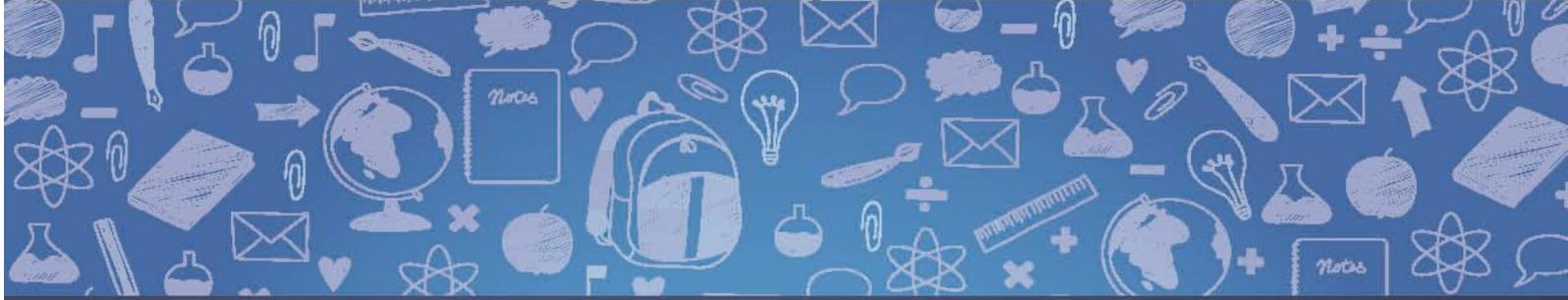


Inspection Report



GEMS Dubai American Academy 2014-2015



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School information



General information

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Location | Al Barsha |
| Type of school | Private |
| Opening year of school | 1997 |
| Website | www.gemsaa-dubai.com |
| Telephone | 04-3479222 |
| Address | P O Box 32762, Dubai |
| Principal | Dr. James Hardin |
| Language of instruction | English |
| Inspection dates | 10 th -13 th November 2014 |



Students

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Gender of students | Boys and Girls |
| Age range | 4 - 18 |
| Grades or year groups | KG 1 - Grade 12 |
| Number of students on roll | 2348 |
| Number of children in Pre-K | 0 |
| Number of Emirati students | 26 |
| Number of students with SEN | 199 |
| Largest nationality group of students | US |



Teachers / Support staff

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| Number of teachers | 185 |
| Largest nationality group of teachers | US |
| Number of teacher assistants | 56 |
| Teacher-student ratio | 1:13 |
| Number of guidance counsellors | 8 |
| Teacher turnover | 20% |



