

**DUNECREST AMERICAN SCHOOL
US/IB CURRICULUM**

**INSPECTION REPORT
2021-2022**


























GOOD



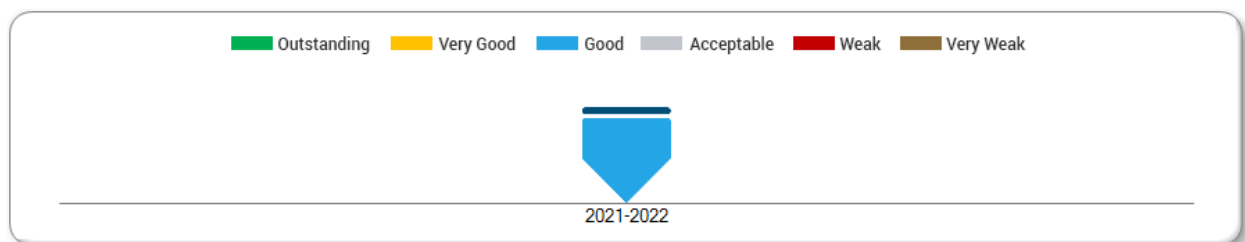
Contents

| | |
|---|----------|
| Contents..... | 2 |
| School Information | 3 |
| Summary of Inspection Findings 2021-2022 | 4 |
| Overall School Performance..... | 6 |
| Main Inspection Report | 8 |

School Information

| | | |
|---------------------|---|------------------------|
| General Information |  Location | Al Barari |
| |  Opening year of School | 2018 |
| |  Website | www.esoleducation.com |
| |  Telephone | 971045087444 |
| |  Principal | Jeffrey Sidney Smith |
| |  Principal - Date appointed | 8/1/2021 |
| |  Language of Instruction | English |
| |  Inspection Dates | 21 to 24 February 2022 |
| Students |  Gender of students | Boys and girls |
| |  Age range | 3-20 |
| |  Grades or year groups | KG 1-Grade 12 |
| |  Number of students on roll | 515 |
| |  Number of Emirati students | 38 |
| |  Number of students of determination | 69 |
| |  Largest nationality group of students | US |
| Teachers |  Number of teachers | 61 |
| |  Largest nationality group of teachers | USA |
| |  Number of teaching assistants | 15 |
| |  Teacher-student ratio | 1:8 |
| |  Number of guidance counsellors | 2 |
| |  Teacher turnover | 14% |
| Curriculum |  Educational Permit/ License | US |
| |  Main Curriculum | US/IB |
| |  External Tests and Examinations | MAP/IBDP |
| |  Accreditation | MSACS |

School Journey for DUNECREST AMERICAN SCHOOL



Summary of Inspection Findings 2021-2022

The overall quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The section below summarizes the inspection findings for students' outcomes, provision and leadership.

Students Outcomes

- Overall students' achievement has improved over time. There is a close association in English and mathematics with measured potential in cognitive tests. There are fewer observable gains in Islamic Education and Arabic. In Arabic as an additional language, students in the Elementary school show improving trends. Across the school, a particular strength is students' ability to explain their thinking and learning to others.
- Students show a high degree of self-discipline and responsibility for their own learning. Their relationships are very positive, with fellow students and teachers. They consistently demonstrate mutual respect and appreciation. Students have opportunities to learn in new ways in many classes, as they predict, try out ideas and share their conclusions.

Provision for learners

- Teachers are skilled in using different strategies to promote learning, particularly in the Elementary school. They maintain high expectations and create opportunities for active learning. Teachers' use of questioning to promote thinking is strong. Teachers know their students well. They consistently adapt lessons to address the needs of all groups, including students of determination.
- Most teachers are skilled in delivering the United States (US) curriculum and the International Baccalaureate Diploma [IBDP] in High School. They create lessons which link well to the content and expected skills. Classes for IBDP in Grades 11 and 12 match curriculum expectations well. In Islamic Education and Arabic, lessons are at an earlier stage of curriculum development. Review of the curriculum has led to the addition of enhancements to motivate students and accelerate learning.
- The school offers a protective environment, with appropriate attention given to students' emotional as well as physical well-being. The buildings are new, with elevators and wheelchair access. The setting is safe and cheerful. Care and support of students is a significant strength of the school, resulting in high morale and good behavior in all phases.

Leadership and management

- The new director has made a smooth transition and maintained a positive school environment. The school has a strong senior leadership team, which promotes a clear vision for next steps in the school's development. Leaders have successfully welcomed a large intake of new students and made appropriate adjustments to ensure that staffing and other practical matters have been managed well.

