

Inspection Report



Dubai English Speaking College 2014-2015



CONTENTS

School Information	2
Parents' Report	3
School Inspection Report	10
Overall school judgement	11
Key strengths	11
Changes since the last inspection.....	11
Recommendations.....	11
How good are the students' attainment, progress and learning?.....	12
How good is the students' personal and social development?	14
How good are teaching and assessment?.....	15
How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?.....	16
How well does the school protect and support students?	17
How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?	17
How good are the leadership and management of the school?	18
What are the views of the Principal, parents, teachers and students?.....	20
What happens next?.....	21
How to contact us.....	21

School information



General information

Location	Dubai Academic City
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2005
Website	www.descdubai.com
Telephone	04-360-4866
Address	Academic City, PO Box 125814
Principal	Chris Vizzard (Head Teacher)
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	17 th -20 th November 2014



Students

Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age range	11 - 18
Grades or year groups	Year 7 - Year 13
Number of students on roll	1146
Number of children in FS1	0
Number of Emirati students	13
Number of students with SEN	140
Largest nationality group of students	British



Teachers / Support staff

Number of teachers	96
Largest nationality group of teachers	British
Number of teacher assistants	12
Teacher-student ratio	1:12
Number of guidance counsellors	1
Teacher turnover	18%



Curriculum

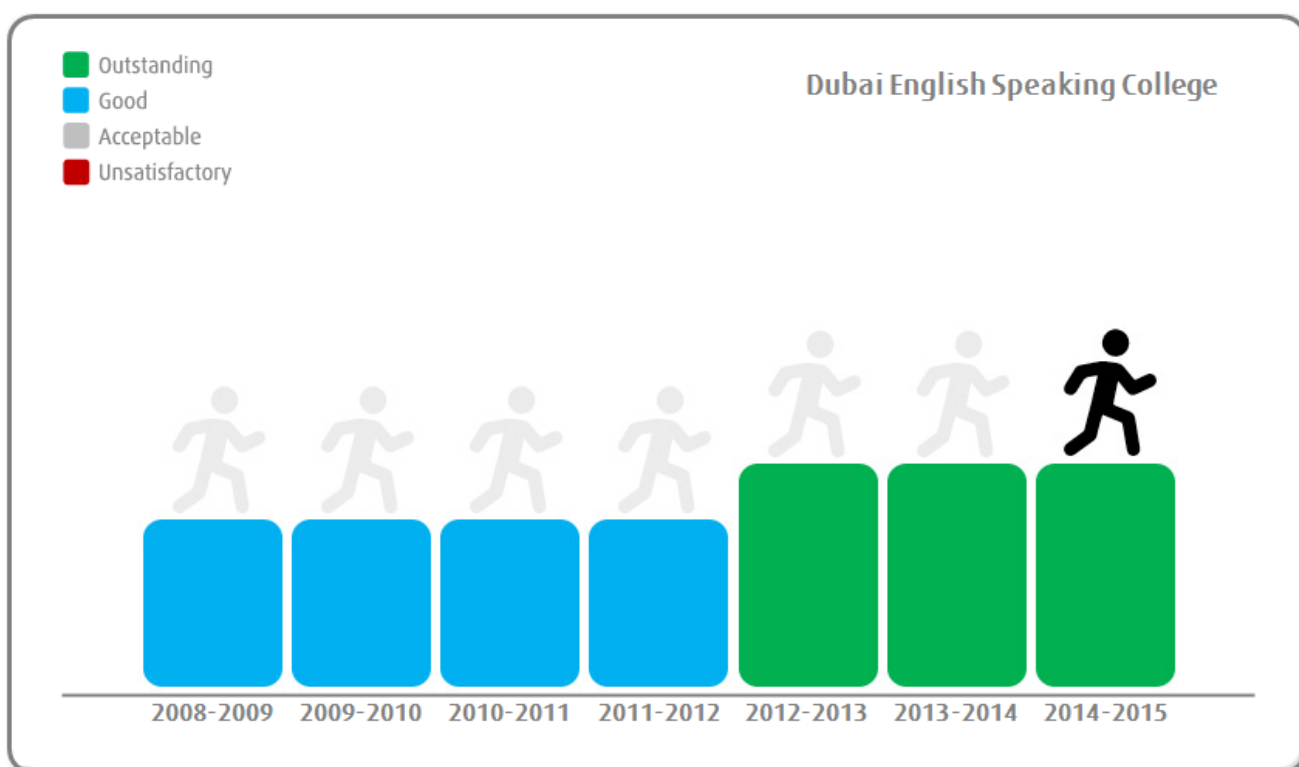
Educational Permit	UK
Main Curriculum / Other	UK
Standardised tests / board exams	CEM - Years 7 & 10; Phase 3 - GCSE; Phase 4 - GCE, AS & A Levels
Accreditation	