Curriculum

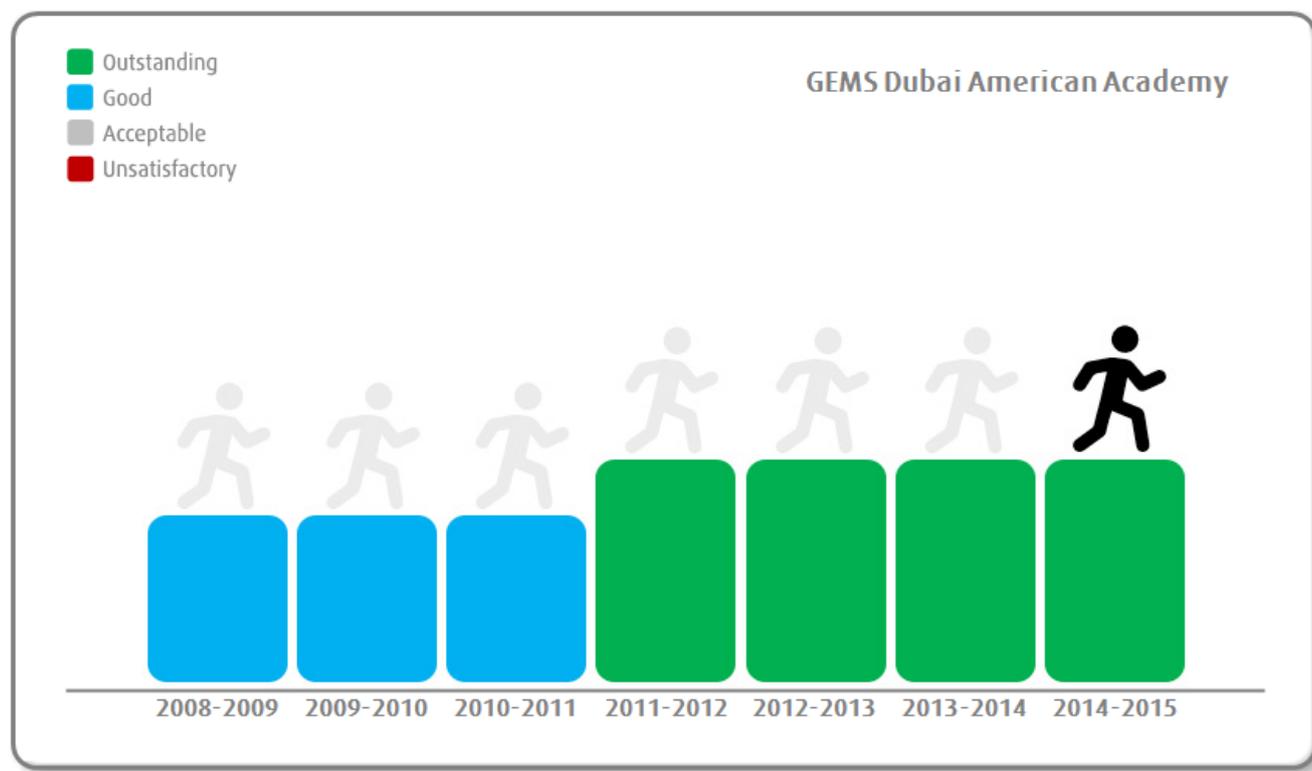
| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Educational Permit | US |
| Main Curriculum / Other | US/IB |
| Standardized tests / board exams | IBDP, SAT 1 & 2, MAP, P-SAT, |
| Accreditation | NEASC, CIS |



Dear Parents,

GEMS Dubai American Academy was inspected by DSIB from 10th - 13th November 2014, and the overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **Outstanding**

In order to judge the overall quality of education provided by the school, inspectors considered six key aspects of the school's performance and standards. Inspectors looked at children's attainment and progress in five key subjects, their learning skills as well as their personal and social development. They judged how effective teaching was across the school. Inspectors considered how well the school's curriculum, including activities inside and outside the classroom, met the educational needs of all children. They judged how well the school protected and supported children. In addition inspectors judged the effectiveness of leadership and governance, including management, staffing, facilities and resources.



The inspection judgments were drawn from a range of evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observing children learning in lessons, looking at their work, talking with children, meetings with staff, parents and governors, and reviewing the parents' and teachers' surveys.

The key strengths and areas for improvement to be made by the school leaders, governors and owners are:

Strengths

- Highly effective leadership inspired the educational community to create an inquiry-based environment.
- Outstanding teaching led to excellent learning outcomes across most phases in English, mathematics and science.
- Most students had mature and responsible attitudes that enabled them to develop independent investigation skills, equipping them to become life-long learners.
- Parents played a key role in the school community and encouraged their children to make the most of the rich curriculum.
- The collaborative relationships between teachers and students were of an extremely high standard.

Areas for improvement

- Students' key skills in Islamic Education and Arabic could be improved by:
 - designing a curriculum aligned with the Ministry of Education standards that meets the needs of all students;
 - focusing teaching on the use of Arabic skills and Islamic knowledge in the daily life of the school;
 - ensuring that assessment data is accurate, analyzed in depth and used consistently by teachers to develop interesting learning experiences.
- Ensure assessment in the Kindergarten is used consistently to plan experiences focused on the development of skills

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

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

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

Yours sincerely,

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau
Knowledge and Human Development Authority

A closer look at GEMS Dubai American Academy



How well does the school perform overall?

Overall, GEMS Dubai American Academy provided an '**Outstanding**' quality of education for its students.