The best features of the school:

- The level of students' engagement, self-responsibility and initiative, contributing towards their positive behavior and enabling them to try new challenges;
- The school's concern for the well-being of teachers, staff and students; the inclusive ethos of the school, and the mutual respect between teachers and students;
- The commitment and dedication of teachers and leaders;
- The relationships and communication with parents and parents' support for the school;
- The wide range of materials and resources to support learning.








Key Recommendations:

- Develop a whole school awareness of the UAE national priorities and embed them in plans at all levels.
- Bring the standard of attainment and progress in Islamic Education, and Arabic, up to the level of performance in other subjects.
- Ensure that the scientific method is embedded across the upper phases to enable students to make predictions, evaluate data, generate hypotheses and draw reasoned conclusions.
- Maintain a constant awareness of, and address promptly, any potential health and safety matters that may arise.

Overall School Performance

Good

1. Students' Achievement

| | | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|---|------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|  <p>Islamic Education</p> | Attainment | Not applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| | Progress | Not applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
|  <p>Arabic as a First Language</p> | Attainment | Not applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| | Progress | Not applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
|  <p>Arabic as an Additional Language</p> | Attainment | Not applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| | Progress | Not applicable | Good | Acceptable | Acceptable |
|  <p>Language of instruction</p> | Attainment | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable |
| | Progress | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable |
|  <p>English</p> | Attainment | Good | Good | Good | Good |
| | Progress | Good | Good | Good | Good |
|  <p>Mathematics</p> | Attainment | Good | Good | Good | Good |
| | Progress | Good | Good | Good | Good |
|  <p>Science</p> | Attainment | Good | Good | Good | Good |
| | Progress | Good | Good | Good | Good |

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

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

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|---|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| Personal development | Very good | Very good | Very good | Very good |
| Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures | Good | Good | Good | Good |
| Social responsibility and innovation skills | Good | Very good | Very good | Very good |

3. Teaching and assessment

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

4. Curriculum

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|--------------------------------------|------|------------|--------|------|
| Curriculum design and implementation | Good | Good | Good | Good |
| Curriculum adaptation | Good | Good | Good | Good |

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

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|--|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection/ safeguarding | Good | Good | Good | Good |
| Care and support | Very good | Very good | Very good | Very good |

6. Leadership and management

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

For further information regarding the inspection process, please look at [UAE School Inspection Framework](#)

Main Inspection Report

1. Students' Achievement

Islamic Education

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|------------|----------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Attainment | Not applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Progress | Not applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

- Across all phases, students achieve similar achievement levels in the key areas of Islamic Education. Non-Arab students make better progress from their starting points. Language barriers limit the progress of Arab students.
- Skills of recitation and memorization from the Holy Qur'an are well developed in the Elementary and lower middle phases. In general, concepts are appropriately linked with real-life situations across all phases. The illustration of Islamic concepts and rulings, and guidelines from verses and the Hadeeth, are underdeveloped.
- Students' notebooks reflect extensive and varied exercises in the application of Islamic concepts. However, critical thinking and problem-solving skills are still below expected levels.

For Development:

- Improve consistency in the links between key Islamic concepts and real life.
- Enhance critical thinking and problem-solving through well-differentiated learning objectives.

Arabic as a First Language

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|------------|----------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Attainment | Not applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Progress | Not applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

- Students' achievement in the Elementary school is better than in the Middle and High schools. Middle school students' progress is slower due to the inadequate analysis of information on attainment to focus on the development of language skills.
- In the Middle and High schools, reading skills are underdeveloped. Students can write well-organized responses to different topics and ideas. The use of standard Arabic in conversations is generally strong. Elementary students express themselves using simple statements. Rhetoric and grammar are underdeveloped.
- Teachers use various strategies in teaching Arabic, and that reflects positively in students' notebooks. However, they do not always implement appropriately differentiated approaches to meet all students' needs and abilities.

For Development:

- Use information gained from assessments to improve teaching, and to provide different tasks and learning objectives to meet the different needs and abilities of all students.
- Improve all language skills through consistent practice at all levels.

Arabic as an Additional Language

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|------------|----------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Attainment | Not applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Progress | Not applicable | Good | Acceptable | Acceptable |

- Younger students make better progress than the older students. They respond well to the Arabic language and use it in different contexts appropriate to their age. Listening and speaking skills are well developed across all phases.
- Students express themselves using basic vocabulary and simple sentence structures in the Middle and High schools.. Writing across all phases is underdeveloped, though there is a stronger picture in Grades 1 to 3.
- In the Elementary school, different approaches and varied teaching strategies accelerate students' progress. The quality of students' practice work in their notebooks, across all phases, is appropriate.

