



GEMS Wellington
Academy (Branch)

🇬🇧 Curriculum: UK/IB

Overall Rating:

Very good



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

Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum



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School information



General information	
Location	Dubai Silicon Oasis
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2011
Website	www.gemswellingtonacademy-dso.com
Telephone	045159000
Address	PO Box 49746
Principal	Michael Gernon
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	14 to 17 November 2016

Teachers / Support staff	
Number of teachers	313
Largest nationality group of teachers	British
Number of teaching assistants	167
Teacher-student ratio	1:13
Number of guidance counsellors	3
Teacher turnover	11%

Students	
Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	3-18
Grades or year groups	FS1-Year13
Number of students on roll	4308
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	N/A
Number of Emirati students	125
Number of students with SEND	396
Largest nationality group of students	Arab

Curriculum	
Educational permit / Licence	UK
Main curriculum	UK/IB / n/a
External tests and examinations	GL PTE PTM PTS SAT1&2 GCSE IGCSE IBDP IBCP
Accreditation	BSO IBO
National Agenda benchmark tests	CAT4 GL



The DSIB inspection process



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

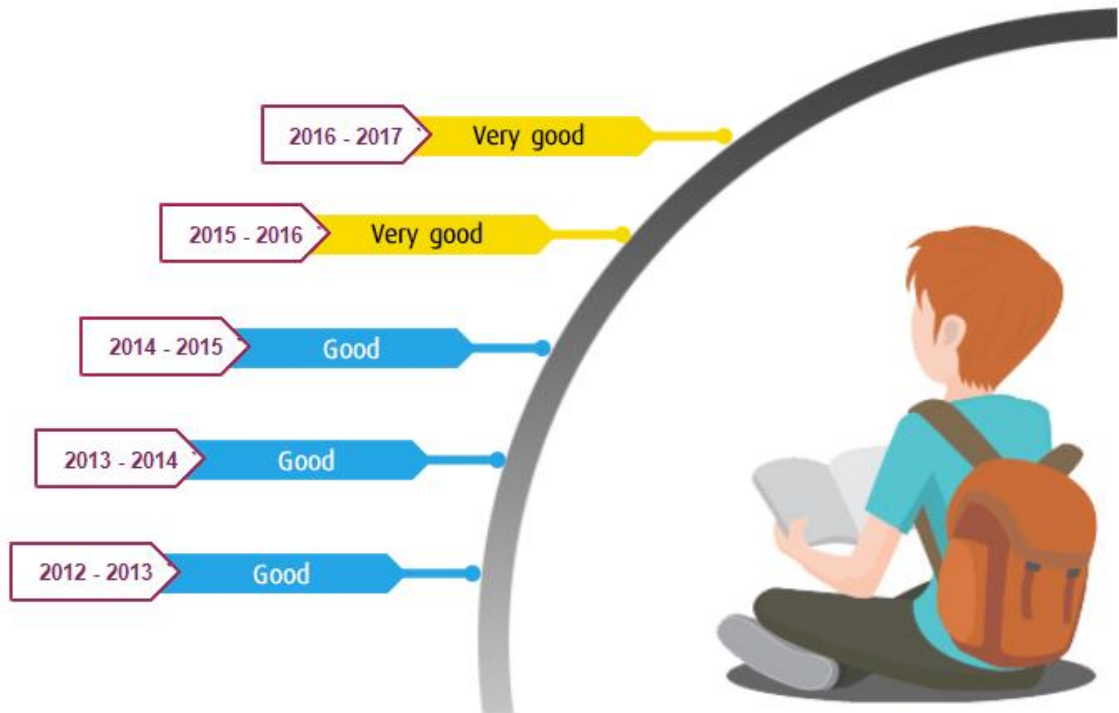
Inspection judgements are drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observation of students’ learning in lessons, review of their work, discussions with students, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and review of surveys completed by parents, teachers and students.