- Students' achievements in English, mathematics and science were outstanding. Students had developed a wide range of research and thinking skills across most subjects and phases but the writing skills of the youngest children in the school required some further development. Challenges remained for students learning Arabic and Islamic Education. Too often, students spoke in colloquial Arabic while students in Islamic Education were not developing the skills to apply their learning in their daily lives.
- Students demonstrated outstanding attitudes to their learning and to their peers. Very positive relationships between students and staff were seen across all phases. Being busy, enquiring and seeking individual ways to solve problems were regular features of life at school.
- Teachers were enthusiastic, committed to each student and very skilled at meeting their needs. Most understood how students of different ages, abilities and dispositions learned. Teaching in Islamic Education and Arabic language lessons did not match the quality of that of other subjects. The learning environment for Arabic was not sufficiently stimulating to foster the use of the language outside the classroom.
- The curriculum in the school was excellent. Faculty administrators worked tirelessly to provide a broad range of stimulating learning experiences. Detailed review and planning ensured that the programs available for students of all phases were improving all the time. While there were some inconsistencies in lessons regarding the teaching of students with special educational needs, the overall provision for these students was of a high standard.
- The campus was safe and secure. The school strongly promoted healthy lifestyles, with an emphasis on sporting activities.
- New leaders had established very positive and effective relationships with the school community. They were highly visible about the school and easily accessed by parents. A new vision for the school had been established to reinforce the importance of students' inquiry and independent learning skills.



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

- Students with special educational needs made good progress in most of their classes. In Arabic and Islamic Education, they progressed only at an acceptable level and occasionally progress was unsatisfactory.
- Systems to identify needs were robust. Students were placed in appropriate learning environments and their progress was tracked.
- Teachers worked hard to ensure that students with special educational needs could experience success in their classes. They were given work that matched their abilities and learning styles while still working to a grade level expectation. The special educational needs program was led by a caring and competent leader who understood the needs of this group of students.

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

| | | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|---|------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|  Islamic Education | Attainment | Not Applicable | Acceptable | Good | Acceptable |
| | Progress | Not Applicable | Acceptable | Good | Acceptable |
|  Arabic as a First Language | Attainment | Not Applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| | Progress | Not Applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
|  Arabic as an Additional Language | Attainment | Not Applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| | Progress | Not Applicable | Acceptable | Good | Acceptable |
|  English | Attainment | Good ↓ | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| | Progress | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |
|  Mathematics | Attainment | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| | Progress | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |
|  Science | Attainment | Outstanding ↑ | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| | Progress | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| | | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
| Learning skills | | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |

↑ Improved from last inspection

↓ Declined from last inspection

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

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Personal responsibility | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Community and environmental responsibility | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |

3. How good are teaching and assessment?

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|---------------------------------|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Teaching for effective learning | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Assessment | Good  | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |

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

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|--|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Curriculum quality | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students | Outstanding  | Good | Good | Outstanding |

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

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Health and safety | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Quality of support | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |

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

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



School **Inspection** Report

Overall school judgement

Outstanding

Key strengths

- Highly effective leadership inspired the educational community to create an inquiry-based learning environment.
- Outstanding teaching led to outstanding learning outcomes in English, mathematics and science.
- Most students had mature and responsible attitudes that enabled them to develop independent investigation skills, equipping them to become life-long learners.
- Parents played a key role in the school community and encouraged their children to make the most of the rich curriculum.
- The collaborative relationships between teachers and students were of an extremely high standard.

Changes since the last inspection

- A high quality of provision for students with special educational needs was developing.
- Scientific skills of kindergarten children had improved significantly.
- Writing skills of the youngest children were less consistent.
- The school had responded proactively to improve the safety provision.
- An outstanding teacher appraisal system was supported by a customized professional development programs

Recommendations

- Improve students' key skills in Islamic Education and Arabic by:
 - establishing effective specialist leadership to design a curriculum aligned with the Ministry of Education standards that meets the needs of all students
 - focusing teaching on the use of Arabic skills and Islamic knowledge in the daily life of the school
 - ensuring that assessment data is accurate, analyzed in depth and used consistently to develop interesting learning experiences.
- Ensure assessment in the Kindergarten is used consistently to plan experiences focused on the development of skills.

 Improved from last inspection

 Declined from last inspection

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

KG

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

- In English, children from all backgrounds and of all abilities made outstanding progress in expressing their thoughts and feelings, using an increasingly sophisticated vocabulary. They listened carefully and responded well to others. Although progress in writing was rapid, many children were not expressing themselves in their writing at an age-appropriate level in line with their oral skills. Reading skills developed steadily.
- In mathematics, children had a secure understanding of number, shape and space and how to make and interpret graphs. Progress in mathematical skills was outstanding because children were beginning to apply critical thinking to their work, for example in planning, analyzing and making complex patterns well above the expectation for their age.
- In science, children's scientific and cognitive skills were outstanding. Children made careful observations and precise records by drawing things of interest, such as leaves. They explored the use of different materials and enjoyed the challenge of designing and making, for example, push and pull toys. Children were able to analyze what could be improved.