For Development:

- Improve progress in the Middle and High schools by using the information from assessment to influence starting points and teaching strategies.
- Provide different learning objectives, based on the different levels within the class, as determined by the number of years of study of Arabic as an additional language.

English

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|------------|------|------------|--------|------|
| Attainment | Good | Good | Good | Good |
| Progress | Good | Good | Good | Good |

- In the lower grades, students read and understand texts at or above the grade level standard. In the High school, research and questioning skills are better developed. Students sometimes make connections to other subject areas and to everyday contexts and experiences.
- The development of literacy in all phases is strong. Students have regular opportunities to use their writing skills to communicate their learning and to express their ideas. Not all students have well-developed skills in writing for purpose across the curriculum.
- The enriched English curriculum in all phases, combined with skillful teaching, creates confident learners who continue to develop their literacy skills across different subjects and genres.

For Development:

- Purposefully plan cross-curricular links with other subjects.
- Make reading across the curriculum a priority, ensuring that all subject teachers understand that they are also teachers of reading, which should be a focus for the whole school.

Mathematics

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|------------|------|------------|--------|------|
| Attainment | Good | Good | Good | Good |
| Progress | Good | Good | Good | Good |

- Students show a range of skills which reflect their developing ability to find solutions and to discuss their thinking when approaching math challenges or activities. They are beginning to connect their mathematical learning in different ways.
- Students use the Common Core mathematical practices well. Older students increasingly apply precision and reasoning, while younger students are developing skills to understand problems and to persevere in solving them. Older students are well prepared for IBDP or higher mathematics in the Diploma Program.
- Some new students have gaps in their mathematical understanding or experience. With sustained effort, they are improving in their skills and gaining confidence to work at solving problems successfully.

For Development:

- Foster students' independent reasoning skills, and provide opportunities for them to have regular discussions, which will strengthen their mathematical thinking.
- Ensure the appropriate building of mathematical concepts and skills in all grades, and check that gaps in new students' knowledge and understanding are quickly identified and addressed.

Science

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|------------|------|------------|--------|------|
| Attainment | Good | Good | Good | Good |
| Progress | Good | Good | Good | Good |

- In Kindergarten, children enjoy observing their world through, on occasion, limited experiential science activities. In the Elementary and Middle schools, students show their learning through practical applications and activities with strong cross-curricular links. All students use technology effectively to support their learning,
- High school students enjoy the challenge of more complex science, including opportunities to discuss and explain ideas. Their confidence and understanding of scientific concepts are developing well. However, insufficient regular engagement in investigative practical work delays the development of strong practical and inquiry skills.
- Science taught through real world contexts supports good achievement. A good focus on reading and precise scientific vocabulary helps progress. Improving language skills allow students better access to the science curriculum.

For Development:

- In all phases, lay the foundation for the application of the scientific method, at age-appropriate levels, and consistently create opportunities for students to apply the linguistic skills they gain in other subjects, to predict, evaluate, explore and conclude.

Learning Skills

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

- Students enjoy their learning as they gain a good range of skills across all subjects and phases. In Kindergarten, as children's skills develop, they strengthen their independent learning skills.
- Throughout, there is positive interaction and collaboration. Respect for fellow students and teachers is consistently evident. A family atmosphere enhances learning. Skills in technology and research are intrinsic to learning. The ability to analyze online information critically and to reference sources accurately is developing.
- Students communicate confidently and engage in lively discussion. They know their own strengths and weaknesses. They are clear about what they need to do to improve. The use of real-life contexts to solve problems frequently involves connections between different strands of learning.

For Development:

- Assist students to develop research skills and enable them to analyze, interpret information and record their sources of information

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

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|----------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| Personal development | Very good | Very good | Very good | Very good |

- Across all phases, students are self disciplined. They form strong relationships with each other and with their teachers. They are fully aware of their choices regarding healthy living habits. They understand the positive impact of food, sports, and lifestyle.
- Students of all age groups express a high sense of responsibility for their fellow students and for their future. They appreciate feedback from teachers and take full advantage of such feedback to develop their performance.
- The school has taken effective measures to ensure the development of students' personal and social skills and has effectively fostered a culture of respect and acceptance.