Judgements are made on a six-point scale

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

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

Inspection journey for GEMS Wellington Academy (Branch)



- The school has grown steadily since opening in 2011. At the time of the inspection, the school has 4,308 students aged from three to 18 years, an increase of just over 200 from the previous year. Teacher turnover at the time of the inspection is 16 per cent, which is broadly typical for an international school. The principal has been in post since 2013.
- Three previous inspections have highlighted strengths in the effectiveness of leadership and governance, the quality of the teaching and the students' learning skills, and the richness of the curriculum. The school has provided a very safe and caring learning environment where all students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), have felt secure and well supported.
- Recommendations over the same period have focused on the need for improvement in students' attainment in Arabic as an additional and first language; Islamic education; and increased consistency in teaching quality by sharing best practice. In addition, the 2015 and 2016 inspections recommended that the school ensure that all teachers use the information available about their students, in order to best meet their needs.

Summary of inspection findings 2016-2017



GEMS Wellington Academy (Branch) was inspected by DSIB from 14 to 17 November 2016. The overall quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. The section below summarises the inspection findings for each of the six performance indicators described in the framework.

- In the Foundation Stage, attainment and progress are outstanding in English, mathematics and science. In primary and secondary, attainment is very good in all three subjects, and progress is generally very good and outstanding. In post-16, attainment and progress are variable across subjects. Attainment in Islamic education and Arabic is mostly acceptable with good progress in places. Students' learning skills are outstanding in FS and Post-16, and very good in primary and secondary.
- Students' personal and social development is exceptional. Most students display excellent attitudes to work and they behave well around the school. In all phases, students' understanding of Islamic values and cultural diversity is outstanding for their age, as is their sense of social responsibility and environmental awareness.
- Teaching in FS is outstanding. Engaging activities ensure that children make a strong start to their education. Elsewhere, teaching is very good, although quality is not as consistent. Most teaching takes account of students' needs and offers appropriate challenge. In Islamic education and Arabic, teaching is more varied and sometimes progress is reduced. Across phases, assessment information is used well to track students' development.
- The curriculum is rich and varied, and designed to develop a range of learning skills as well as knowledge and understanding. The school successfully modifies the curriculum to meet the needs of all groups, including those with SEND.
- Students are very well cared for, and supported in their personal and academic development. They are safeguarded by a robust child protection policy and they respond well to the school's promotion of healthy lifestyles.
- Leaders set a clear vision and direction for the school's work. Leadership is widely devolved, promotes high standards, and focuses on raising students' performance. Sophisticated self-evaluation enables the leadership and the well-informed governors to identify and target the right areas for action in their improvement planning. Parents are firmly engaged with the school's work. Management is extremely efficient, and facilities and resources are of the highest quality.

What the school does best

- Students' personal development and social responsibility are exemplary
- Children in the Foundation Stage make an outstanding start
- The school provides very strong support for students with SEND, within a very caring and inclusive school environment
- The curriculum is varied and interesting, which enables students to develop strong learning skills
- Leadership at all levels is strong, committed, and promotes innovative learning approaches.

Recommendations

- Improve students' attainment in post-16 mathematics by ensuring that all teachers have access to relevant IB professional development and demonstrate the necessary knowledge and skills to support students.
- Raise students' attainment and progress in Arabic by:
 - providing sufficient quality time for students to continuously practice their writing and reading
 - providing consistent feedback on students' writing, with a focus on improving spelling, grammar and sentence structure.
- Further develop the effectiveness of teaching in Islamic education and Arabic by:
 - raising expectations of what students should achieve in these subjects after consecutive years of study
 - ensuring that pace and challenge of lessons are appropriate and meet the needs of students
 - ensuring that activities engage students more
 - applying more rigorous and realistic methods of evaluating students' progress over time.
- Continue to improve assessment by:
 - completing the re-alignment of the internal processes to accommodate the changes in the curriculum
 - ensuring that all leaders and teachers make the best use of data from international benchmarking assessments.