Elementary

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

- In Islamic Education, most students could recite short Surahs from memory and knew the Pillars of Islam and Pillars of Faith. They made expected progress in understanding the message of the Prophets and learning aspects of ablution and fasting.
- In Arabic as a first language most students attained levels that were in line with curriculum expectations. Listening for understanding and speaking skills were better than reading and writing skills which were still developing. Writing was mainly restricted to copying.

- Most students had adequate listening skills in Arabic as an additional language. They could write simple sentences but spelling and grammatical errors were common. They made acceptable progress in understanding the meaning of new words and arranging them into simple sentences.
- Students applied their English skills in a variety of rich and interesting activities. As a result, most students were able to think critically and they spoke, read and wrote with a level of confidence, expression and imagination that was above expectations.
- Innovative and highly effective use of resources in mathematics by all teachers and students ensured outstanding attainment and progress in all classes. Students performed at above expected levels in independent learning skills, problem solving, and collaboration. They could confidently work with numbers, shapes and data.
- Students excelled in their scientific studies by building well on previous learning. They applied their skills to real-life situations, conducted accurate investigations and recorded and analyzed data in detail. They discussed possible solutions and recorded them in their science journals. Older elementary students were able to reflect on their outcomes.

Middle

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

- In Islamic Education, most students memorized short Surahs and understood beliefs, rituals and morals properly. A majority performed daily prayers and made good progress in identifying the characteristics of the Prophets.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students' listening for understanding and speaking skills were developing but they continued to use colloquial language as they studied new vocabulary.
- In Arabic as an additional language, students read familiar words and related them to pictures but listening and reading skills were underdeveloped. Most students made good progress in presenting their work but with limited fluency.
- In English students used technology well to respond to challenging and thought-provoking activities. They read with confidence and understanding, and wrote independently and creatively to a high standard.
- In mathematics, students had an outstanding ability to use abstract algebraic manipulations and develop numerical skills. Almost all students made excellent progress.
- In science, students were able to observe accurately and record their findings. They analyzed information, drew conclusions and suggested hypotheses to explain their observations.

| High | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Subjects | Attainment | Progress |
| Islamic Education | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Arabic as a First Language | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Arabic as an Additional Language | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| English | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Mathematics | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Science | Outstanding | Outstanding |

- In Islamic Education, the recitation skills of most students and their knowledge of Prophets were appropriate for their ages. Students made acceptable progress in understanding the Qur'an verses related to Prophets' stories but excessive focus on facts slowed their progress.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students' listening and speaking skills were developing well but progress in the writing and reading of many students was slower.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students could read short familiar texts and understand their meaning. Writing was underdeveloped due to too much copying and very limited opportunities for free writing. Most students made adequate progress in developing their vocabulary.
- In English, students were able to think critically and develop their language in all subject areas. They learned to use technology to collaborate with their peers as they completed interesting and thought-provoking assignments.
- In all external examinations in mathematics, most students attained levels that were above international benchmarks. Attainment and progress were outstanding because the development of critical thinking, inquiry and investigation skills was outstanding. Students were learning mathematics through investigations and open-ended problem solving. Their analytical thinking skills and the quality of written mathematics were outstanding.
- In science, students studied increasingly complex ideas, concepts and vocabulary. They understood scientific method well and were accurate and specific in their use of technical language and scientific resources.

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Learning skills | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |

- Students across the school displayed a wide range of learning skills. They engaged very willingly with the objectives of most lessons. Students led their own exploration of issues and solved some challenges independently.
- When students worked together, they were knowledgeable of their roles, keen to get busy and arrived collectively at their conclusions.
- Most students used technology skillfully to access further information and to share their work for peer and teacher review. They could build links across concepts easily. Most students were adept at developing their inquiry and critical thinking as a regular and integral part of their learning experiences.
- When teaching enabled them, students of all ages were skillful and committed to developing their own learning.

