



Safa British School

 Curriculum: UK

Overall Rating:

Good



"We are keen to prepare the new generation that is ready to be creative and innovative to help us achieve our ambitions for even greater prosperity"

Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum



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School information



| General information | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Location | Al Safa |
| Type of school | Private |
| Opening year of school | 2004 |
| Website | www.safabritishschool.com |
| Telephone | 0097143884300 |
| Address | Al Quoz 1, P.O Box 71091, Dubai |
| Head teacher | Dan Sutton |
| Language of instruction | English |
| Inspection dates | 7 th to 9 th November 2016 |

| Teachers / Support staff | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Number of teachers | 52 |
| Largest nationality group of teachers | United Kingdom |
| Number of teaching assistants | 31 |
| Teacher-student ratio | 1: 16 |
| Number of guidance counsellors | 0 |
| Teacher turnover | 32% |

| Students | |
|--|----------------|
| Gender of students | Boys and girls |
| Age range | 3-11 |
| Grades or year groups | FS1-Year 6 |
| Number of students on roll | 822 |
| Number of children in pre-kindergarten | 0 |
| Number of Emirati students | 20 |
| Number of students with SEND | 20 |
| Largest nationality group of students | UK |

| Curriculum | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Educational permit / Licence | UK |
| This might be deleted | UK / MoE |
| Main curriculum | |
| External tests and examinations | CAT 4, GL |
| Accreditation | British Schools Overseas |
| National Agenda benchmark tests | GL |



The DSIB inspection process



In order to judge the overall quality of education provided by schools, inspectors consider the six standards of performance that form the basis of the UAE School Inspection Framework (the framework). They look at children’s attainment and progress in key subjects, their learning skills and their personal and social development. They judge how effective teaching and the assessment of learning are across the school. Inspectors consider how well the school’s curriculum, including activities inside and outside classrooms, meet the educational needs of all students. They judge how well schools protect and support children. In addition, inspectors judge the effectiveness of leadership, which incorporates governance, management, staffing and facilities.

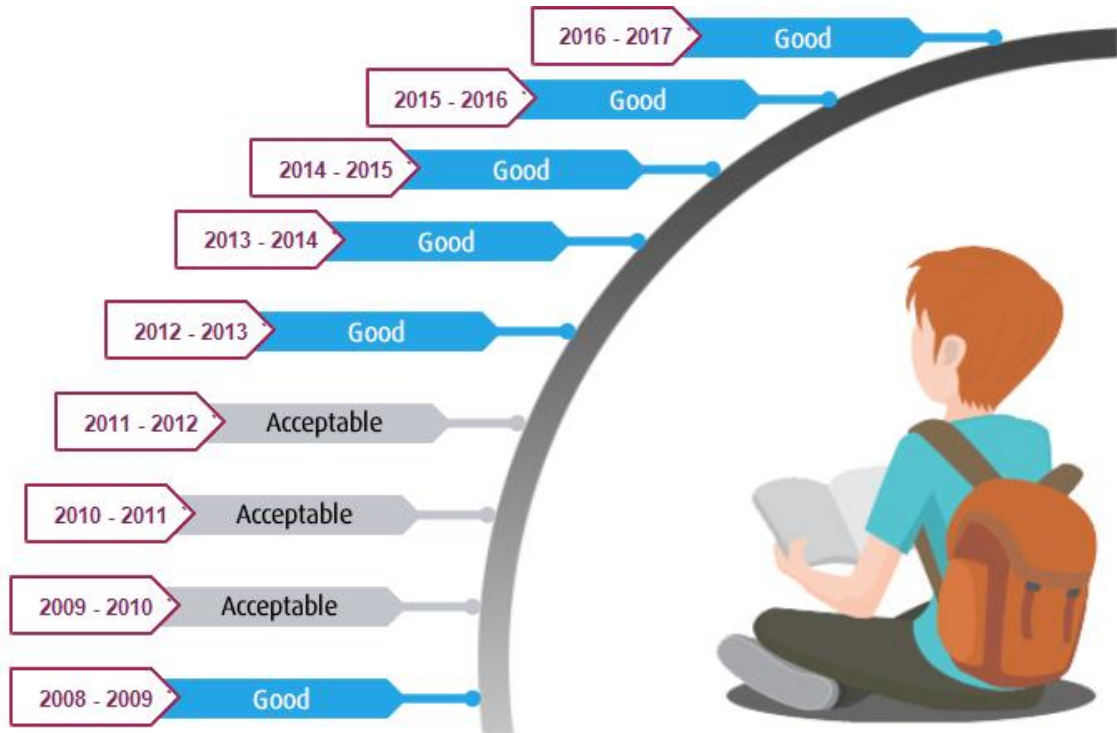
Inspection judgements are drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observation of students’ learning in lessons, review of their work, discussions with students, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and review of surveys completed by parents, teachers and students.

