



Star International  
School (Branch)

 Curriculum: UK

Overall Rating:



"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	Mirdif
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2008
Website	www.starschoolmirdiff.com
Telephone	04-2884644
Address	POBox 90848, 24B Street, Mirdif
Principal	Gill Roberts
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	21 to 23 November 2016

Teachers / Support staff	
Number of teachers	40
Largest nationality group of teachers	British
Number of teaching assistants	20
Teacher-student ratio	1 : 10
Number of guidance counsellors	0
Teacher turnover	65%

Students	
Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	4-11
Grades or year groups	FS2-Year 6
Number of students on roll	390
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	39
Number of students with SEND	25
Largest nationality group of students	Arab

Curriculum	
Educational permit / Licence	UK
Main curriculum	UK / MOE
External tests and examinations	SAT
Accreditation	BSO
National Agenda benchmark tests	GL and IBT



## 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.

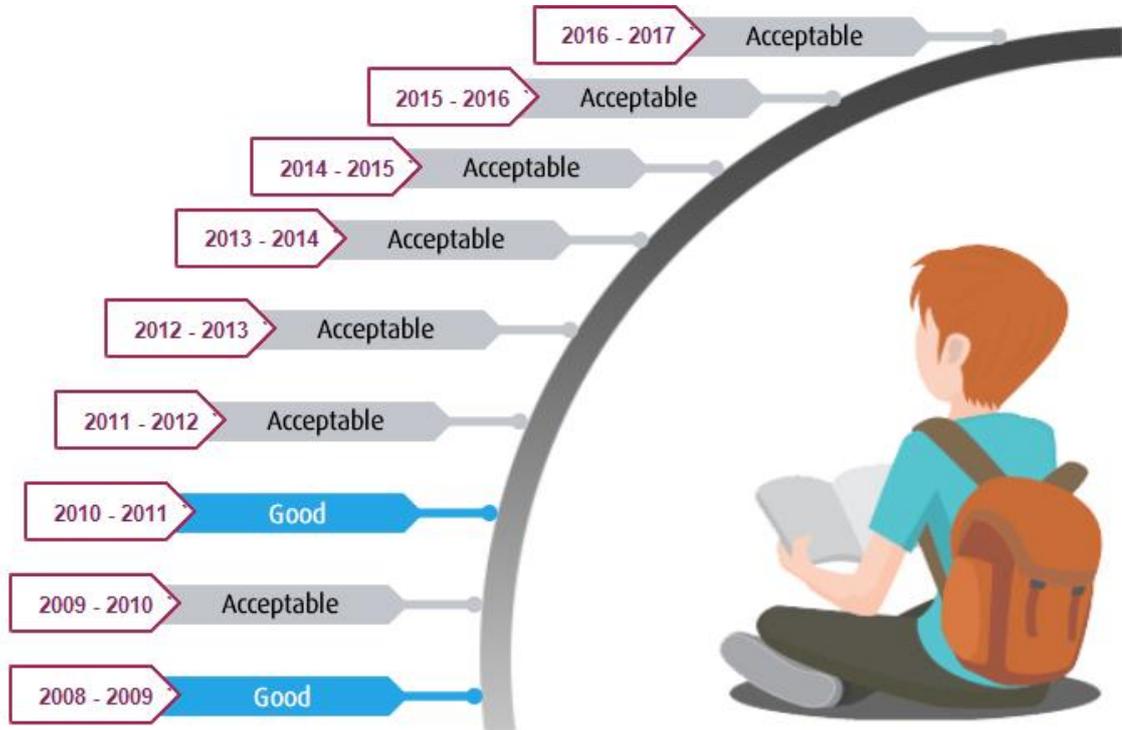
Inspection judgements are drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observation of students’ learning in lessons, review of their work, discussions with students, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and review of surveys completed by parents, teachers and students.