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

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Personal responsibility | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |

- Children in Kindergarten behaved well and had positive attitudes towards each other and towards learning. They undertook a wide range of responsibilities, for example as line leaders, counting those present, and as table captains and cleanliness monitors.
- Students across the school were highly self-disciplined and behaved with courtesy and mutual respect. They enjoyed positive relationships with each other and school staff.
- Most students had an excellent understanding of the value of healthy food. They adopted an active life-style through excellent food choices, a keen awareness of the value of sporting activities and the practical use of the common areas of the campus during recess periods.
- Attendance of students was good overall although, on occasion, a small minority of students arrived late for some classes.

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |

- Students understood Islamic values very well, translating them into a culture of kindness and charitable initiatives that spread across the campus and local community.
- Students showed deep understanding of Emirati society, culture and history. This was developed through a rich program of school events and field trips.
- Most students had a strong awareness of their own cultures, those of their peers and across the world as a result of class projects and reports on country visits. This was best expressed through the high levels of mutual respect between all members of this school community.

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Community and environmental responsibility | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |

- Student-led organizations and clubs had a very positive impact on the school and the local community.
- Students' excellent work ethic was demonstrated by their innovative class projects and student government initiatives.
- Students contributed to the recycling program and helped in conservation efforts. This commitment to environmental conservation was evident throughout all phases of the school.

3. How good are teaching and assessment?

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Teaching for effective learning | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers had excellent subject expertise and understanding of how children and students at different developmental stages learn. They used this very effectively to engage students' interest. Teachers planned very effective lessons, providing stimulating learning environments which supported students' growing independence. They used time and good quality resources to enhance learning very well. Teacher-student interactions were characterized by skillful, challenging, open questioning and thought-provoking discussions. In many of the best lessons, students raised questions and pursued their own lines of inquiry. In most lessons, teachers used a range of strategies very well to meet the needs of individual students. However, this was not consistent. In a few lessons, teachers did not differentiate sufficiently to meet, fully, the needs of all learners, including non-native speakers of English. The promotion of critical thinking was a strength in some areas, for example, in mathematics in high school and elementary school, but this was inconsistent across the school. Teaching in many other subjects shared the same strengths as the key subjects. Teachers' of Arabic as a first language demonstrated acceptable subject knowledge. It was better among the teachers of the older students. Planning was acceptable but teachers were not good at timing different elements of a lesson in order to allow students to spend necessary time thinking and exploring solutions to challenges. Teaching was frequently didactic with closed questions. There was limited differentiation and promotion of critical thinking. A few lessons in Arabic did not have clear learning objectives. | | | | |

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|--|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Assessment | Good  | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the Kindergarten, the school had designed its own assessment system, linked to the international measures of the Common Core State Standards and 'Next Generation Science Standards'. Teachers had an accurate knowledge of the attainment and progress of individual children through continuous assessment. The subsequent use of assessment data to influence teaching, the curriculum and children's progress was usually good. Some weaker teaching was linked to imprecise use of continuous assessment. A wide range of assessment techniques was observed in elementary, middle and high school phases including assessment strategies which specifically targeted critical thinking, inquiry and problem solving. Valid and reliable data linked to the school's curriculum was available to teachers. Many used these data effectively. International benchmarks were used and results were scrutinized and analyzed so as to inform a targeted approach to teaching and learning. The outcomes of these analyses had a strong impact on lesson planning in many subjects and phases. All parents were well informed of the international and internal assessment results. In a majority of lessons, students were involved in self-assessment with clearly stated success criteria. Consequently, most students knew what was expected of them. | | | | |

- Teachers had excellent knowledge of students' progress and achievements. Students received very informed and effective oral feedback and written comments to allow them to know how to improve their work further. However, in Arabic and Islamic Education, assessment did not effectively inform the curriculum and classroom teaching.

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

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Curriculum quality | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |

- The school offered a well-balanced curriculum sharply focused on the development of both knowledge and skills. The curriculum through to Grade 10 was based on Common Core State Standards in English and mathematics. The science curriculum was based on the 'Next Generation Science Standards'. In Grades 11 and 12, the curriculum followed the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program. The history and social science, and arts curricula were based on other US standards.
- The school had ensured continuity across levels. It planned for progression by examining progress in all subjects and making any necessary adjustments. The school had appropriately adjusted the curriculum for Grades 9 and 10 in order to ensure that coursework prepared students well for the IB programs in Grades 11 and 12.
- The curriculum provided for extensive enrichment, especially in the IB Program. The school provided many off-campus field study experiences. Online research projects promoted independent learning. Guest speakers further enhanced the curriculum.
- Cross-curricular links allowed students to integrate knowledge and understanding across different strands of their learning. This was especially strong where students used technology to build links of their own across different topics in science and mathematics.
- The curriculum was reviewed regularly and systematically. It was changed as necessary to ensure that students' academic and personal needs were met well.
- The curriculum for Arabic as a first language was functional but not rigorous. It did not support the development of the Arabic language skills. There was a lack of cross-curricular connections in lesson planning.