Judgements are made on a six-point scale

DSIB inspection teams make judgements about different aspects, phases and subjects that form the work of the school, using the scale below, which is consistent with the framework.

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Outstanding | Quality of performance substantially exceeds the expectation of the UAE |
| Very good | Quality of performance exceeds the expectation of the UAE |
| Good | Quality of performance meets the expectation of the UAE (This is the expected level for every school in the UAE) |
| Acceptable | Quality of performance meets the minimum level of quality required in the UAE (This is the minimum level for every school in the UAE) |
| Weak | Quality of performance is below the expectation of the UAE |
| Very weak | Quality of performance is significantly below the expectation of the UAE |

Inspection journey for Safa British School



- The Safa British School, which opened in 2004, has provided a good quality of education to its students since 2012. In recent years its roll numbers, which have risen slowly, have exceeded 800 students, aged from 3 to 11 years. Foundation Stage (FS) children make up approximately a third of the school population. The head teacher has been in post since the beginning of this academic year. Teacher turnover at the time of inspection was 32 percent, compared with 38 percent last year.
- Previous DSIB inspections have acknowledged strengths in students' personal development and their social responsibility and innovation skills. Partnerships with parents and the community have been outstanding. The school has been highly successful in engaging its parents as partners in their children's learning. The school provided rigorous child protection policies and procedures for the safeguarding of its students.
- Recommendations from recent reports highlighted the need to improve students' attainment and progress of Islamic education and Arabic languages and to improve the provision of English, mathematics and science in FS, through more appropriate support and challenge. Last year's inspection report recommended that the admission policy for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) should be reviewed.

Summary of inspection findings 2016-2017



Safa British School was inspected by DSIB from 7th to 9th November 2016. The overall quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The section below summarises the inspection findings for each of the six performance indicators described in the framework.

- In the FS, children make good progress in literacy and numeracy. Their attainment is at expected levels in these subjects and science. In the primary phase, attainment and progress of the majority of students exceed expected levels in English, mathematics and science. In Islamic education and Arabic as a first language, attainment and progress are acceptable. However, attainment and progress in Arabic as an additional language are weak. Across the school, students' learning skills are good.
- Students' personal and social development and innovation skills are strengths across both phases
- The quality of teaching is good across the school. However, teachers are not using assessment information consistently well to support their teaching.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced across both phases. Teachers successfully adapt the curriculum to meet the learning needs of different groups of students.
- The provision for health and safety within the school reaches very high standards. Students are provided with good levels of care and support across the school.
- The new head teacher is enthusiastic and aspirational, but is in his early days at the school. His impact is emerging as he brings the necessary stability and experience to drive the school forward. Self-evaluation in the school is acceptable, as is the school's governance. The school is well resourced and has appropriate numbers of well qualified staff. Partnerships with parents are very positive.

What the school does best

- The newly appointed head teacher is committed to achieving the vision and direction for the school as evidenced by the newly developed science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) facility.
- Good teaching across the school has led to well-developed learning skills and good progress particularly in English and mathematics.
- The outstanding personal development, social responsibility and innovation skills are exhibited by students across the school.
- The school's provision for keeping its students healthy and safe is outstanding, as are the partnerships with parents and the community.

Recommendations

- Urgently develop students' attainment and progress in Arabic as an additional language, by monitoring the impact of the recently introduced teaching strategies and using the new assessment methods more effectively, so that they lead to improved student progress.
- Improve the knowledge, skills and understanding of children in FS, in English, mathematics and science by improving the quality of teaching and how well teachers use assessment so that their teaching is matched to children's needs.
- Establish effective internal assessment processes and use accurate international benchmark data to monitor student progress better.
- Ensure that the school's governance fulfils its responsibilities of broad representation, monitoring for accountability, and support for the school and its new head teacher.