### 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.

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

## Inspection journey for Star International School (Branch)



- The school, which opened in 2008, follows the National Curriculum for England and caters for Foundation Stage (FS) 2 to Year 6 students. The current principal took up post just after the end of the last academic year. The student roll is 390 having previously been 448 two years ago. There are 40 teachers, 26 of whom joined the school this year.
- Inspections have judged the school to be acceptable for the last five years after a brief period of oscillation between good and acceptable. Students' personal and social development have been recognised as strengths of the school for several years.
- Recurring themes in the inspection recommendations over the last three years include the need to address staff and parent dissatisfaction, improve the quality of teaching and improve progress and attainment at the primary phase. The previous year's report also identified the need to improve the processes for school development planning, and to ensure teachers plan learning activities for different groups by better use of assessment information.

## Summary of inspection findings 2016-2017



**Star International School (Branch)** was inspected by DSIB from 21 to 23 November 2016 . The overall quality of education provided by the school is **acceptable**. The section below summarises the inspection findings for each of the six performance indicators described in the framework.

- Children’s attainment and progress in FS are good in English, mathematics and science. Whereas attainment and progress in these subjects are mainly acceptable in the primary phase. Students make good progress in Islamic education and in Arabic as a first and second language, but attainment remains at an acceptable level. Students in both phases are acquiring good learning skills.
- Students behave very well and show very good attitudes towards their learning and to others. Their understanding and appreciation of Islamic values and Emirati culture is good. Students demonstrate social responsibility when given the opportunities to do so.
- The quality of teaching and assessment is good. Analysis of assessment data is carried out systematically.
- The design of the curriculum and the way in which it is adapted to meet the needs of different groups of students are of good quality overall.
- The school has effective procedures and policies for keeping all school members safe and for promoting healthy lifestyles. Staff ensure a good level of care and support for students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- School leaders and governors are beginning to have a positive impact on outcomes of students, evident in the mainly good progress across the school Partnerships with parents and the community are good. Senior staff employ a range of methods for school self-evaluation and improvement but do not always accurately identify the school’s strengths and areas for improvement. Management, staffing, premises and resources are of a good quality.

## What the school does best

- The school's thematic approach to planning the curriculum, and the effectiveness of teaching, are having a positive impact on students' learning and progress.
- Students' personal and social development, their very good behaviour and their attitudes to learning and to others are a strength.
- There have been significant improvements in the school's systems for assessment and the analysis of data, which is leading to greater consistency in the quality of teaching in the primary phase.
- The new principal and other school leaders are increasingly effective in bringing about improvements and have a good capacity to innovate and further develop the school.

## Recommendations

- Improve self-evaluation and improvement planning by:
  - rationalising the range of action plans to ensure better focus on key priorities
  - involving middle leaders in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching to build on the positive impact of the professional development of staff
  - further developing teachers' knowledge and understanding of what constitutes best practice in learning.
- Improve attainment and progress by:
  - ensuring that teachers use assessment information more effectively to match the abilities and learning needs of different groups of students, particularly those that are higher-attaining
  - spreading the good or better practice which exists in teaching to improve consistency in the occurrence of high quality lessons
  - focusing more closely on developing students' critical thinking and other higher-order skills, including reading for analysis
  - providing more consistently high-quality written feedback to students on their work, and following up to ensure they have taken account of the advice.
- Further embed environmental awareness and action across the student body and provide more opportunities for students to volunteer and work in the community.

## 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 the school's targets:

- Attainment based on the National Agenda benchmarks is below expectations in English, mathematics and science.
- The school meets the registration requirements for the National Agenda Parameter.
- Staff have analysed assessment data well and teachers are beginning to use the results to meet students' needs more effectively.
- There is an increasing awareness among teachers of the need to develop students' higher-order thinking skills more effectively; some changes have been made to include these skills across different subjects.
- Teachers are adjusting their strategies to include more open-ended tasks and activities which allow students to explore, investigate and draw their own conclusions.
- Although several students in Year 3 or Year 5 are aware of the results of their cognitive ability test taken this term, students generally are not fully aware of the results of the GL progress tests taken at the end of the last academic year

Overall, the school's improvement towards achieving its National Agenda targets meets expectations.



