	Good 	Good	Good
	Progress	Good 	Good	Good
 Science	Attainment	Good 	Good	Outstanding 
	Progress	Good	Good	Outstanding 
		Primary	Middle	Secondary
Learning skills		Acceptable	Good	Good



 Improved from last inspection

 Declined from last inspection


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

	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Personal responsibility	Outstanding 	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
Community and environmental responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

3. How good are teaching and assessment?

	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Good	Good
Assessment	Acceptable	Good 	Good 

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

	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Good	Good
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good 

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

	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Health and safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of support	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	Good
Governance	Acceptable
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Good



School **Inspection** Report

Overall school judgement

Good

Key strengths


- Students' attainment and progress were good in most key subject areas.
- Student attitudes and behaviour were outstanding throughout the school.
- Assessment was used effectively to guide teachers' planning of learning in the middle and secondary phases.
- There was a wide range of extra-curricular options, particularly in secondary phase.
- Relationships between staff and students were positive and caring.


Changes since the last inspection

- Results in students' examinations had improved and students consistently achieved above the local and national norms.
- The school's use of assessment data for planning lessons had improved, particularly in the secondary phase.
- Processes for identifying and teaching students with special educational needs had improved.






Recommendations

- Improve teaching methods and set appropriate standards to meet the learning needs of all students in Arabic as an additional language.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching, particularly in the primary phase, by ensuring teachers have high expectations of students, and lessons provide appropriate challenge.
- Align the curriculum to more accurately and consistently meet the needs of all learners, especially for students with special educational needs.
- Ensure class sizes comply with KHDA guidelines.

 Improved from last inspection

 Declined from last inspection



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

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

- In Islamic education, students had a good understanding of Fiqh law. Students consistently attained good standards in examination results.
- In Arabic as an additional language, listening skills were strongest in this phase. Students understood most spoken words and a range of familiar expressions. The majority of students spoke well and used an adequate range of vocabulary when explaining their ideas. Writing skills were in line with expectations.
- In English, students listened attentively, read fluently and spoke well. They listened and responded thoughtfully and were able to follow instructions. Students' reading and writing skills developed well across the primary phase and older students managed well with both fiction and non-fiction texts. Weaknesses in critical thinking affected the performance of higher ability students.
- Mathematics was strong across the primary grades. Most students had a good understanding of mathematical concepts and could explain the processes used to solve problems. They made good progress in their understanding of number and calculation skills.
- In science, students attained levels that were above curriculum standards. This were seen in the external examinations they took, in their work records and in daily lessons. Students talked knowledgeably about parts of the body and their functions, the adaptation of animals and plants to their environments and the effects of different types of forces. They explored scientific ideas and concepts through hands-on activities, carried out simple investigations and recorded their observations. Science lessons interested the students and encouraged them to develop positive attitudes to enquiry based learning.

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

- In Islamic education, students had a good understanding of Prophet Mohammad's (PBUH) Seerah. However, their recitation skills contained errors and few students used Tajweed rules correctly. Over the past three years, students' examination results showed an overall improving trend.
- Reading skills in Arabic as an additional language were in line with expectations. Students were able to read sentences and could match sounds to letters. Nevertheless, comprehension was limited across this phase. Students' writing skills were not well developed because most students were not given sufficient opportunities to write.
- In English, students' writing showed a firm grasp of grammar, spelling and punctuation which became increasingly accurate across the phase. However, progress in writing was inconsistent because students were not provided with enough opportunities to write at length, for different purposes and for different audiences. Most students were able to express their ideas orally. They read aloud with fluency, expression and confidence. Their comprehension skills and ability to extract information from text were well developed.
- In mathematics, most students attained levels that were at least in line with CBSE curriculum expectations. They understood the importance of correct structure for communication and presentation in mathematics. All students had very good handwriting and were well trained to show their work in a correct, logical and accurate way. Progress in mathematics had improved over the last three years.
- In science, students attained levels above curriculum standards. They demonstrated high levels of knowledge, skills and understanding of scientific terms and processes that allowed them to be successful in classroom and laboratory lessons. Across the phase, students became more independent learners through performing practical activities collaboratively. This developed their scientific thinking, extended their enquiry and investigation skills and enabled them to relate basic scientific concepts to real life situations.