National Agenda Parameter



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

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

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

- Attainment on the National Agenda Parameter (NAP) benchmark report is not secure in English, science and mathematics.
- The school meets the registration requirements for the NAP.
- The school has analysed the data provided by the GL benchmark test. As a result of the first tests undertaken, the school identified the areas of spelling, punctuation and grammar for development. The more recent results have not yet been analysed effectively. The outcomes of these tests do not accurately reflect the quality of learning in lessons in the school.
- The school has introduced aspects to its curriculum which reflect the requirements of the PISA and TIMSS tests. These include more opportunities for data handling, critical thinking, problem solving and research. However, these are not fully embedded and, as a result, their development is inconsistent. The very strong cross-curricular STEAM facility allows students to visualise real life learning and further embed critical thinking skills.
- Teachers have made some adaptations to their teaching strategies to suit the requirements of the National Agenda. In the best examples, they use techniques, such as 'flipped learning' where students prepare learning before the lesson and then act as teachers to their peers. The teachers promote collaborative work in almost all lessons and develop critical thinking and problem solving through a range of skilful questioning.
- Students have some understanding of the National Agenda and their role in supporting it. However, they do not have specific National Agenda targets to guide their improvement. They are able to use technology well, especially tablets, to support their learning. This was evidenced in nearly all lessons seen during the inspection and through projects such as in the STEAM facility which promote cross-curricular links.

Overall, the school's improvement towards achieving its National Agenda targets is not secure.

Innovation in Education

The UAE Vision 2021 sets the aspiration 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' and provides a basis for evaluating schools in order to deliver a world-class education for all children in the UAE.









Promoting a culture of innovation:

- Students regularly access interdisciplinary lessons in the school's STEAM facility. They exhibit a strong work ethic, which they use to good effect when working independently on innovative projects. This enables them to use their knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation to construct an interactive working model of a smart city. Students use innovative skills to design and create a range of objects using a 3D printer and 3Doodle pens. They share thoughts on a number of future innovations for the school, such as solar panel electricity generation for the school and road safety improvements. The school's well-considered innovation policy underpins the teaching of innovation, led by the head teacher and others who actively encourage innovative practice.

Overall school performance

Good

1 Students' achievement

| | | Foundation Stage | Primary |
|---|------------|------------------|------------|
| Islamic education  | Attainment | Not applicable | Acceptable |
| | Progress | Not applicable | Acceptable |
| Arabic as a first language  | Attainment | Not applicable | Acceptable |
| | Progress | Not applicable | Acceptable |
| Arabic as an additional language  | Attainment | Not applicable | Weak ↓ |
| | Progress | Not applicable | Weak ↓ |
| English  | Attainment | Acceptable | Good |
| | Progress | Good | Good |
| Mathematics  | Attainment | Acceptable | Good |
| | Progress | Good | Good |
| Science  | Attainment | Acceptable | Good |
| | Progress | Acceptable ↓ | Good |
| | | Foundation Stage | Primary |
| Learning skills | | Good | Good |

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

| | Foundation Stage | Primary |
|---|------------------|-------------|
| Personal development | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures | Good | Good |
| Social responsibility and innovation skills | Outstanding | Outstanding |

3. Teaching and assessment

| | Foundation Stage | Primary |
|---------------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Teaching for effective learning | Good | Good |
| Assessment | Acceptable | Acceptable ↓ |

4. Curriculum

| | Foundation Stage | Primary |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|---------|
| Curriculum design and implementation | Good | Good |
| Curriculum adaptation | Good | Good |

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

| | Foundation Stage | Primary |
|---|------------------|-------------|
| Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Care and support | Good | Good |



6. Leadership and management

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


Main inspection report



1. Students' achievement

|  Foundation Stage | | |
|--|----------------|--|
| 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 | Acceptable | Good |
| Mathematics | Acceptable | Good |
| Science | Acceptable | Acceptable  |

- In English, children's attainment is acceptable and their progress is good. Most children demonstrate levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that are in line with Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) standards. By FS2 most children can discriminate letter sounds and rhymes, communicate clearly and concisely, read, decode words and write simple sentences. Assessment information indicates that the majority of children make better than expected progress in their speaking, listening, reading and writing, in relation to their starting points.
- Children's attainment in mathematics is acceptable and their progress is good. Most children demonstrate levels of knowledge, skills and understanding of numeracy, measurement and shapes that are in line with EYFS standards. Problem solving and recognising patterns are in the early stages of development. Information from assessments indicate that the majority of children make better than expected progress in numeracy and shapes and measures, in relation to their appropriate starting points, as well as during their lessons.
- Children's attainment and progress in their understanding of the world are age-appropriate. They know about similar and different materials and which float or sink. However, their enquiry skills, such as predicting, investigating, and recording processes and outcomes, in drawings or words, are below EYFS age-related expectations. In lessons and over time, most children make expected progress in relation to their starting points.