Dear Parents,

Dubai English Speaking College was inspected by DSIB from 17th–20th November 2014, and 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 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' leadership, personal and social skills and enthusiasm were particularly strong, and they accepted responsibility for their own learning and development.
- Students' progress in most subjects was outstanding.
- Across the school, teachers demonstrated very good leadership.
- Students made excellent contributions to the life of the school.

Areas for improvement

- Improve the content of lessons and thus students' progress in Arabic and Islamic Education.
- Take forward the review of the school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme.
- Improve the quality of the careers education and guidance provided to students.
- Review and update the procedures for the identification of students with special educational needs.

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

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

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

Yours sincerely,

**Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau
Knowledge and Human Development Authority**

A closer look at Dubai English Speaking College



How well does the school perform overall?

Overall, Dubai English Speaking College provided an '**Outstanding**' quality of education for its students.

- In Islamic Education, students' attainment was acceptable and they made good progress overall. In learning Arabic as a first language and additional language, students' attainment and progress were acceptable. Across the school, students' attainment and progress in mathematics and in science were outstanding. In English, students made outstanding progress, whilst their attainment was good in the secondary phase and outstanding in the Post-16 phase. Students demonstrated very high levels of learning skills. They were independent and reflective learners, could work well with others and confidently applied previously learned skills to new situations. Students effectively applied their critical thinking skills to problems, enquiries and investigations. These skills were not always used to the best effect in Islamic Education and Arabic lessons.
- Students' behaviour was exemplary, relationships were highly positive, and personal and social skills were strong. Their community and environmental responsibility was outstanding, because they were proactive in leading initiatives that had positive effects upon the local community. Most students had good understanding of Islamic values, the heritage and culture of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and an awareness of other global cultures.
- The quality of teaching across the school was consistently high. Teachers were skilled at engaging and motivating students through well-planned lessons that challenged them to think for themselves and collaborate with others to learn. Teachers assessed learning effectively and provided oral and written feedback to students to ensure that they knew what to do to improve.
- Students engaged in a core curriculum that was enhanced by a wide range of other subjects, including the expressive and performing arts, modern languages, physical education, design and food technology, information and communication technology, economics and psychology. There was a wide range of extra-curricular activities to enrich students' experiences.
- The school was inclusive and had a strong culture of supporting students with special educational needs. The house system and medical services effectively ensured each student's well-being.
- The newly appointed Principal and Head Teacher worked well together and were very ably supported by strong senior and middle leaders. There was effective leadership at all levels within the staff. All teachers were well qualified and ably supported by a team of assistants. The Board of Governors supported the school well and had a vision for its future development. The school's very good facilities had recently been further enhanced.


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




- Students with special educational needs made acceptable progress in their academic learning. They made good progress in their social, personal and emotional development, particularly in the development of their resilience when faced with challenging work.
- The overall quality of support provided for students was very good. However, teachers required a clearer understanding of each student's specific needs in order to be able to plan effective adaptations to the curriculum for them.
- School leaders were committed to developing students' social, academic, personal and emotional well-being. Most parents were very supportive and appreciative of the support their children received and recognised the good progress made at the school by almost all students with special educational needs.