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 Parameter benchmarks meets expectations in English, mathematics and science.
- The school meets the registration requirements for the National Agenda Parameter.
- Senior leaders, and relevant administrative staff, have been trained and information disseminated. The analysis and interpretation of the tests has been shared with relevant teams, and strategies developed to support students. Next steps have been discussed with middle leaders, subject coordinators and teachers, who have contributed to the well-structured plan. Teachers in GL Progress Test subjects have a working knowledge of the data.
- The curriculum is matched to the National Agenda parameter requirements. There is a focus on key areas such as application of knowledge and questioning. The school is further developing its strategies to promote independent learning skills; research and enquiry; and problem solving through the application of learning to real world problems. .
- The school has offered teachers training to develop students' creative and critical thinking and the use of higher order questioning. Lesson plans comprise a competency focus, such as collaboration, curiosity or critical thinking. Teachers use Bloom's Taxonomy and Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory to develop awareness and understanding. Planning takes account of the need to challenge students and develop their capacity to ask 'why' and 'how' questions.
- Students are regularly informed of their summative assessments results and consequent targets, including any National Agenda Parameter tests. From Foundation Stage, children are encouraged to develop digital literacy with access to a range of resources both within their class and a technology room. Students across all phases are very confident users of learning technologies, with access to a 'blended learning' area and online courses.

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

Innovation in Education

The UAE Vision 2021 sets the aspiration for the UAE to be among the most innovative nations in the world. The National Innovation Strategy sets the context for 'innovation' and 'innovative leadership' and provides a basis for evaluating schools in order to deliver a world-class education for all children in the UAE.









Promoting a culture of innovation:

- Students demonstrate strong creative and independent skills and are confident users of learning technologies. Reflection on learning is less developed. Students take the initiative in a wide range of activities, especially in the diploma programmes. Blended learning and enrichment time engages and motivates students. Through effective strategic planning, leaders have developed links with various external institutions, both in industry and higher education, providing further opportunities to develop the culture of innovation across the school.

Overall school performance

Very good

1 Students' achievement

		Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Islamic education 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable	Good	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good	Acceptable	Good
Arabic as an additional language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not applicable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good	Good	Not applicable
English 	Attainment	Outstanding	Very good	Very good ↓	Outstanding
	Progress	Outstanding	Outstanding	Very good ↓	Outstanding
Mathematics 	Attainment	Outstanding	Very good	Very good	Acceptable
	Progress	Outstanding	Very good	Very good	Good
Science 	Attainment	Outstanding	Very good	Very good	Good ↓
	Progress	Outstanding	Outstanding ↑	Very good	Very good
		Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Learning skills		Outstanding	Very good	Very good	Outstanding

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Outstanding	Outstanding ↑	Outstanding	Outstanding
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Very good	Very good	Very good
Assessment	Outstanding	Very good	Very good	Very good

4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum design and implementation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Curriculum adaptation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Care and support	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding


6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership	Outstanding			
School self-evaluation and improvement planning	Outstanding ↑			
Parents and the community	Outstanding			
Governance	Outstanding			
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding			



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	Outstanding	Outstanding
Mathematics	Outstanding	Outstanding
Science	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Children demonstrate their English speaking and listening skills through role-play and practical activities. In FS1, children recognise initial sounds and are able to blend these together and decode simple words. In FS2, stories such as 'Three Billy Goats Gruff' provide the stimulus for children to develop their skills by listening accurately, anticipating events and responding with comments. Higher attaining children are beginning to write in short narrative sentences using appropriate grammar and descriptive words. They are able to read simple texts with fluency and expression.
- In mathematics, children quickly develop a good grasp of number concepts. They consolidate and practice their skills in understanding and application through activities such as shopping and number games. Children in FS1 are able to add numbers, count securely beyond 10, and apply real world examples to the use of one-digit numbers. In FS2, children are introduced to measurement, and are able to explain which item is heavier, while using bucket scales. All children skilfully use technology to enhance their understanding and application of numeracy skills.
- In science, children develop early investigative skills regarding the world around them through practical activities. In FS1, they can sort and classify animals according to where they live, and they are able to talk about the differences. They develop skills of observation as they study the similarities and differences across a range of materials. All children in FS develop outstanding enquiry and exploration skills as a result of an imaginative learning environment.