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

- Students across all phases have a clear appreciation how Islamic values influence UAE society. They believe that these values are an essential component of the diverse fabric of the country.
- Students are involved in a wide range of cultural activities which reflect their understanding and appreciation of the heritage and culture of UAE.
- Students show a deep understanding, awareness and appreciation of their own and other world cultures. They believe that diversity is a path to openness and to gaining new experiences.

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|---|------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| Social responsibility and innovation skills | Good | Very good | Very good | Very good |

- In all phases, students plan and implement sustainable development initiatives such as, Project Maji, which enables people in Kenya and Uganda to have access to clean water. The majority of older students commit fifteen hours of their time to the National Honor Service.
- Students have a strong environmental awareness and demonstrate very good care for the planet. They understand sustainable goals and how to promote them. Students in Grade 6 joined one million students across the globe to develop solar power in schools.
- Older students volunteer willingly and welcome opportunities to take on responsibilities. The Student Council has raised money and collected donations of food and blankets for an animal shelter which had been swamped with unwanted pets after the recent pandemic.

For Development:

- Strengthen students' depth of understanding of Islamic values, and of the heritage and culture of the UAE.

3. Teaching and assessment

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

- Teaching is good across phases, but is more consistently so in the Elementary school. Teachers know their subjects well and teach with confidence. They create a positive learning environment. Most teachers understand how young people learn, use diverse strategies and plan an interesting range of activities.
- Skillful questioning encourages students to reflect on their own understanding. Teachers adapt their planning well to meet the needs of all students, including students of determination. They provide effective support and challenge to keep students interested and motivated.
- Teachers give students time to think. Students are trained to become reflective, independent learners. Teachers use technology and other resources well to help students to develop collaboration, discussion and independence. In the better lessons, teachers incorporate critical thinking, problem-solving and research.

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|------------|------|------------|--------|------|
| Assessment | Good | Good | Good | Good |

- Internal assessment processes are consistent. They are linked to the curriculum standards for each grade. Internal assessment results are higher than the fall MAP external assessment. MAP and CAT4 are used effectively to benchmark students' academic outcomes and to compare expectations to potential.
- Information gained from assessments is analyzed well. Clear information about students' progress as individuals and groups is communicated to all teachers. It is detailed and accurate. Teachers are well trained in its use.
- Most teachers have good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of individual students. They provide personalized support and challenge. Oral feedback is strong, helpful, and constructive. Peer- and self-assessment are not yet applied systematically. The use of standardized assessment rubrics is developing.

For Development:

- Ensure that information gained from internal assessment is more closely aligned to curriculum grade level standards and is reliable and valid.
- Use the MAP and international assessment data to identify strengths and gaps for individual students and address these gaps through specific and targeted actions.

4. Curriculum

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|--------------------------------------|------|------------|--------|------|
| Curriculum design and implementation | Good | Good | Good | Good |

- The school curriculum prioritizes the application of knowledge and skills through small group work and project-based learning. Younger students are engaged in simple inquiry. Older students engage in higher level skills. The IBDP curriculum is offered alongside the US High School Diploma for students in Grades 11 and 12. Both follow the appropriate licensing requirements and offer students successful further education pathways.
- Careful and regular curriculum review has led to more rigorous learning opportunities for all, resulting in enthusiastic, engaged and ambitious learners. Cross-curricular links are developing.
- 'Springboard' has been effectively introduced in the upper grades. In the Elementary school, several enrichment programs successfully promote speaking and reading skills.

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|-----------------------|------|------------|--------|------|
| Curriculum adaptation | Good | Good | Good | Good |

- Teachers know their students well. They use information from assessments effectively to identify gaps in how students are learning. They make appropriate adaptations across all phases to address the needs of almost all groups of students. However, this is less evident in Islamic Education and Arabic.
- Teachers and leaders have a strong understanding of curriculum standards and use additional resources effectively, resulting in enrichment and challenge in most lessons. Links with Emirati culture and UAE society are not as well developed or appropriately embedded.
- The school continues to broaden the curriculum to include more electives and extra-curricular activities, taking into account the interests and talents of all groups of students.
- Children in Kindergarten 1 and 2 receive instruction in Arabic weekly.

For Development:

- Ensure that planned and appropriate differentiation influences teaching in both Islamic Education and Arabic.
- Provide more independent learning opportunities and challenge for the higher achieving students in all phases.