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|---|---|------------|--------|-------------|
| Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students | Outstanding  | Good | Good | Outstanding |

- The school designed exciting and stimulating experiences for many different groups of students. This was best exemplified through, for example, the opportunities for students with particular talents to lead their own lessons with interesting research or language-focused presentations. High School students with a talent for writing helped other students with precise descriptions of why they had improved a draft of their writing with a richer vocabulary. Such opportunities were less frequent for students of Arabic as a first language and some students with special educational needs in the Elementary and Middle Schools.
- In the High School, students had a wide range of curricular choice. They used their elective options well to enhance their preparation for their future learning pathways. This enabled them to develop skills that might otherwise have remained underdeveloped.

- A very wide range of after-school activities was available for all students from Kindergarten through to High School. Most students availed themselves of these fully to develop their specific interests and talents. The school day, while quite long, provided students with a varied, stimulating and relevant set of excellent experiences that enhanced their lives at school.

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

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Health and safety | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |

- The school's health and safety procedures were very efficient and provided students with an environment that was safe and secure.
- The buildings and grounds were maintained carefully and to a high standard by a dedicated staff.
- All employees were trained to be aware of the importance of child protection and sought to protect students, including taking action to safeguard them from bullying and the potential dangers of unsupervised internet usage.
- The laboratories and medical facilities followed good safety procedures.
- The school's security team assured that students and faculty were very well protected and that the facility was constantly monitored to assure that only authorized individuals were allowed on campus.

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Quality of support | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |

- Staff-student relationships were very positive across the school with excellent behavior programs and a life skills program. Building relationships was very much a priority. All teachers were involved in extra-curricular activities to foster positive student/staff relationships outside the classroom.
- The management of attendance and punctuality was effective in terms of ensuring that such a large student population arrived and departed, mostly, at the correct timings. The school was considering the introduction of a positive incentive program to assist with the management of attendance.
- The school had clear, equitable and compliant policies and procedures in place for the identification and placement of students with special educational needs, allowing them to make good progress.
- Parents were very satisfied with the provision for special educational needs and acknowledged the progress their children made academically and socially. Staff supported students very well, especially with regard to their emotional needs. Students recognized their own strengths and many took ownership of their own learning.
- Advice and support for all students were excellent, providing students with highly focused career progression advice.

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

| | Overall |
|---|---------|
| The overall effectiveness of provision for students with special educational needs | Good |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The leadership of the special educational needs program was competent and caring. The leader was well informed about the needs of the students and had valuable experience in special educational needs. The program ran smoothly from day to day. The identification of students was consistent and equitable due in large part to the well-written, detailed and clear policies and procedures. Concerns about students could be raised by parents, teachers, staff or even students themselves. Steps were then taken to investigate each concern and, if appropriate, designate the student as having special needs. The curriculum was modified to some extent but was not innovative enough to meet all the needs of students with special educational needs, particularly in Arabic and Islamic Education lessons. The relationships with parents were very strong. Parents praised the program and delivery of services to their children. They believed that the school was interested in the success of all students with special educational needs and provided all the necessary support for them. In most subjects, the progress of students with special educational needs was good overall. This was not the case, however, in Arabic language lessons and Islamic Education, where students' progress was only acceptable and in some instances unsatisfactory. Teachers were not consistently effective when marking and reporting to provide a precise record of each student's progress. | |