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

- In Islamic education, most students are working at levels that are in line with the expected curriculum standards. Students are developing their Islamic knowledge and understanding at a steady pace. They are able to talk about what they are learning and apply it to their own lives. For example, in the lower years of the phase, students can talk about the importance of cleanliness before prayer. In the upper years, students' recitation skills are improving, with most reciting short verses with few errors.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students are working at the expected curriculum levels. They demonstrate reading skills that are in line with expectations, especially when reading familiar texts, answering direct text-related questions and applying grammatical rules. Most students are less confident when writing, mainly due to their limited vocabulary. This restricts their independent and creative writing. When speaking, a majority of students attempt to use modern standard Arabic and some can do this confidently. Students make acceptable progress in relation to lesson objectives and over time.
- Students' attainment and progress in Arabic as an additional language are both below curriculum expectations. Most students struggle to read and write simple sentences correctly and independently. Their writing is largely limited to copying, with excessive spelling mistakes and incorrect letter formation. A few, more able students, can write simple sentences, and a few can also read familiar text correctly and confidently. However, most students tend to memorise the sentences and repeat them when seeing a familiar phrase. Students' progress in speaking is limited and most are not confident when holding a simple conversation about new topics.
- In English, students attain standards that are above curriculum expectations. They develop ideas thoughtfully and speak with confidence when contributing to discussions. They read increasingly complex texts, showing understanding of significant ideas and events. Progress in reading is enhanced by reading for pleasure outside the lessons. By the end of the primary phase, students' writing is confident and fluent. They use complex sentences, imaginative language and correct punctuation. However, for a minority of students in the lower primary phase, progress is not rapid enough. Teachers do not use assessment well enough to plan for the next steps in students learning.
- In mathematics, students attain well against expected curriculum standards. When measured against international standards, using benchmark tests, the school's outcomes are very high. However, this is not reflective of the work in books or lessons observed during the inspection, which convey an overall picture of good levels of attainment. The measurement of progress is not secure; it is only measured using year on year benchmark tests. However, these have not been used as consistently or accurately as they could be. Progress in lessons, as seen during the inspection and in the scrutiny of students' work, is good compared to expected curriculum standards. The school is not currently monitoring the progress of particular groups of students in a meaningful way in mathematics.

- In science lessons, practical skills are evident and are developing well in all years. Investigative skills are less evident, except in upper primary, where they are being developed. Evidence from available data, lessons and student workbooks, indicate that the attainment and progress of the majority of students, especially those in upper primary classes, are better than expected. The progress students make is linked to their increasing ability to predict with reasons, analyse data, and evaluate outcomes. Students' understanding deepens as they move through the school.

| | Foundation Stage | Primary |
|---|------------------|---------|
| Learning skills | Good | Good |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children in FS enjoy their learning and sustain good levels of concentration. Students in the primary phase are motivated and engage well with learning tasks. The youngest students persevere with reading independently and are not easily distracted. Older students take responsibility for their learning and show maturity in how they evaluate their progress. Students' engagement when learning Arabic as an additional language is less secure. • Children in FS communicate well with each other through active learning experiences. Students in the primary phase work collaboratively and productively in groups. They share ideas and take account of the views of others, for example when discussing how they can contribute to society and help to preserve national identity. They explain what they have learned clearly and confidently. • Students make connections between areas of learning because the curriculum integrates subjects well. They use technology, design skills and electronics to create unique models of buildings and cityscapes. Students are reflective and contribute thoughtfully to discussions about the National Agenda showing that they are making connections with what they already know and their new learning. • Students are developing age appropriate enquiry and research skills, although opportunities for developing these skills are not fully exploited in lessons. In FS, problem solving and innovation skills are underdeveloped. Students in primary are developing critical thinking, innovation and enterprise through the STEAM project, relating learning to real life contexts. In science practical work in upper primary, students make models of the human intestine using stockings, which grasps their imagination. | | |

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

| | Foundation Stage | Primary |
|-----------------------------|--|--------------------|
| Personal development | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students across the school are very positive, respectful and kind. They have a strong sense of responsibility, take on peer coaching roles seriously and are keen to support each other when they can. They enjoy taking part in school activities and competitions. Students' behaviour is exemplary; they enjoy positive relationships with each other and with their teachers. They are self-disciplined, caring and supportive of each other. Students adhere well to the school's golden rules and this is reflected in the low instances of bullying. Staff- student relationships are excellent. Students are polite, sensitive of the needs of others around them and are empathetic towards each other. The students describe the school as having a friendly atmosphere and that their teachers are kind and helpful. Across the school, students respond well to a range of initiatives that promote healthy living and e-safety. They understand the need to stay active and make healthy choices on a regular basis. They can reflect on their own lifestyles and what they could do better to stay healthy. Attendance is good. Overall attendance is around 96 per cent, with a small number of persistent absentees. Across the school, students are punctual arriving at school and to lessons. | |