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


- In Islamic education, students knew, understood and applied Islamic concepts to levels above curriculum expectations. Most students attained high levels in examinations.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students' speaking skills were below expectations. Students could express their ideas using a range of familiar words but only a small minority had a rich vocabulary. Writing and speaking were the least developed skills. Students' writing was mostly clear to read but was restricted to copying or forming simple sentences.
- In English, Grade 9 students appreciated the distinctions illustrated in Shakespeare's "Seven Ages of Man" and could relate it to real life. In Grade 12, students discussed realistic dialogues, enacted role-plays and made PowerPoint presentations on specifications of dialogue writing. Most could extract meaning from text and identify key ideas when summarising the main points. The writing skills of most students lagged behind reading, speaking and listening skills in all grades, although the gap was narrower in Grade 12.
- In mathematics, students made good progress which had improved over the last three years. Attainment levels in their knowledge and use of functions, graphing techniques, calculus and modern mathematics were well above international standards. However, their skills in modeling, carrying out open ended tasks, projects and analyses of practical applications were less well developed because of the limited opportunities for students to develop these skills.
- In science, most students attained levels and made progress above expectations. Students could lead a class through discussion and hands-on activities. They possessed a strong scientific vocabulary and working knowledge of the science laboratory work and the correct steps in the scientific process. They showed good understanding of abstract phenomena such as atoms and molecules, gravitation, quantum mechanics and kinetic theory. Students could apply their learning to different aspects of life such as health, the environment, industry, the weather, space research and agriculture. As compared to their counterparts in other parts of the world, students performed extremely well as measured against their starting points.

	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Learning skills	Acceptable	Good	Good

- Students were enthusiastic and actively engaged in their own learning, demonstrating excellent attitudes and focus during the lessons. Students in the secondary phase could confidently reflect on their own learning and take responsibility to improve it independently. However, in other phases reflection skills were in need of improvement.
- Most students collaborated and interacted effectively.

- Application of learning to the real world and connections between areas of learning were better developed in the middle and secondary phases where most students, when given the opportunity, could apply their knowledge. In the primary phase these skills were inconsistent.
- Enquiry, research and critical thinking skills were the weakest across all phases. Imaginative and creative writing skills were underdeveloped.

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

	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Personal responsibility	Outstanding 	Outstanding	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students demonstrated mature and sensible attitudes and demonstrated self-reliance. • Students' behaviour was very good and showed strong commitment to school life although poor behaviour in some primary lessons affected students' progress. • Relationships between students and with staff were very respectful; students were courteous to one another and to adults. • Almost all students had positive attitudes towards healthy living and took part in activities which promoted healthy lifestyles. • Attendance for the most recent term was good. Almost all students arrived in good time for lessons. 			

	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all students had an excellent understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness. • Students exhibited positive attitudes towards the heritage and traditions of the UAE and could explain their relevance to people in Dubai. • Students had an excellent awareness and appreciation of their own culture and other cultures from around the world. They provided details and examples and were able to compare and contrast them with their own Indian culture. 			



	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Community and environmental responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students talked enthusiastically about the wide range of initiatives they had helped to develop and which had made a positive contribution to their local community and wider global appeals. The student voice was valued in the school. There were various forums for effective communication between all members of the school community. All students in the school were given the opportunity to present their ideas to a school audience in the 'Thoughts Aloud' activity. 			

- They demonstrated an excellent knowledge of projects led by their environmental ambassadors and how these made a significant impact upon the environment.
- Older students appreciated the opportunity to be appointed to positions of responsibility and then contribute positively to all aspects of school life, such as peer mentoring in classes.

3. How good are teaching and assessment?

	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Good	Good


- In most lessons in the middle and secondary phases, teachers used their good subject knowledge to plan work that was suitably engaging for students of all ability levels.
- Very effective class management, based on high expectations and students' enthusiasm for learning, was a feature of most lessons. Time was managed well in the majority of lessons, so that learning moved at a good pace.
- There was inconsistency in the extent to which teachers used questioning to deepen students' knowledge and understanding, to develop their language skills, and to ensure that all students were making good progress.
- Teachers generally made good use of assessment information to plan work that was suitably demanding for all groups of students, including those capable of reaching higher levels. However, in too many lessons in the primary phase, the work set for the most and least able was too similar and was either too easy or too hard for students working at different levels.
- In the middle and secondary phases, teachers provided opportunities for the promotion of critical thinking skills and independent learning. However, this was less evident in the primary phase.

	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Assessment	Acceptable	Good 	Good 

- Good use was made of the skills-based tracker to check students' progress against curriculum expectations.
- Internal and external assessments were analysed to identify weaknesses in provision and to modify the curriculum as required.
- Assessment was used well to identify where teaching was having less impact on students' attainment and progress so that action can be taken to address weaknesses.
- Assessment was used well in the middle and secondary phases in lesson planning. However, in the primary phase, there was inconsistency in the use of assessment in planning learning tasks that matched students' attainment levels.
- Although teachers marked students' work regularly, students were rarely required to respond to the advice and requests made by teachers.

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

	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Good	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The curriculum followed CBSE guidelines which were age appropriate internationally. Its focus was to impart knowledge, understanding and develop skills such as investigation and research, particularly in subjects like science and mathematics. There was emphasis on development of life skills, attitudes and values. Values were instilled through morning assembly and moral science. Creative and independent writing was encouraged through the school's magazines. Creative Arts such as dance, music, art and PE were introduced. Students of Grade 4 played keyboard during break-time. The curriculum was reviewed annually by a committee before the start of the academic session and meetings were held regularly to review the effectiveness of the curriculum. 			