Overall school performance

Acceptable

1 Students' achievement

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

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Personal development	Very good	Very good
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Acceptable	Acceptable

## 3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good
Assessment	Good	Good

## 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	Good	Good
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	Good
Governance	Good
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	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	Good ↑	Good
Mathematics	Good ↑	Good
Science	Good ↑	Good

- In English, the majority of children make good progress from their starting points and their communication, language and literacy skills are above the curriculum expectations for children of their age. They have good comprehension skills. They can predict events in stories and respond to teachers' questions. Almost all children express themselves confidently and listen carefully to their teachers and to other children. They make good progress in reading and writing by applying their knowledge of letters and sounds to read simple texts.
- In mathematics, the majority of children have a good understanding of number and can count reliably from one to 20. They understand the concept of 'less than' and 'more than' a given number. They carry out simple operations with numbers and recognise and understand basic mathematical symbols. Children have a good understanding of two and three dimensional shapes. They use appropriate mathematical language to describe the capacity of containers, including 'full', 'half-full' and 'empty'. They can recognise, create and describe simple repeating patterns.
- The majority of children in FS2 make better than expected progress in science from entry to school and demonstrate good levels of understanding in relation to the world around them. They know about the differences and similarities between themselves and others in their class. They have a good knowledge about materials and living things. They show care and respect for living things in the environment.

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

- Most students reach levels of attainment in Islamic education that are in line with curriculum standards. They have an adequate understanding of the life of the Prophet (PBUH) and the values of Islam. Their understanding of the principles of worship and the meaning of short Hadeeths (the Prophet's sayings) is appropriate for their age. They memorise prescribed Surahs from the Holy Qur'an. Recitation skills are developing well for the majority of students. In lessons and over time, a majority of students make better than expected progress.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students attain levels in line with national curriculum expectations. Students' listening skills are well-developed. They can understand and respond to standard Arabic and have reasonable speaking skills although a few use colloquial language. Reading comprehension is improving especially in the upper grades. Most students in Years 3 and 5 can analysis the main elements and values of appropriate stories. Progress is good. In Year 6, large majority of students develop good skills of understanding of the prescribed poems and prose.
- Most students attain levels in line with national curriculum expectations in Arabic as an additional language. Their listening skills are well-developed and they can understand appropriate Arabic standard language. In speaking, vocabulary and fluency are limited. In lower grades, students can write reasonable words, phrases and short sentences independently. Progress is good. Students in Year 4 improve their language skills by applying grammar structures to their writing.
- In English, the majority of students make better than expected progress against curriculum expectations from their starting points and reach levels expected for their age. Students extend their range of vocabulary and develop their ideas for writing through discussion. The quality of writing is less well-developed but is improving. Students make good use of their knowledge of phonics to help with their reading and to improve their spelling. They are developing their ability to predict during guided reading sessions. Higher-level reading skills of inference and comprehension are underdeveloped.
- Most students' knowledge, skills and understanding in mathematics are in line with curriculum standards. Although external assessment results are lower than expected, in lessons and in their work, students demonstrate an acceptable level of understanding of shapes, measurement, computation skills and the use of data. Problem-solving skills are underdeveloped. Most students make acceptable progress over the course of the term. A few students respond well to challenges and make greater gains.

- In science, most students make expected progress and are working at appropriate levels for their age. Whilst their results against international benchmark tests are less positive, in lessons, they are meeting teachers' higher expectations, making acceptable progress against their starting points and reaching appropriate levels.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Learning skills	Good	Good

- Children in the FS enjoy their learning. The majority of children show increasing independence after just twelve weeks in school. Primary students also demonstrate the ability to work on their own. In lessons, students are learning how to assess their own work and that of others; when it is given, they readily accept and implement advice from teachers and their peers on how to improve their work.
- Children in the FS know how to take turns and work together with their peers. Students in the primary phase are able to collaborate in a range of situations. They share their ideas and hold active discussions. A few students contribute less when working in a group and when their teachers ask their opinions. Opportunities to develop deeper, more meaningful discussions between students are inconsistent across subjects.
- Students make connections between areas of learning, for example in humanities when they use their tablets to pinpoint features and landmarks in Dubai. Lower primary students learn the importance of writing instructions correctly so that others can use them to follow a recipe. During Enterprise Week students design and lead their own projects to help them develop their organisational skills.
- Students increasingly use their research skills across the curriculum. In a minority of lessons, when students use computers, the challenge is low, particularly for the most able in their independent enquiry work. In mathematics, students have opportunities to think critically and, on occasion, to solve problems. Students' ability to be evaluative is developing steadily as a result of the investigative tasks they undertake.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Personal development	Very good	Very good

- Students' attitudes towards their work and to others are very positive. They are willing to help each other when necessary, and contribute to the school's warm ethos. They demonstrate age-appropriate levels of responsibility.
- Children in the FS work well together and behave responsibly when working without direct supervision. Students in the primary phase almost always show very good behaviour in lessons. Minor incidents of misbehaviour occur infrequently, usually when teaching is less engaging.