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

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|---|------|------------|--------|------|
| Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding | Good | Good | Good | Good |

- In all phases of the school students receive high levels of care and guidance. The school effectively protects students from all forms of bullying. Students are regularly reminded about internet safety. Safeguarding procedures are in place and known to students and staff.
- The school provides a safe, hygienic and secure environment. Supervision of students is very effective, including on school transport. The buildings are well maintained. All areas of the school are accessible for wheelchair users.
- Medical care is provided by a doctor and nurse. Secure records are meticulously maintained. During the inspection, some minor health and safety issues were identified by the team. Where possible, they were immediately rectified by the school.

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| Care and support | Very good | Very good | Very good | Very good |

- Care and support are very effectively embedded. A strong rapport exists between staff and students. Attendance is high. The behavior of almost all students is very good. Students of all ages conduct themselves with courtesy and uphold the school's high expectations.
- Students who are gifted and talented or those of determination are quickly identified by specialist staff. Their expertise ensures that the students receive personalized support. The school's wholly inclusive environment ensures that all students can flourish and make good progress.
- Students in the Middle and High schools receive high quality advice for their future careers and personal well-being. Kindergarten children, and students in the Elementary school, receive advice appropriate to their age. They know how to seek support for their well-being.

For Development:

- Maintain the identification and prompt addressing of any potential health and safety issues.

Inclusion of students of determination

| | |
|--|------|
| Provision and outcomes for students of determination | Good |
|--|------|

- The inclusion leader and champion, specialist teachers and the governor for inclusive education all provide a very strong model of an inclusive school community, where individuals of all abilities are valued. The school's admission policy and improvement plan embrace students of determination.
- The identification of students of determination is precise and consistent in all phases. The specialist team provides support and planning so that students' additional needs benefit from curricular modifications. As a result, students experience academic, social and personal success.
- Partnership with parents is a strong contributory factor in the well-being of students of determination. Parents are actively involved in developing student action plans that set out detailed strategies to support all learners. The inclusion team provides specialist advice to families.
- There is appropriate training for staff and parents to ensure effective professional practice. Students of determination have an accommodation plan or school action plan that is implemented by most class teacher in purposeful settings, alongside their fellow students.
- Progress and attainment of students is tracked and monitored against personalized academic and social targets. The school's system for measuring students' success is accurate. Most students make good progress over time. The inclusion department monitors outcomes for the full range of additional needs.

For Development:

- Investigate curricular pathways and choices to enhance the range of options available for students of determination.
- Expand the coaching program for class teachers and focus firmly on outcomes and progress.

6. Leadership and management

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

- The director and senior leadership team have a clear vision for developing the school. Valuing the strong base of learning and positive morale established since opening, they recognize the need to move forward as a larger school aiming towards excellence. Leaders show a commitment to inclusion and to developing best practices to meet the needs of all students. They demonstrate sustained effort, clear direction, perseverance, and the ability to adjust where needed.
- Leaders thoroughly understand the school's strengths and needs, due to effective self-evaluation processes. There is an equitable and systematic approach to teacher evaluation and appraisal. Clear markers for teacher expectations are based on successful teaching strategies to promote learning. School improvement, and long-term strategic plans, are based on maintaining the strengths of the school, and on adding appropriate next steps for development.
- Parents are a key part of the life of the school. They are highly supportive of the school initiatives and activities. They recognize that their views are important in planning new actions. The school seeks the opinions of parents and shares its responses to surveys across the school community. Communication is open and freely available, both in person and electronically. School reports are provided regularly, keeping parents well informed about their children's achievement.
- Governors regularly seek the views of interested parties. They have expanded stakeholder representation on the Board. They ensure that teachers, students and parents can access their Board representative, but an Advisory Council is not yet in place. Governors act appropriately to support the development of the school. However, full accountability from and responsibility for the performance of the Islamic Education and Arabic departments is underdeveloped. Governors have provided the necessary infrastructure and resources needed to adapt teaching through the uncertainties of the last two years. Governors have oversight of strategic plans. They appoint well-qualified teachers to meet their aspirations for a high-quality school.
- The management of the school is highly efficient. Staff members are appropriately qualified and deployed effectively. Facilities are of high quality and there are sufficient resources in all subjects. Regular professional development is suitably matched to the school's vision and priorities. Productive external partnerships support teachers in collaborative research and in the development of a positive learning culture within the school.

For Development:

- Assure and account for students' outcomes, especially as a matter of urgency, Islamic Education and Arabic.
- Give a greater focus to UAE national and Emirate priorities in all strategic planning and vision.
- Expand subject choices in the later grades.

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 QA.Schools@khda.gov.ae