	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum planning was an annual feature. The needs of all learners were recognised and students with special educational needs (SEN) were identified in most cases. However, provision for SEN as well as higher achieving students was not well developed. The curriculum was modified in a generic way to meet some needs of all learners but lacked rigour. After Grade 10, streams of commerce and science were offered along with other electives. Extracurricular activities included many sporting events, film making and animation. 			

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

	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Health and safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school had child protection and bullying policies and a cyber-safety document was shared with parents, staff and students, both directly and through the school's electronic portal. Student safety was a priority and all students are scanned in and out of the building and when arriving and departing on buses to assist in tracking their movements. This assured a complete overview of the students' welfare and safety. The school's health and safety policies were well developed and ensured that the school provided an outstanding environment in which the students could learn. The medical staff promoted healthy living through in-school celebrations, in addition to tending effectively to the needs of all students. 			

	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Quality of support	Good	Good	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outstanding relationships between staff and students, based on mutual respect, contributed to the caring inclusive ethos of the school. The school had an effective policy on attendance and punctuality. Appropriate action was taken with students who were repeatedly late or absent. The school's counsellors worked effectively to support students' needs. Class teachers kept concise records of students' personal development. The school had appropriate systems to identify and support students with special educational needs. However, this was not always effectively delivered to ensure good progress. Support was inconsistent. Lessons did not always provide sufficient challenge to promote the development of gifted and talented students. Older students were given a range of advice and information about pathways for their next post-school educational steps. 			

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"> The school effectively promoted an inclusive ethos and had trained and qualified professionals in the special educational needs team. The school had appropriate systems to identify and support students with special educational needs. However, this was not always effectively delivered to affect progress and support for students in classroom based learning was inconsistent. 	

- Curriculum and learning support provision for students with special educational needs was planned. All identified students had individual education plans (IEPs) but teaching did not always reflect the targets and support strategies found in the IEPs.
- Overall, students with special educational needs made acceptable progress in their learning and development.

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

	Overall
The effectiveness of leadership	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leadership team demonstrated a clear vision and direction for the school. • The Principal was efficient and demonstrated the ability to lead the team effectively. • Communications between leaders were frequent and concise which led to the efficient operation of the school. • Successful innovations developed by the leadership team led to improved levels of student achievement. • The school leadership team had not yet been able to address the issue of low attainment and progress in Arabic as an additional language. 	

	Overall
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-evaluation was an embedded and continuous process in the work of the school. • The school action plans were achievable and measurable, and were developed from previous reports and internal analysis. They addressed both the teaching and learning processes. • The school was thorough in its efforts to address all areas identified and the resulting action plans were implementable and measurable. • The school had addressed each recommendation from the previous report. School development planning had resulted in improvement of aspects of the school's work but needed to address further all subjects, especially the attainment and progress in Arabic as an additional language. 	




	Overall
Parents and the community	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The positive relationships between parents and school had a strong impact on the school. • Parents were supportive of the openness of the school staff. • Parents felt that their children were safe, comfortable and challenged academically in the school. • Parents were provided with regular reports that provided detailed information on their children's academic and personal progress. • The parent volunteer opportunities in the school were numerous and provided links to the wider community. The school had many links with the community such as, community service, supporting numerous charities, business fairs and environmental improvement. 	

	Overall
Governance	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board of Governors had sought input from parents to improve areas of the school. • Governance committees had committed support and personnel to the school for building needs, staffing and professional development. However, the governors were not working closely enough with the school leaders to address the issue of low attainment and progress in Arabic as an additional language. • The Board of Governors had not ensured that the school complied with KHDA class size guidelines. 	

	Overall
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The day-to-day management of the school was good and all areas of the building were well-maintained. • Most staff had appropriate qualifications and additional staff had been hired to address the needs of students with special educational needs. • Instructional technology was present in all classrooms and used by most teachers but only a few students used technology to improve their learning. • The school was still lacking an appropriate sports field, limiting the students' opportunities to improve their sporting skills in comparison to their peers in other schools 	

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	1381	30%
	Last year	1750	41%
 Teachers	191		86%
 Students	1027		90%

- A minority of parents, and most teachers and senior students responded to their surveys.
- Of those who responded to the survey, parents felt that their children enjoyed school, were well looked after and safe. They thought the school was well led and that their children were making good progress in English, mathematics and science. They believed that their children found school work interesting and challenging but thought the class sizes were too big. Parents were happy that school leaders listened to their views about the school. Half of those who responded understood how well the school performed in international assessments.
- Teachers said the school was led well and that the school supported their professional development. A few said they required more time for lesson preparation and correcting students' work.
- Students said they felt safe, were well looked after and treated fairly in school. They considered that they were making good progress in Arabic as an additional language, in English and mathematics. Students felt that school leaders listened to their opinions and that their learning needs were met appropriately by the curriculum.
- A large proportion of parents and students commented that there were insufficient opportunities for students to participate in after-school activities and that the quality of the football field was poor.

*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