1- How good are the students' attainment, progress and learning skills?

		Secondary	Post-16
 Islamic Education	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Good
 Arabic as a First Language	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable
 Arabic as an Additional Language	Attainment	Acceptable	Not Applicable
	Progress	Acceptable	Not Applicable
 English	Attainment	Good	Outstanding
	Progress	Outstanding 	Outstanding
 Mathematics	Attainment	Outstanding	Outstanding
	Progress	Outstanding	Outstanding
 Science	Attainment	Outstanding	Outstanding
	Progress	Outstanding	Outstanding
		Secondary	Post-16
Learning skills		Outstanding	Outstanding

 Improved from last inspection

 Declined from last inspection

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

	Secondary	Post-16
Personal responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding

3- How good are teaching and assessment?

	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Outstanding
Assessment	Outstanding	Outstanding

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

	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Outstanding
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Outstanding	Outstanding

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

	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of support	Outstanding	Outstanding

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

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

Overall school judgement

Outstanding

Key strengths


- Students demonstrated outstanding attitudes, behaviour, work ethic, respect for others, and strong independence. They held positions of responsibility and leadership.
- The learning environment, resources and facilities were excellent and a highly effective house system ensured that students thrived in a harmonious and inclusive community.
- There was consistently high quality teaching across most subjects, resulting in students making overall outstanding progress in their learning.
- Leadership of the staff at all levels was highly effective and the commitment to consistently motivate students to learn further improved their learning outcomes.
- Students initiated many developments that positively affected the life and work of the school.

Changes since the last inspection

- Students' progress in learning English had improved to be outstanding in the secondary phase.
- New facilities had been added, including a fitness suite, upgraded social spaces and improved learning technologies.
- The post-16 base had been enhanced and more sun-shading provided to give students greater comfort outdoors.


Recommendations

- Implement a more challenging curriculum and more effective lesson plans to facilitate better progress by students learning Islamic Education and Arabic.
- Develop the school's PSHE programme, making good use of the available time, including Form Time, and provide senior students with more effective and comprehensive careers education and guidance.
- Develop a more effective process for identifying students with special educational needs.

 Improved from last inspection

 Declined from last inspection

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

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

- In Islamic Education, most students demonstrated appropriate levels of understanding of the principles of Islam and key Islamic facts, and developed their understanding of the Qur'an and Hadeeth.
- In learning Arabic as a first language, most students had secure listening comprehension skills and developed their vocabulary and reading comprehension skills steadily. However, progress in developing their oral and written skills was slower.
- In learning Arabic as an additional language, most students made steady progress in learning new vocabulary and using it in a range of familiar contexts. Progress was relatively slow by the less experienced students, who were still developing their skills in decoding and shaping Arabic script.
- In English, the majority of students made better than expected progress in relation to their starting points and most students attained levels above international standards.
- In mathematics, almost all younger students made excellent progress building on their very good numerical skills and mental calculation skills. At the end of the secondary phase, students continued to make excellent progress and performed very highly in their International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) examinations, demonstrating excellent use and understanding of algebra.
- Students' attainment and progress in science was outstanding. They had developed excellent skills, scientific knowledge and conceptual understanding. They understood the uses and implications of science in everyday life in the world around them.

Post-16		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic Education	Acceptable	Good
Arabic as a First Language	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as an Additional Language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
English	Outstanding	Outstanding
Mathematics	Outstanding	Outstanding
Science	Outstanding	Outstanding

- In Islamic Education, most students in the Post-16 phase, particularly non-Arab students, steadily developed deep levels of understanding to link Islamic values to real-life contexts.