- Relationships across the school are very positive. Students are respectful of their teachers and other adults and relate well to their peers. They are considerate of others and aware of their needs.
- Students have an appropriate understanding of safe and healthy lifestyles. They make sensible choices about their own diet and exercise. Children in the FS respond well to opportunities for physical activity.
- Students' attendance is very good. On occasion, a few students arrive late to school at the start of the day.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
<b>Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures</b>	Good ↑	Good

- Across the school, students demonstrate a clear understanding of Islamic values and their relevance in UAE life. They know why the mosque is important for Muslims. They can explain the values of fasting, such as patience and sharing the suffering of the poor, during Ramadan.
- Most students show a good understanding of Emirati heritage and culture. They can explain how Dubai has grown rapidly to become a modern state. They can name the seven Emirates and some of their leaders. They are aware of the cultural activities and celebrations in the UAE such as National Day.
- Most students are aware of the cultural diversity in Dubai. They can describe aspects of their own cultures and some aspects of other cultures.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
<b>Social responsibility and innovation skills</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Students are aware of their role in the school community. They demonstrate their commitment to the house system by acting as house captains, school council representatives and playground leaders. They can relate to values such as inclusiveness, responsibility and resilience in their own lives. They occasionally engage in charitable works such as organising a shoebox appeal for people less fortunate.
- Almost all children demonstrate a keen work ethic and older students, particularly, are focused on achieving their learning goals. When opportunities are provided, students engage in projects and are keen to share their creations with other members of the school community. They occasionally show initiative by engaging in creative activities such as the 'Dubai from the Sky' project.
- Students are aware of changes that have happened to the UAE environment. They care for their school by maintaining a litter-free environment. The Eco Club, though small, is beginning to have a significant impact on other students' actions by requesting a 'No Paper' day and a 'Lights Off' day to promote understanding of a sustainable environment.

### 3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good 

- Teachers in across the school have secure knowledge of the topics they teach and explain things well. They are generally aware of how students learn best. At the primary phase, they are not always clear enough about how their students learn well, and, as a result, students do not always receive the full support that they require in lessons.
- Planning is well devised. Lesson plans show a good knowledge of students' abilities and any potential barriers to learning. Resources are used well and teachers create stimulating learning environments. Occasionally, time is not managed efficiently, for example during the start and end of lessons and when children spend too long listening and insufficient time applying what they have learnt.
- Teachers' interactions with students are a strong feature of most lessons. Teachers have good questioning techniques, but do not always target challenging questions at higher-attaining students or seek extended explanations.
- Teachers know students well which allows them to plan for the different needs in their class. In the best lessons teachers manage groups with different abilities well. Support staff are well-deployed to support students who have SEND.
- Critical thinking and problem-solving are evident in an increasing number of lessons. In some subjects, such as Islamic education and humanities, and in the FS, there are good opportunities to solve problems related to students' lives. In science, teachers are aware of the need to develop students' investigative skills. This is already having an impact on how successfully students can think scientifically.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Assessment	Good	Good 

- Internal assessment processes are well-planned, coherent and consistent. They are aligned to the curriculum standards and take a variety of forms for different purposes. Students undertake a reading assessment, and a comprehensive assessment tool, Learning Ladders, is used in all subjects to record students' progress and achievement of learning objectives.
- The school compares students' achievements in English, mathematics and science by using appropriate international benchmark tests. Students in Years 3 and 5 also take cognitive ability tests. These provide an indication of students' potential and are used alongside external measures of progress to enable teachers to check whether students are making sufficient progress.
- The school's assessment co-ordinator works effectively and systematically with teachers to analyse assessment data and to identify the needs of individual students. Teachers in the FS use learning journeys well to track children's development over time and to plan for their next steps in learning.