| | Foundation Stage | Primary |
|--|--|-------------|
| Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures | Good | Good |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Across the school, students' understanding and appreciation of Islamic values develops well. Students are able to talk about the features of a mosque and the traditions of Iftar during Ramadan. The older students can discuss the features of the UAE and Dubai that are Islamic and the ways in which these should be respected. The integration of UAE social studies in the FS is enhancing the children's understanding of UAE life and culture such as food, clothing, games, celebrations and other traditions. Students across the school are aware of the different landmarks of Dubai and can talk about aspects of the heritage and culture of the UAE. Children in FS have limited knowledge and understanding of their own culture and that of their peers. Students in the primary phase can talk about their own culture and aspects of the UAE, but their awareness of cultural diversity is emerging. | |

| | Foundation Stage | Primary |
|--|---|--------------------|
| Social responsibility and innovation skills | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students demonstrate deep understanding and commitment to their roles and responsibilities as prefects, junior leaders and as active citizens living in Dubai. Students have an excellent work ethic. Older students are creative and have very practical and imaginative ideas. They apply these in well-planned projects and enterprise activities such as the construction of an innovative model city and a business bazaar, where they consistently make well-informed economic decisions. Students demonstrate a very good understanding of environmental sustainability. The Eco Warriors team is actively involved in seeking ways to support the conservation of water and energy in Dubai. With support from the "Search for water", group they initiate many schemes within the school to build awareness of water pollution in their environment. Students' innovative skills are evident when they attempt to design solar panels to support the school's self-sufficiency in electricity. | |

3. Teaching and assessment

| | Foundation Stage | Primary |
|--|---|-------------|
| Teaching for effective learning | Good | Good |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers have a secure knowledge of their subjects and of the way students learn. This is especially so in the upper primary classes and it is also more evident in FS2 than FS1. Teachers frequently use a variety of activities, which stimulate and support learning for most students. Lesson plans are thorough and generally include differentiated targets for groups of learners. They also include learning objectives, although these are less clear in the Arabic language lessons. Resources are well suited to lessons. The learning environment is bright, well-ordered and stimulating. Some lessons lack sufficient pace and this can lead to a reduction in the rate of progress by learners. In FS1, there is an occasional lack of challenge. Open ended questioning, in the better lessons, allows students to explore ideas and develop complex responses. In the Arabic languages, questioning is more content-driven which restricts scope for broad, deep thinking. More free-flowing dialogue is evident in upper primary, with more productive peer assessment and teacher feedback as a consequence. Group work and paired activities are common and students enjoy working together. This is generally successful, with opportunities for self and peer assessment evident, especially in upper primary. This is not the case in Arabic as an additional language, where opportunities for assessment are less effective due to a lack of monitoring by teachers. In FS, paired or group work is led by the teacher, rather than driven by the children. Research tasks, in the better lessons, encourage more independent and higher order thinking, as well as problem-solving, although this is more evident in upper primary. There are few opportunities for critical thinking. The STEAM facility encourages innovative thinking with, for example, a model city being made using a 3D printer and electronic components. | |

| | Foundation Stage | Primary |
|------------|------------------|--------------|
| Assessment | Acceptable | Acceptable ↓ |

- The school’s internal procedures for assessment are underdeveloped. As a result, minimal useful data are produced. This hinders the school's ability to measure students’ progress over time. A new system has recently been introduced across the curriculum but this is not used effectively to inform teaching.
- The school increasingly benchmarks its students against international expectations. This year all students are registered for international benchmark tests. In FS, children will be taking the baseline test and an end of year test. However the use of assessment results in order to identify performance levels in skills and knowledge has only recently been introduced.
- The monitoring of progress using data over time is not evident. Assessment methods and systems have changed from year to year and there are no comparable data from one year to the next. As a result, there has been minimal meaningful analysis of students' progress between years. The new systems have had insufficient time to become embedded in school practice to maximise their effectiveness.
- Teachers use the limited assessment data to pitch their teaching at the correct level for their students. Although data and assessment information are limited, teachers know their students' abilities, talents and needs well, through day-to-day interaction and in-class exchange. This informal information is used to adapt teaching and modify the curriculum as necessary.
- Due to their good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of individual students, teachers are able to provide appropriate challenge, support and feedback in lessons and, in better examples, through marking in their books. Students’ learning grids for each lesson have been useful in establishing routines of self, peer and, to some extent, teacher assessment. In FS, the provision of support and individualised challenges related to the Early Learning Goals is inconsistent, especially for the high attaining children.