- By Year 12, students of Arabic as a first language had developed an adequate understanding of Arabic grammar and had steadily improved their listening and reading comprehension skills. However, their progress in writing was significantly weaker.
- In English, most students attained levels that were above the curriculum standards and made better than expected progress in relation to their starting points. Most students were very articulate and could write well for a variety of purposes.
- Examination results in mathematics were excellent and were higher than expected. Most Advanced Level students manipulated algebra skilfully and accurately, and made excellent progress in applying their skills to problems involving calculus or coordinate geometry.
- In their recent science work and in lessons, Post-16 students demonstrated knowledge, skills and understanding that were above international expectations. They made better than expected progress in lessons because they learned in a stimulating learning environment that encouraged collaborative discussion, critical thinking and independent learning skills.

	Secondary	Post-16
Learning skills	Outstanding	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In most lessons, students enthusiastically and responsibly engaged in learning independently. Most students could also evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses and take appropriate steps to improve. • In almost all lessons there was highly effective collaboration between students, which generated challenge, innovation and the desire to excel. Their interactions with teachers were also very productive and were mature enough to enable students to regularly provide feedback on lessons they had observed. • Most students confidently applied previously learned skills in new situations and made meaningful connections across their learning. They developed these cross-curricular skills in special events, such as when science and geography collaborated to teach earth science. However, such events were not integrated fully into their learning. • Students often thrived when applying their critical thinking skills to problem-solving, enquiry and investigation, and increasingly when using learning technologies. Their research could also lead to innovation, such as when Year 7 students created learning resources for studying fractions to a commercial standard. 		

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

	Secondary	Post-16
Personal responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students consistently demonstrated excellent attitudes and had developed strong self-reliance and resilience. They valued and made good use of critical feedback from their teachers. The behaviour of students was mature in classes and as they moved around the campus. Relationships among students and between students and staff were exceptional, with strong trust and mutual respect evident. Across the school, and particularly through the house system, students readily embraced many opportunities to take responsibility and to demonstrate leadership. Students had a strong understanding of what made a healthy lifestyle, including diet and personal fitness. The rate of attendance was good and students arrived punctually at school and to their lessons. 		

	Secondary	Post-16
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Across the school, students demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the core values of Islam and most understood the influence of these on their own lives in Dubai. Students appreciated the heritage and traditions of the UAE and how these affected life in modern Dubai. Students' understanding of other world cultures and the diversity in Dubai was very well developed. 		

	Secondary	Post-16
Community and environmental responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students' community and environmental responsibility was outstanding, because they were proactive in leading initiatives that had positive effects upon the local community. The school had successfully built an ethos wherein students wanted to be involved. The link with the Rashid Special School, mentoring students with special educational needs, was one example whereby both sets of students benefited greatly from the experience. Students had an excellent work ethic. They had many opportunities to take part in enterprising activities, particularly if they were part of the growing number that took up business studies and economics subjects; their enterprise projects and 'pitches to Dragons Den' showed creative ideas. The 'eco-warrior' group was highly motivated, with a strategic view to increase environmental awareness across the school. Among the many excellent planned projects was the 'Bionest/Interserve' project to grow endangered indigenous plants from cuttings and water these using a system that extracted water from sewage. 		

3. How good are teaching and assessment?

	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most teachers and coaches had extensive expertise and knowledge of their subjects, and knew how to teach so that students learned very effectively and took responsibility for their learning. • Teachers created excellent learning environments that included an extensive range of high quality resources to help and stimulate students to learn. Lesson plans were often imaginative, but they were weak in Arabic. Teachers skilfully provided enough time to enable students to think deeply. • Teachers' interactions with students were very effective and productive. They ensured that learning was the main focus, and their questions often created a dynamic and effective learning environment, which enabled students to make outstanding progress. The post-16 area had a particularly positive learning ethos. • Almost all teachers regularly planned personalised learning and often skilfully matched challenge, support and activities to the needs of the different groups of students. In the best examples, teachers also introduced options. For example, Year 12 mathematicians made excellent progress when they selected graded exam questions about the graphs of functions. • In most subjects, teachers routinely promoted independent learning. They provided opportunities to develop a range of critical thinking skills and enough time for purposeful reflection. Students were able to excel with minimal direction, typically through collaboration in pairs or in groups. 		