- Teachers are beginning to use assessment information more effectively. They identify gaps in students' knowledge, skills and understanding, and adjust the curriculum and their teaching approaches to improve learning and increase the rate of progress. For example, lesson-starter activities in mathematics have been introduced in some lessons to provide open-ended tasks and challenges and to encourage students to think more creatively.
- Teachers generally know their students well. They routinely assess students during lessons and adjust the pace of teaching accordingly to ensure that all students learn. The quality of written feedback to students is inconsistent, and sometimes lacks clear guidance on how to improve their work.

#### 4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Good

- The school successfully follows the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and the National Curriculum for England. Both have a clear rationale and are relevant to the needs of most students, meeting both school and national requirements. Teachers effectively plan a broad range of learning activities that promote a good balance between the development of knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Teachers creatively plan exciting themes that will motivate and engage students and meet the needs of most of them. The curriculum is sequenced appropriately, in almost all subjects. It ensures continuity by building on students' prior experiences. Consequently, the curriculum prepares students well for the next stage of their education within the school and beyond.
- The curriculum provides suitable variety for students when they are learning in and out of the classrooms. It promotes and responds to the particular needs and interests of students. They can opt to carry out additional research, or complete creative and investigative projects at home. Children in the FS have choices during free-flow activities but these do not consistently provide challenge to promote their thinking and develop learning.
- Meaningful links across subjects are deliberately planned to enable students to develop their knowledge and skills in different contexts; in Islamic education, for example, students learning about 'zakat' use mathematical calculations to work out the amount of savings to be donated to charity. There are regular opportunities for students to carry out research, projects and assignments using technology across many subjects.
- Teachers regularly review the curriculum, taking students' views into account, and make changes to meet the needs of students. There is now a greater focus on practical experimentation as a result of a recent review of science. In English an audit prompted a change in phonics teaching and guided reading.
- The UAE social studies curriculum is drawn from the Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum. It is planned to develop students' knowledge and understanding of the culture and heritage of the UAE along with concepts and skills. The curriculum provides adequate continuity and progression but there is some repetition of learning between year groups that slows the pace of students' progress. Most students engage readily with the learning activities. Assessment of students' attainment in UAE social studies has recently been improved to ensure that students make the expected progress.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
<b>Curriculum adaptation</b>	Good	Good

- In the FS, the common themes are personalised by class teachers to meet the needs of almost all groups. Most teachers in the primary phase modify the curriculum to take account of the range of students' abilities. Programmes of study support most students who have difficulties in learning. Students who learn more quickly than others are not always fully challenged in their learning.
- The school offers a range of interesting activities in lessons and after school. Potential journalists conduct interviews and write reports of sporting events. Home learning choices include creative activities that expand the curriculum and encourage students to pursue their own interests. Students find the potential of green-screen photography fascinating, especially when they see images of themselves on top of the Burj Khalifa.
- Almost all children sing the UAE National Anthem in Arabic accurately. Primary students learn about Dubai and the UAE through the thematic curriculum. The school has heritage corners and displays that remind students of the landmarks of Dubai. Social studies lessons promote the rich heritage and history of each Emirate. Students visit cultural centres to learn more about the Bedouin lifestyle.
- Children in FS receive 60 minutes of teaching of Arabic as a first language, or 30 minutes of teaching in Arabic as an additional language. They learn simple words and some songs, including the UAE National Anthem.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
<b>Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding</b>	Good	Good

- The school's child protection policy outlines effective procedures. Teaching assistants and teachers receive training on the policy and procedures from the principal and the medical staff. Appropriate measures are in place to protect students from bullying and cyber-bullying.
- Systems are in place to ensure a safe, secure and hygienic environment. Security at the front gate is rigorous with a new procedure for identifying parents and visitors using a lanyard system. Supervision of students on the school premises and on the school transport system is managed very well. At the time of the inspection the school met all regulatory requirements.
- All records are accurately maintained and stored securely, including records of accidents and incidents and subsequent follow-up actions. The school carries out fire drills and evacuation procedures regularly. Fire safety audits are carried out annually and appropriate action is taken. A part-time doctor and full-time nurse work in the school clinic. Medication and medical records are stored securely in the clinic.