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

| | Overall |
|---|-------------|
| The effectiveness of leadership | Outstanding |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new senior leadership team had inspired the community with a new vision for an inquiry-led learning environment across the entire school. The leaders were highly visible and accessible to parents and students. The new superintendent and the new deputy superintendent provided very strong collaboration across the school. A highly distributed leadership culture had emerged where excellent communication, openness and sharing of ideas, challenges and strategies were routine expectations. Leaders were focused on bringing the school's vision to the practical life of the classroom in order to benefit each student. New priorities were emerging for the teaching of students with special educational needs along with the Arabic and Islamic Education targets. Leaders were perceptive of the areas for development. The school was aiming to be a truly world-class learning community. The capacity to realize this was developing well and focused on success. A shared vision had begun to embed across the school. All teachers were very committed to the improvement goals set by the leadership team. | |

| | Overall |
|--|-------------|
| Self-evaluation and improvement planning | Outstanding |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school displayed a very strong capacity and commitment to ongoing improvement. Significant effort had gone into addressing the recommendations from last year, with some success in enhancing the scientific skills of young children. Despite the efforts, teaching and learning quality in Arabic and Islamic Education remained inconsistent. Nevertheless, teachers in these subjects were beginning to develop their practice in line with the expectations of the school's leaders. An excellent professional development culture supported teachers in acquiring new skills in inquiry, ongoing assessment strategies and the use of technology for teaching and learning. The school had established further priorities to extend these strategies to every grade level and to evaluate students' progress as part of the teachers' own appraisals. The school was aware of the need to develop a more personalized curriculum to meet the needs of students in Arabic and Islamic Education, particularly in the Elementary and Middle Schools. | |

| | Overall |
|--|-------------|
| Parents and the community | Outstanding |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents were very involved in the life of the school. They were welcomed in every phase and made valuable contributions to their children's learning experiences. For example, they played a positive part in developing specific aspects of reading programs. Most school communications promoted a feeling of care and concern from the leaders and teachers. Specific communications demonstrated teachers' openness and supportive comments to parents regarding their children. The reporting of students' progress, as well as parent/teacher conferences, was varied in style, content, and frequency across the phases. However, parents acknowledged the quality of the communication and its usefulness in understanding their children's progress. Parents of children with special educational needs appreciated the clear messages about targets and the supportive suggestions. The school's parent association supported many school-wide activities in an effort to increase parental engagement. Student involvement in community service included an extensive variety of activities. The school was involved extensively with the local community, including links with charitable agencies, fundraising, providing for the disadvantaged in the community and taking part in recycling activities. | |

| | Overall |
|--|-------------|
| Governance | Outstanding |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors were very supportive of the school's vision. They had the highest expectations for leaders and teachers, although this was not yet resulting in benefits for students in Arabic and Islamic Education. • Excellent promotion of the vision for the school was leading the community to better educational outcomes for students. There was clear capacity and willingness to learn together to make the school even more effective. • Governors and leaders worked well together to ensure the safety of the campus. They recognized the need to upgrade the school facilities systematically to support the high level of education offered to students. • Governors and leaders were closely aligned in their desire to further the vision of a school built on strong professional expectations and a clear, positive communication culture. | |

| | Overall |
|---|-------------|
| Management, staffing, facilities and resources | Outstanding |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school was effectively and efficiently managed. Procedures and routines were well thought out and implemented. Procedures were altered quickly when a need arose. • Sufficient staff were employed to keep class sizes low and to provide learning support where needed. Staff were highly qualified and trained for a US curriculum school. • Premises were well designed and supported learning activities well. Facilities for the program of physical education were excellent, including a track field with artificial padding, two swimming pools and large indoor sports areas. • Library and resource areas were of a high quality. The libraries contained a large number of books in English, and there were more than 600 books and periodicals in Arabic in the middle and high school library. The school was well equipped with modern technology. However, the prayer room was too small. | |

What are the views of the Principal, parents, teachers and students?

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

| Responses to the surveys | | | |
|--|------------------|-----|------------|
| Responses received | Number | | Percentage |
|  Parents* | This year | 202 | 12% |
| | Last year | 342 | 15% |
|  Teachers | 64 | | 33% |
|  Students | 109 | | 23% |

- Responses to the surveys were low. Only about a tenth of parents and under a quarter of students responded. A third of the teachers responded.
- Parents were very positive about the school's provision for their children. They appreciated the commitment and skills of the teachers. However, some concerns were expressed by a few parents regarding the progress their children made in Arabic and Islamic Education. Nevertheless, almost all parents who responded said they thought their children were safe, supported in their learning and aware of what was expected. Almost all supported the new leaders in the school, whose visibility and communication style were much valued.
- Teachers were also very positive. They were pleased about the professional learning culture that had been established and appreciated the high expectations made of the staff.
- Students expressed strong satisfaction with the teaching across the subjects and felt supported in their learning.

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

What happens next?

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

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

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

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

How to contact us

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