	Secondary	Post-16
Assessment	Outstanding	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal assessment processes were detailed, clear and thorough, and used very effectively to support and improve learning. Assessment practices were linked well to the school's curriculum objectives. These provided comprehensive measures of students' academic progress and their attitudes, but not of other aspects of personal development. • The school used reliable tools to compare students' test results with international assessment benchmarks, to predict exam grades and to set targets. Teachers made a range of effective modifications to the curriculum, teaching methods and assessment to meet the school's 2015 UAE National Agenda targets, particularly in mathematics and science. • Valid international comparisons endorsed the accuracy of the school's assessment data. Regular and thorough analysis enabled teachers and students to be fully aware of their progress and to what extent individual goals were being met. Parents were also effectively engaged in this process. • Assessment information was used very effectively in most subjects to track students' progress and modify the curriculum. • Almost all teachers provided insightful, personalised feedback to improve their students' progress. They consistently provided high quality written comments on how to improve, which required each student's active engagement. Students were routinely and extensively involved in assessing their own work and that of their peers. They were very keen and confident in identifying the necessary steps to improve. 		

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

	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of the curriculum was outstanding in most subjects. It provided breadth and balance with a high degree of personalisation. It was motivational for almost all students. Planning for progression was a strong feature of the curriculum, particularly in preparing students for universities across the world. Transition events ensured that students were well-prepared for the expectations of secondary school life. There had been further expansion to an already outstanding enrichment programme. Overseas visits and visitors to the school continued to enhance the curriculum. Effective, dedicated cross-curricular days were planned, such as the investigation of polymers in science, communication and persuasive writing skills in English and designing and marketing new use of the polymers using computers. The curriculum was frequently reviewed following consultation with students and parents. A full-scale curriculum review was underway as part of the school's vision for 2016. Many lessons in Arabic as a first language lacked coherence and progression opportunities. Most activities within a lesson were not linked and were rarely related to the acquisition of language skills. 		

	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Outstanding	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The curriculum's design was outstanding. It was modified to meet the needs of students of all abilities. Teachers were adept at planning activities that motivated students and provided challenge for the more able in most lessons. This was particularly the case when students were taught in higher ability groups, such as the 'express' group in the science programme. The Elite Performance Programme offered coaching within the curriculum to talented football students. Students were able to choose from a variety of pathways in Year 11 and the Post-16 phase to suit their career aspirations. The school was continuing to increase the options in response to parents' and students' suggestions. Whatever their interests, students had opportunities to develop their skills and talents through an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. These included 39 different sporting clubs and highly successful drama productions involving over 100 students. 		

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

	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety	Outstanding	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision to ensure students' welfare was of high quality, with clear child protection and anti-bullying policies, including those about cyber bullying, with related procedures in place. A well-maintained campus provided a very pleasant, suitably supervised, clean and safe environment for students. Bus transport safety routines were rigorously applied. Emergency evacuation drills were regular and appropriate records were held. The school nurses and medical doctor provided very good support to students. Careful attention was given to first aid training of the staff and first aid kits available. There were regular checks of students' well-being were made. Facilities were excellent and accessible to all. Students benefited from and appreciated the school's promotion of healthy living. 		

	Secondary	Post-16
Quality of support	Outstanding	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student-teacher relationships were marked by respect and courtesy, and a highly positive ethos permeated throughout the school. The school had outstanding systems for the promotion and management of students' attendance and punctuality. Teachers knew individual students' strengths and weaknesses very well, but a more robust process for the identification of students with special educational needs was required. The learning support team effectively supported students with special educational needs. The quality of the support provided in the school was outstanding. Students had ready access to personal guidance and support when required. They required more systematic careers education and guidance. 		

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

	Overall
The overall effectiveness of provision for students with special educational needs	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The leadership of special educational needs provision reflected the overall inclusive school ethos, with a strong commitment to the holistic development of the students. The quality of social, personal and emotional support received by students was outstanding. A more rigorous system for identifying students with special educational needs was required. More relevant modification of the curriculum, based upon students' needs, was required across subjects. In lessons, evidence of progress in accordance with the objectives was acceptable. Students with special educational needs made good progress in all aspects of their social, personal and emotional development, particularly their self-esteem and their resilience when tackling challenging work. 	