- The school premises and facilities are maintained to a good standard. In general, they provide a suitable learning environment for students. While ramps are in place and provide access for the school community to ground floor level, there is no lift to provide full accessibility for any members of the school community with mobility difficulties.
- Staff in the school clinic have a schedule of health checks, including immunisation programmes and some curriculum-related activities and initiatives. They are in the process of completing a body-mass index survey involving all students, with a follow-up programme in conjunction with the physical education (PE) department. Appropriate shaded areas are provided in the schoolyard and students have access to fresh drinking water.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Care and support	Good	Good

- Relationships between all members of the school community are positive. Adults are good role models and help students to develop respect for others, to manage their feelings and understand appropriate behaviour choices. Systems and procedures for managing behaviour are understood clearly and are effective.
- The systems for tracking attendance and following up absences are very effective and ensure that very good levels of attendance are maintained throughout the school. Most parents support the school well in this aspect.
- The school has an inclusive admissions policy and welcomes students who have SEND. An effective system enables the early identification of students who have SEND. Parents of those students are included in their children’s learning and are invited to work in partnership with school leaders and teachers to plan appropriate educational programmes. Systems to identify students who are gifted and or talented continue to improve but are at an early stage of development.
- The school provides effective specialist support for most students with SEND and for those who are gifted and or talented. The quality of support enables most students to make consistent personal and academic progress. In the classroom, learning activities are not always adjusted sufficiently to promote good progress for students with SEND or to sufficiently challenge higher achieving students.
- Students feel well supported and know that their teachers and other adults in school will help them when they need assistance. Staff members plan appropriate lessons to teach safety and aspects of health and personal development. Informally the school monitors the social and personal development of all students. More formal systems for monitoring well-being are underdeveloped.

## Inclusion

### Provision and outcomes for students with SEND

Good

- The recent appointment of a new principal, leader of SEND and new learning support team, bring fresh energy and the capacity to improve the quality of provision for students who have SEND. The school's own evaluation of the quality of provision is largely accurate and the strategy for improvement is appropriate.
- The school utilises a range of indicators to identify students with SEND. Systems are improving and the school has a greater understanding of the challenges experienced by students and the actions needed to ensure progress. The effectiveness of strategies and modifications used by teachers in the classrooms is inconsistent.
- Almost all parents are pleased with the quality of support for their children. The specialist team provides valued and effective support to parents of children with SEND. Parents are invited to be involved in the production, implementation and review of their children's specific learning programmes.
- Support provided by the specialist team is appropriate and promotes improved learning and progress. Some of the most challenged students make significant progress as a result of early identification and the high-quality support they receive from the specialist team. Support in the classroom is not as effective. Basic modifications, such as the levels of support provided and adjustments to learning activities are evident in the majority of lessons but these do not consistently promote good progress.
- Despite the careful and targeted support provided by the specialist team for students with SEND, the inconsistent quality of provision in classrooms limits their academic progress and personal development.

## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Good

- The new principal is working with staff and others on updating the school's vision. This task is almost complete. Leaders are increasingly committed to making the school inclusive and implementing the UAE National Agenda.
- The principal is supported well by others on the senior leadership team. New leaders at middle level, who number around half of the team, are showing promise and have made a good start to their roles. Overall, there is good consistency of expertise and professionalism across the middle level team.
- Given that a significant proportion of staff are new to the school, relationships are developing, and are increasingly professional and effective. Communication is effective. Morale is positive, though there is a degree of concern among staff about workload.

- Leaders have a developing capacity to innovate and improve aspects of the school's work. Working with staff, they have embedded improvements to key aspects such as assessment.
- Leaders have ensured that relevant aspects of the school's work are compliant with all statutory and regulatory requirements. Attainment in core subjects remains at an acceptable level, and continues to be an aspect requiring focused development.