4. Curriculum

| | Foundation Stage | Primary |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|---------|
| Curriculum design and implementation | Good | Good |

- The curriculum has a clear rationale and is well aligned to the school’s values and vision. It is particularly successful in supporting the development of students' learning skills and personal development. It promotes interest and enjoyment in both phases. Statutory requirements are fully met.
- The curriculum is well planned to ensure that students develop their knowledge, skills and understanding systematically. In FS there is a suitably strong emphasis on the development of speaking and phonic skills. Continuity and progression from FS to Year 1 is less secure. In mathematics, curriculum mapping ensures that programmes are tailored to the specific needs of students. Students are well prepared for their next stage of education

- The curriculum in both phases provides opportunities for students to make choices to develop independence in learning, although the activities in FS are not always fully thought through to develop a broad range of skills.
- The curriculum is planned so that students' skills are developed in meaningful and interesting contexts. Topics studied in FS connect children's learning well. The school has increased the opportunities in the upper primary phase for independent learning, research and critical thinking. The introduction of the STEAM project has opened up exciting cross-curricular learning experiences for students.
- The school shows a strong commitment to the continuous development of the curriculum to meet the needs of all students. Rigorous and regular reviews of the curriculum, and the resulting changes, are beginning to have a positive impact on students' academic achievement and personal development. The school has introduced accelerated reading programmes and a more coherent programme of extra-curricular activities.
- UAE social studies is integrated into topic work in all phases. Topics are thoughtfully planned to develop knowledge, skills and understanding in history, geography and civics. Teachers plan purposeful tasks and activities that stimulate students' interest in the society in which they live. There is ongoing assessment of student progress. Teachers facilitate lively discussions about how students can become responsible citizens and contribute to a cohesive society. Students are keen to learn about UAE culture, heritage and traditions and the diverse groups of people that are represented in the country.

| | Foundation Stage | Primary |
|-----------------------|------------------|---------|
| Curriculum adaptation | Good | Good |

- Teachers modify the curriculum in a way that enables most students, including those who have SEND, gifts and talents and those at the early stages of learning English, to make good progress. In a minority of lessons, especially in Arabic as an additional language, and English in the lower primary phase, the curriculum does not fully cater for students' needs. Limited accurate benchmarking data are available to support teacher planning.
- The school provides a wide range of exciting after-school activities, which are demanding as well as enjoyable. They help students to develop physical, creative and academic skills. Older students benefit from curriculum projects which link science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics. Younger students have fewer opportunities to develop their skills in enterprise and innovation than older students.
- Throughout the school, links with Emirati culture, values and society are built into many subjects of the curriculum. For example, in Year 1, students wrote letters to the leaders of the UAE commenting on their understanding of, and views about, the value of the National Agenda for Dubai.
- The school offers Arabic for all children in FS. It includes one 30-minute session per week for FS1 and two for FS2. The programme's focus is on basic language development, such as learning the alphabet, colours and numbers.

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

| | Foundation Stage | Primary |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The safety of children is the highest priority in the school; all staff receive regular child protection training. Effective programmes exist to guard against cyber bullying and unsafe social media use. Rigorous safeguarding procedures are in place. Buses and cars are well supervised on arrival and departure. Seat belts are used and registers taken on buses and each bus has a supervisor on board. The school site is secure as parents and others are not permitted through the three access doors without identification. Regular safety checks take place, including fire drills. Fire extinguishers are checked regularly. Risk assessments are produced for off-site visits. The premises provide a hygienic, safe and clean environment in which students can learn. A ramp is in place at the front entrance for those who require wheelchair access. Toilets and classrooms are safe, clean and secure. The premises are well-maintained and ensure that students and staff, together with children in FS, are safe at all times. The school nurses advise all students and parents about the importance of healthy lifestyles. Healthy lunchboxes are promoted and checked. Physical education, together with extracurricular activities, promote physical wellbeing very well. | | |

| | Foundation Stage | Primary |
|--|------------------|-------------|
| Care and support | Good | Good |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships between staff and students are outstanding and are characterised by mutual respect and appreciation. Students comply with the positive behaviour policy that is displayed in every classroom and they rarely misbehave. Teachers encourage students to manage their own behaviour and to develop habits that support their learning. As a result, students settle happily into school and work hard. The school has good systems in place to check, record and monitor student attendance and punctuality. The small minority of persistent absentees and those who are frequently late are rapidly identified and their families are contacted. As a result attendance is good, especially in upper primary phase classes. The school identifies children with SEND prior to their entry to the school. A personal learning plan (PLP) which identifies each student's individual targets is quickly implemented. This provides useful information to parents, students and teachers. Ongoing monitoring of students' progress has begun to help staff to identify the learning needs of a much larger group of students for whom good provision is made. The support teachers provide for students who have SEND and the gifted and talented which enables most to make good progress. In a minority of lessons, progress is slower as work does not fully cater for students' needs, particularly in Arabic languages and English in the lower primary phase. All students with SEND have a PLP but occasionally these are insufficiently focused on academic targets. | | |