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

- In Islamic education, most students are working at levels that are in line with curriculum expectations. In lessons and recent work, they make expected progress in relation to appropriate learning objectives. Students demonstrate acceptable levels of understanding and knowledge of Islamic laws such as Salat Al Jama'ah and Ablution. They memorise prescribed verses of the Holy Qur'an, and the recitation skills for most, are age-appropriate. Data show that students studying Islamic education in Arabic perform better than those studying the subject in English.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students demonstrate knowledge and understanding that are in line with expectations. They develop listening skills at an appropriate pace and can follow a story and dialogue confidently. The majority manage to use modern standard Arabic when answering questions, but less-confident students resort to colloquial Arabic or English. Most students make strong progress in reading, but writing skills vary. More able students develop their vocabulary for expressing ideas, and experiment with different phrases. Most students' writing contains basic spelling, and grammatical errors.
- In Arabic as an additional Language, most students are working at levels in line with the curriculum standards. In lessons and recent work, the majority of students make better than expected progress, as measured against learning objectives. Students have adequate listening and speaking skills. They are able to read familiar words and understand key vocabulary in lessons. Reading comprehension and writing skills are less developed. Most students depend on translation most of the time.
- In English, most students develop a range of knowledge that is well above curriculum expectations. Reading and comprehension skills of the large majority of students develop very well. Younger students have a secure understanding of letters and the sounds they make, and are able to read proficiently. In writing, students show increasing accuracy in spelling and grammar. Most are able to put their ideas into a sequence that makes sense, and can show links between sentences. Speaking and listening skills develop particularly well. As a result of very good teaching, all groups of students make outstanding progress.
- In the external benchmark tests in mathematics, over two thirds of students attain above age-expected levels. According to internal assessments, by the end of the phase students show an understanding of numeracy that is well above curriculum standards. They can calculate the area and perimeter of compound shapes, and apply these techniques in the solution of real-world problems. They are comfortable in estimating and then calculating the volume of cubes and cuboids.


- Attainment in science, measured against the school's curriculum standards, shows that the large majority of students are above age-related standards. Students make rapid progress from the early primary years where they begin to develop appropriate enquiry and investigation skills, through to the end of primary, where they can make insightful predictions about the likely outcomes of investigations they plan and carry out. They are able to clearly express their ideas and understanding using the correct scientific language. Attainment over the past three years is consistently above curriculum standards and comparable to international benchmarks.

Secondary		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Acceptable	Good
Arabic as a first language	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as an additional language	Acceptable	Good
English	Very good ↓	Very good ↓
Mathematics	Very good	Very good
Science	Very good	Very good

- In Islamic education, most students' knowledge is in line with curriculum standards. They demonstrate better than expected progress in the application of their knowledge to real-life situations. They make solid progress in learning the main facts of the topics covered, but do not yet sufficiently support their understanding of a topic with appropriate verses of the Holy Qur'an or Hadeeth. Improvement in students' attainment is hindered by the lack of challenge provided across this phase.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students demonstrate expected levels of knowledge and understanding. Most have appropriate listening skills, but often struggle to communicate clearly and confidently using modern standard Arabic. Students often revert to using colloquial Arabic or English. Most students make steady progress in reading and their comprehension skills are mostly secure. Writing levels vary widely and while some students use minimal words to answer questions, others are more elaborate and expressive. Basic spelling mistakes and incorrect sentence structures are a common feature in writing.
- In Arabic as an additional Language, most students are working at levels in line with curriculum standards. In lessons and recent work, the majority make better than expected progress as measured against learning objectives. Their listening skills are in line with expected curriculum outcomes. Most students can carry on short conversations and talk about familiar topics. They can read short texts and identify the main points. Students are able to write about a range of familiar topics. However, their work contains frequent spelling and syntax errors. Most students depend on translation for much of the time.
- In English, the large majority of students develop a range of knowledge that is well above curriculum expectations, and, as a result, they are very successful in external examinations. Over the last three years, the attainment of the large majority of students is consistently above national and international standards. Students are able to make good use of inference and deduction when analysing texts. They are particularly adept at writing extended reports that convey their ideas effectively. Students can express their viewpoints with clarity and respond thoughtfully to others'

views. Progress for all groups is very good but fluctuates as students move through the secondary phase.