<b>School self-evaluation and improvement planning</b>	Acceptable
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- Senior staff use a range of methods for gathering and analysing information about the school's work. They gather views of stakeholders, observe lessons, and consider internal and, increasingly, external test data. The school is getting to know its strength and weaknesses, but self-evaluation judgements of some key aspects are overly positive.
- All teachers are observed teaching by the senior leadership team and receive constructive feedback. Judgements of lessons which are good or better are mainly accurate. The process does not fully focus on the progress and attainment of students in lessons. As a result, the proportion of self-evaluation judgements at the very good or outstanding levels is high and not fully in line with inspection findings.
- The school has a wide range of improvement plans which staff are working hard to implement. At times, the strategies and actions to be taken are not set out in sufficient detail, and criteria by which success will be judged are not always specified clearly enough. There are signs of some improvements in students' academic progress.
- Senior leaders have made progress in addressing most of the recommendations of the previous inspection report. Analysis of assessment data has improved markedly and the overall quality of teaching has improved at the primary phase. Teachers' use of assessment information to ensure the needs of all students are met is still inconsistent, and students' critical thinking skills are in need of further development.

<b>Partnerships with parents and the community</b>	Good
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- The school makes very strong and successful efforts to engage parents in the life of the school. The school seeks their views and parents feel that their views are heard and valued by the leaders when creating improvement plans. Parental involvement is seen as a very important aspect of the school.
- Parents are kept very well informed about the life of the school and value this greatly. They feel that they are valued members of the school community. They say that nothing is too much for the leaders and the class teachers and they are confident that, when they have problems, these will be addressed rapidly and solved effectively. This includes the parents of children who have SEND.
- Although reports are sent home on a twice-yearly basis, these are not fully reflective of the students' experience of school. They do not contain clear evaluations of attainment and progress in terms of curricular expectations or next steps for student improvement. However, parents feel that their children's teachers keep them better informed on an informal basis.

- The school has developed some links with other schools through sports and other activities. There are a few links nationally and internationally which are having a significant impact on students' learning development and achievements.

<b>Governance</b>	Good
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- The governing body has representatives from all stakeholder groups apart from students. The former principal of the school acts as an advisory director of education and plans to be in school for around seven weeks over the course of the school session to support leaders and others. The governing body is closely involved in decision-making in the school.
- Governors meet regularly and receive reports on how the school is performing. There is a performance management system for the principal which includes targets. Governors' reviews of assessment data, and of the school's self-evaluation activities to hold senior staff accountable, are not sufficiently comprehensive or rigorous.
- The governors ensure that the school has a good supply of suitable staff and resources. They have ensured that all aspects of the school's work conform to statutory and regulatory requirements. Through the new director of education, they are beginning to work with the new principal to raise standards.

<b>Management, staffing, facilities and resources</b>	Good
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- From arrival in the morning to departure at the end of the day, the school's appropriate procedures are implemented effectively, ensuring that the school day runs smoothly.
- Staff are well qualified. Two-thirds of them are new to the school. Some are also new to leadership posts, as are others who have been promoted from within the school. Overall, the introduction of these new appointments are having a positive impact. A well-planned induction course helps new teachers to settle in to the school and to Dubai. Professional development activities include useful work on assessment.
- The school premises are of good quality and are used well to create a positive learning environment. The sports hall, swimming pool and IT room are positive features. The school does not have a lift to support people with physical mobility issues to access the upper floor.
- The school has a suitable range of resources, including interactive whiteboards and a number of tablet computers for use by students. The library has a suitable stock of Arabic books, and resources for Islamic education are of high quality.

## 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	
<b>Parents*</b> 	2016-2017	114
	2015-2016	205
<b>Teachers</b> 	36	
<b>Students</b> 	41	

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

- Parents' responses to questions in the survey are very positive.
- Nearly all additional comments submitted by parents are complimentary. Several of these focus particularly on the new leadership of the school.
- A small minority of parents express some concerns around: the school's support for social and emotional needs; safe use of internet and social media; the approach to dealing with bullying; the quality of support for students with particular needs.
- Responses from teachers who completed the survey are very positive with concerns only raised in the areas of continuing professional development, the availability of resources to support teaching and workload.
- Students' responses are generally positive. They have some concerns around opportunities for taking environmental responsibility, the development of their leadership skills and their understanding of the impact of Islamic values on Dubai society.

## 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](mailto:inspection@khda.gov.ae)