- Students have access to a number of adults in school in whom they confide when they experience problems. The school monitors students' well-being through regular assessments. Hence, students who are unhappy are identified quickly. Student health is promoted through a programme of personal development, which promotes a healthy lifestyle and regular exercise.

Inclusion

Provision and outcomes for students with SEND

Good

- School leaders have improved the identification and provision for students with SEND. This has been supported by effective training. An increased number of students receive support that meets their needs. The reviewed admissions policy presents a more inclusive view of the school as welcoming students with SEND but this message is not clear to all parents.
- The school identifies children with SEND prior to entry to the school. A PLP which identifies each student's individual targets, is quickly put in place. This provides useful information to parents, students and teachers. Ongoing monitoring of students' progress has helped staff to identify the learning needs of a much larger group of students for whom good provision is made.
- The school has formed good partnerships with parents who are fully involved in the creation of their child's PLP and are involved in regular reviews of progress. A few parents would like more frequent communications with the school by email or through the school diary, especially when their child experiences problems.
- Teachers modify the curriculum and provide support for students in relation to their level of needs. This enables most to make good progress. Provision is more variable in the Arabic languages and in English in the lower primary phase. Interventions from specialist staff are individualised to meet the needs of all students. Occasionally the targets in the PLP are insufficiently linked to academic learning.
- The SEND department uses the limited range of internal and external assessment information available to monitor student progress across the school. This process has helped staff to identify a large number of students in need of short-term, specific support. Analysis of this information shows that progress is varied across year groups and subjects, but good overall, especially in reading.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Good

- The newly appointed headteacher, supported by his senior leaders, is ambitiously pursuing an aspirational vision to unlock the potential of every child in the school. His demand for more consistent, improved provision and assessment of the school's students is commendable.
- Leaders demonstrate a secure knowledge of the school's curriculum. They have a developing awareness of a broad array of best practice in teaching, learning and assessment. However, there is an inconsistency in the current ability of middle leaders to evaluate rigorously the processes of both internal and external assessment to ensure that every student has their learning needs met.

- Communication in the school is becoming increasingly effective. The head teacher has shrewdly embarked on the professional development of middle leaders to support more effective, distributive leadership. He is now monitoring all middle leaders regularly to ensure that there is no complacency. Senior and middle leaders demonstrate an emerging competence in their monitoring roles. There is capacity to improve but they require support in their development.
- The senior and middle leaders collectively drive improvements in their areas, including the new leader in FS, under the watchful eye of the head teacher. Management targets are set although there has been too little time to see their impact. Leaders support teachers' and students' development of innovative activities as well as encouraging an ambitious use of tablet computers for research, calculating, and written and video recording.
- In a short space of time the headteacher has the support of most staff in his quest for improvement. Almost all support the wide ranging school improvement initiatives. Leaders know the school's areas of strength and those areas in need of immediate and longer term enhancement. There is capacity for continued improvement. Leaders ensure that the school is compliant with all statutory and regulatory requirements.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Acceptable ↓

- Self-evaluation processes involve leaders and teaching staff evaluating a wide range of information. Included are internal and external assessment data, parent and student surveys. The headteacher and other leaders have an emerging working knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development. However, opportunities for a more accurate, in-depth assessment of students' achievements in an international context are missed. As a consequence, some of the school's judgements of its own performance are overly optimistic.
- Monitoring and evaluation opportunities are planned to determine students' progress and the effectiveness of the school's operations. Systematic observation of teaching provides evidence of impact on students' attainment and progress. A new recording system is in place. However, it requires review. It is overly complex and it does not provide sufficient pertinent feedback to teachers. The outcomes of lesson observations provide guidance for the school's continuing professional development programme.
- The school's improvement planning is based upon the previous inspection report recommendations. It is supported by departmental plans. All are populated with targets and procedures to address the school's and the UAE's requirements. However, not all targets are written in measurable terms. This reduces opportunities for the accurate evaluation of their success.
- There has been some progress made in addressing the recommendations of the previous report. The school's admissions policy has been reviewed and is now more inclusive. However, the provision for Arabic as an additional language remains weak, and little has been done to streamline improvement planning processes.