- In mathematics, the large majority of students attain above expected levels in GCSE and in external benchmark tests. By the end of the phase, students apply appropriate mathematical techniques to compare two pieces of data and produce a report on their findings. They are able to draw and interpret a cumulative frequency graph and interpret key information from a histogram. Student progress is well above expected levels with no discernible differences in the achievements of different groups of students.
- Attainment and progress in science, measured against curriculum standards, shows that a large majority of students are above age-related standards. Students are actively engaged in their learning and are developing more effective enquiry and investigation skills. They are able to clearly express their ideas and understanding using the correct scientific terms, and can relate their learning to real-life situations as they make connections between subject areas. Attainment over the past three years is consistently above curriculum standards and comparable to international benchmarks.

 Post-16		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language	Acceptable	Good
Arabic as an additional language	Not applicable	Not applicable
English	Outstanding	Outstanding
Mathematics	Acceptable	Good
Science	Good ↓	Very Good

- In Islamic education, most students' factual knowledge is in-line with curriculum expectations. They are able to demonstrate their understanding by applying their learning to real-life situations, but do not sufficiently support their answers or points of view with verses from the Holy Qur'an and Hadeeth. Students' recitation skills are in line with expectations.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students' knowledge and understanding are in line with expectations. They make better than expected progress in their listening and comprehension skills. They can follow a speech held mostly in modern standard Arabic and form views that reflect a deeper understanding of the content. However, many do not fluently elaborate on their views using correct sentence structures, and often switch to colloquial Arabic to express their points of view. Writing levels vary widely.
- In English, most students develop a range of knowledge that is well above curriculum expectations and as a result they are very successful in their IBDP examinations. In their writing, students are able to analyse how literary characters differ from each other and how they portray emotions. They are able to read, reflect and discuss in depth how Shakespeare used dramatic devices in his writing. They can analyse adverts and pictures to understand how companies project ideas in order to sell goods. As a result of high quality teaching, students make outstanding progress.

- In mathematics, the post-16 cohort entered for the IB Diploma in 2016 was few in number. At IB higher level, students attained results in line with curriculum standards, as did those in the mathematical studies group. Attainment in lessons mirrors external assessment results. Students are able to describe and identify an arithmetic sequence, calculate both the n th term and the sum of an arithmetic series. Students at the higher level can manipulate vector expressions and apply these to complex geometric problems. Progress against starting points both for female and male students is above expectations.
- In post-16 science, the majority of students have the knowledge, skills and understanding to achieve a good or better level of attainment, although this is not as evident in chemistry. Students have developed effective investigation skills through the required practical components of their science classes, and most are making better than expected progress. They are able to express their ideas and understandings clearly and when challenged are able to justify these understandings with sound reasoning.


	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Learning skills	Outstanding	Very good	Very good	Outstanding