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

	Overall
The effectiveness of leadership	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recently appointed Principal and Head Teacher worked together to good effect and were ably supported by strong senior and middle management teams and by teachers who shared their vision of continuous improvement. Leadership was widely distributed with the house system operating to good effect, creating mutual support and collective responsibility for achieving success. Staff relationships were very positive and communications were effective within a climate of consistently high standards and expectations. Across the school, staff members at all levels demonstrated a strong capacity to innovate and to plan for improvement. School leaders had been very successful in developing the school and sustaining high performance across most subjects. 	

	Overall
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A rigorous self-evaluation system was embedded, which effectively identified priorities for improvement, involved all staff members and was subject to regular review. Teachers were reflective practitioners who were involved in a professional development programme that met their needs and the development aims of the school. An ambitious agenda for improvement was set, making effective use of data, including an analysis of examination results. All the recommendations of the previous inspection report had been addressed, but further attention was required to improve students' learning outcomes in Islamic Education and Arabic. 	




	Overall
Parents and the community	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents had very productive links with the school as visiting speakers, making Eid and Haj presentations, providing work experience placements and supporting careers guidance. Home to school communications were effective and included a daily online 'DESC Dispatch,' the Head Teacher's weekly blog, a Parents' Forum and readily accessible and highly visible senior leaders. Regular homework, daily student planners, detailed student reports and twice yearly parent-teacher meetings provided good opportunities for parents to monitor their children's progress. The school had good links with other schools and universities, which benefited students. Promising links were developing with the local community and businesses, with the launch of the school's 'achievement partnerships' initiative. 	

	Overall
Governance	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board of Governors was highly supportive of the school, had overseen the successful development of the campus and had ambitious development plans for the future. • Governors engaged with parents, sought their views and provided an annual report. • The Board held the school to account for its performance but needed to ensure success by students learning Islamic Education and Arabic that was similar to other subjects. • Governors had made a significant contribution to the outstanding performance of the school. They needed to focus on the 2021 UAE National Agenda for Education. 	

	Overall
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The day-to-day management of the school was highly effective and efficient, with excellent use was made of the available space. • All teachers were suitably qualified and deployed effectively; teaching assistants provided very good support to them. All staff members had access to a good range of professional development opportunities. New staff members were engaged in an impressive induction course. • The house system provided opportunities for innovative staff roles and Advanced Skills Teachers were effective in helping to improve other teachers' practices. • The attractive learning environment was accessible by all. The facilities and teaching resources were excellent. They were consistently enhanced by displays of students' work and recently improved by additions, including new social spaces, a fitness suite and accommodation for post-16 students. 	

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	205	22%
	Last year	257	36%
 Teachers	69		67%
 Students	74		18%

- Minorities of parents and students and the majority of teachers responded to their surveys.
- Of those who participated in the surveys, responses indicated high levels of satisfaction regarding almost all aspects of the work of the school.
- Almost all parents said their children enjoyed school and were safe. Almost all students agreed.
- Almost all parents, teachers and staff agreed that the school was well led.
- Almost all parents and students indicated that there was good quality of teaching, including regular feedback on how to improve, which supported learning well.
- Almost all parents, teachers and students believed that the school was highly successful in promoting a good range of learning skills.
- Almost all parents believed that their children were making good progress in learning English, mathematics and science.
- A significant number of parents and students disagreed that progress was good in learning Arabic as an additional language.
- All teachers, almost all parents and most students thought the school provided a good range of extra-curricular activities.
- Almost all parents and teachers and most students indicated that the school provided students with good opportunities to develop their community and environmental responsibilities.
- Almost all teachers and most students reported that the school's leaders listened to their views and took account of them.
- A few students and teachers commented on the need for a more effective careers education and guidance programme to prepare students better for life after school.

*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