Partnerships with parents and the community

Outstanding

- The school's leaders at all levels have been successful in reshaping the partnership with parents and providing a more inclusive welcoming environment. The school's 'Friends of Safa' group assists the school in fundraising for extracurricular equipment. However the school does not make sufficient use of the group's enthusiasm and ideas to initiate new developments.
- Parents stay informed of their children's achievements through a variety of communication channels. The school's newsletter is complemented by telephone and IT communication systems. However, the school's website is difficult to use and requires review.
- The formal school reports, produced twice a year, provide parents with good quality, in-depth information about their children's academic achievements, including information about their next learning steps.
- The school is increasingly developing links with other schools in Dubai. Inter-school moderation of students' work and cross-school staff training are supporting the development of the school. Competitive sport is played with a number of schools. Links with local businesses are emerging. The schools facilities are well utilised after school hours by local community groups, such as for swimming training.

Governance

Acceptable ↓

- Governance, which includes representation from staff and directors, has limited parental and stakeholder representation. Meetings are sporadic as they are held only 2 or 3 times per year. The board occasionally seeks and considers the views of stakeholders. However, they have not invited or included representatives from the Friends of Safa group, or from a broad range of parents, to join the board. This restricts the board's knowledge of both the functioning of the school and the wider views of parents.
- The governing board monitors the school's actions during its meetings. However, the board is not furnished with regular monthly reports from the principal to enable a rigorous evaluation of the school's performance. The board therefore cannot effectively hold the school to account for the achievements and personal development of its students in a timely manner.
- The board exerts some influence and is having some impact on the overall performance of the school. Resources have been provided to upgrade facilities to make better use of available space and to make rooms and corridors more attractive. Highlights include the development of the STEAM facility to encourage students' innovation and creativity, and improvements to the FS internal and external learning areas to foster greater free flow and active learning.

Management, staffing, facilities and resources

Very good

- Regularly changed displays ensure a lively and interesting learning environment. The timetable is managed well and supervision is efficient. These contribute towards a learning experience which is well-ordered and stimulating. Systems exist which allow day-to-day routines to proceed efficiently.
- All teaching staff are appropriately qualified to teach, including those with responsibility for SEND. Staff, including leaders, are generally deployed efficiently. There is a thorough induction process for newly appointed staff. Professional development takes place on a regular basis, both in school and off-site. This is directed by senior leaders as well as being initiated by teachers.
- The premises are modern, light and well proportioned, with appropriate specialist areas, including STEAM facilities, music suites, and a library. The sports hall and the swimming pool, although in need of refurbishment, are of a good size. A lifeguard is on duty. Access to floors above ground level remains limited.
- There are ample ICT facilities, both fixed computers and mobile tablet computers for use in classrooms. Smartboards are found in all teaching rooms. Increasing use of corridors and open spaces for learning, extend and enliven the classroom experience. The library is well resourced, with around 2000 titles available.

The views of parents, teachers and senior students

The views of parents, teachers and senior students

Before the inspection, the views of the parents, teachers and senior secondary students were surveyed. Key messages from each group were considered during the inspection and these helped to form inspection judgements. A summary of the survey statistics and comments from those who responded to the survey follows:

| Responses to the surveys | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----|
| Responses received | Number | |
| Parents* | 2016-2017 | 175 |
| | 2015-2016 | 141 |
| Teachers | 45 | |
| Students | 0 | |

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

- Almost 30 percent of parents responded to this year’s survey, a higher proportion than the previous year. Most teachers completed their surveys. Students are not eligible to complete a survey.
- Almost all parents are satisfied with the quality of the school’s educational provision. They agree that their children are learning well, in an extremely safe environment. They say that their children enjoying their schooling.
- The positive promotion of literacy and the love of reading in English is valued. However, parents are less positive about the development of those skills and qualities in the Arabic languages.
- Almost all parents confidently agree that their children are safe on the school buses, that behaviour of children in the school is extremely good and that the school promotes a caring ethos, while developing children’s independent learning skills.
- A large majority of parents agree that the school welcomes and cares for students with SEND.
- The teachers surveyed are extremely positive about the overall quality of the school’s provision and its operational efficiency.

What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the inspection report. This should address:

- recommendations from DSIB
- areas identified by the school as requiring improvement
- other external reports or sources of information that comment on the work of the school
- priorities arising from the school's unique characteristics.

The next school inspection will report on changes made by the school.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau
Knowledge and Human Development Authority

If you have a concern or wish to comment on any aspect of this report, you should contact inspection@khda.gov.ae