- Students are eager to learn, are actively involved in their development and show increasing skills as learners and assessors of their own learning. They respond well to feedback from teachers and peers, and work effectively in pairs and in small groups. The questions they ask show that they are making important connections between new learning and what they already know.
- Students communicate effectively in groups and as individuals, and are able to interact with purpose and work towards completing tasks. This is a strong feature in most subjects, when encouraged by teachers. Students develop a high level of skills as independent thinkers and learners, by contributing ideas and listening to one another. Students have learned to listen to other students' views and to respond to them thoughtfully.
- In lessons, students make meaningful connections between subject topics and the real world. For example, in mathematics, when applying scale measurement to a map of Dubai. Students are successful in applying their skills to problems that reflect real-life situations. They make connections between their learning in many different parts of the curriculum.
- Students are innovative in their project work, particularly in primary, secondary and post-16 science lessons, where they can apply research skills by using books, internet research and gathering information to solve problems. In the most successful lessons, students are able to reach accurate and appropriate conclusions, and confidently present what they have found out. However, this is not so strong in mathematics.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students in all phases demonstrate responsible attitudes to learning and are highly motivated. Children in the FS are confident, happy and enjoy their learning. Many students participate in the extensive, varied and exciting opportunities that the school makes available. Students' attitudes have a positive impact on their learning and contribute to their significant personal and academic achievements.
- Students' behaviour is exemplary. They are self-confident, respectful and demonstrate pride in their learning and towards the school. Relationships are highly positive. The school's house system reinforces students' sense of identity and belonging. They contribute to the life of the school beyond the classroom as part of the wider community. Instances of bullying are extremely rare.
- Students display empathy towards each other and are self-aware. Consequently, relationships are strong. This has a positive impact on learning, because students support and encourage each other in lessons. Students enjoy sharing their successes and achievements. The school promotes active participation and engagement in the extensive opportunities available to students, and values the ways in which they support each other and contribute to school life.
- The school actively promotes health and well-being, and encourages students to consider the benefits of healthy eating and active lifestyles. As a result, students are well informed and make sensible choices about staying safe, active and healthy. Mindfulness is a recent initiative that contributes to students' mental well-being and self-esteem.
- Almost all students maintain a consistently high level of attendance, although this is lower in post-16. Students are almost always punctual to lessons. Attendance and punctuality is routinely monitored and the school sets high expectations in this regard. This is well communicated to students. No time is wasted as students move efficiently around the school's extensive facilities.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Outstanding	Outstanding 	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Across all phases, students demonstrate an excellent understanding and appreciation of Islamic values. These are recognised as an essential part of the classroom environment and reinforced throughout the curriculum. Students celebrate different Islamic occasions such as Ramadan, Eid, and Hajj. Moreover, exploring a weekly Islamic value and introducing the "Culture Ambassador" role and "Culture Chronicle" publication play a major part in raising students' awareness of Islamic culture.

- Students have many opportunities to extend their knowledge and appreciation of the UAE culture and heritage. They actively celebrate UAE cultural events such as participating in the UAE Flag Day parade in the presence of HH Sheikh Mohamed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, and assembling a human flag during National Day. The school has launched a programme of various cultural activities, such as visits to museums and heritage sites in order to enhance students' understanding of the UAE culture.
- Students demonstrate excellent understanding of their own and other world cultures through a range of activities. The International Day, held annually, offers an opportunity to appreciate different nationalities and cultures that are represented amongst the student body. Overseas trips, for example, to the USA, Thailand, and Japan, are organised to enable students to experience and further understand these cultures.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students take pride in being part of the school community. They enjoy taking responsibility and they initiate projects, contribute to, and volunteer in the local community. Students across phases actively organise fund-raising activities for local charities. Pastoral ambassadors within the school have roles that include peer mentoring, resolving conflict and supervising behaviour. They support younger students through a highly effective cross-phase mentoring programme.
- Students have a very positive work ethic, acting as role models and promoting a caring environment. They are proud to take on leadership roles and initiate projects such as Tedx Talks and a charity week for Dubai Cares. Primary students have designed their own 'Competency Heroes' to support the competency initiative. Students initiate a wide range of personalised learning opportunities and lead conferences to promote self-esteem and reflection.
- The school has an eco-programme, with initiatives such as a 'Greenhouse Gas Audit' to raise environmental awareness. Students are actively involved in the environmental awareness projects and are keen to find ways to improve the school environment. Students take on roles of clean energy and environment ambassadors to encourage their peers to become more aware of global issues.

3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Very good	Very good	Very good

- Across all phases, teachers have secure subject knowledge and know how to adjust their teaching so that it is presented in a meaningful context for students. In FS and Primary, teachers include a wide variety of activities to meet the needs of younger learners. In Primary, Secondary and Post-16, teachers address different concepts by providing a wide range of examples to reinforce students' understanding, but this is not consistent across all subjects.

- Comprehensive planning ensures that teaching is targeted and students understand the learning expectations for each lesson. Planning follows a sequence of effective learning steps but time management in Islamic education lessons is not always effective. Teachers make very good use of varied resources and create inviting learning environments to motivate students. In FS, classrooms are multi-sensory and visibly stimulating, enhancing the learning for the younger children.
- Teachers' thoughtful questioning inspires students' curiosity, promotes critical thinking and deepens their understanding in most lessons, especially in FS. This is more variable in mathematics, Islamic education and Arabic. Teachers successfully target questioning for formative assessment and adjust lessons accordingly. Frequent opportunities for extended dialogue between students in whole class settings engage and motivate students, resulting in strong progress in the large majority of lessons.
- Teachers fully understand that students have different learning needs and almost all lessons are creatively and successfully planned. Learning tasks are differentiated ensuring that students work at the correct level of difficulty. Most students are fully engaged and appropriately challenged in lessons, particularly in English in primary and post-16. Additional support, and good use of resources, ensures the very good progress of most groups of students.
- Teachers' very good use of varied strategies promotes critical thinking and problem solving in many lessons. Frequent individual and small group learning projects effectively develop student's independence and collaboration skills. Students enthusiastically participate in theme week classes and engage in enterprising activities that provide opportunities for creativity.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Assessment	Outstanding	Very good	Very good	Very good

- Assessment systems are consistent across the school. In the FS, assessment information provides valid, reliable and comprehensive measures of children's academic, personal and social development. There is a regular schedule of formative assessments, which are linked to curriculum standards. Arabic and Islamic education departments have adopted this practice but assessment of work is sometimes over-optimistic. School leaders are now re-aligning these internal processes to accommodate changes to the National Curriculum in England.
- The school has invested in international benchmarking such as GL Progress and CAT4 cognitive ability tests for both primary and secondary phases in English, mathematics and science. Some tests have been analysed, resulting in changes to curriculum and lesson planning. Not all teachers are aware of the results of these benchmarking tests or their implications.
- Detailed assessment data are thoroughly analysed after training for both leaders and teachers. Information about students' individual and group progress is very detailed. Teachers and leaders undertake regular student tracking. An achievement monitoring process (MER) has recently been introduced in secondary, to track student progress and monitor teaching quality. Further development of CAT4 predictions is planned to more accurately identify student progress rates across grades and subjects.
- Assessment information is used effectively in most areas to modify the curriculum. Subject departments are rapidly developing strategies to ensure that teaching meets the needs of all groups of students. Sharing of good practice and collaboration is encouraged. Data is used to set targets for students and there are reliable systems to inform them of their progress against these.

- Teachers in FS have very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of individual children. Teacher assessment, student self-evaluation and improvement dialogues are effective strategies in the secondary phase. The quality of this improvement dialogue and ensuring follow up action are not yet consistent. Good practice where students critically assess their performance and contribute to setting their own targets has yet to be adopted more widely.

4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum design and implementation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The school demonstrates commitment to preparing students for their future, equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed for their next phase of education. The curriculum promotes innovation through initiatives such as blended learning approaches. The highly effective curriculum meets students' needs. It is compliant with the requirements of a broad and balanced UK curriculum and with the International Baccalaureate programme.
- The school plans an interesting, progressive and highly-structured curriculum that builds on what students already know and can do. Students benefit from its focus on the acquisition of competencies, knowledge and skills. The curriculum in Arabic and Islamic education requires more challenge and consistent engagement. Transitions between all phases are smooth, and support for students ensures their progress in learning is continuous.
- The school offers a wide choice of subjects for secondary students in GCSE and IGCSE. In post-16 there is a comprehensive range of options for students through the IB Diploma and BTEC. The enrichment programme is extensive, challenging and enjoyable. Consequently, students are provided with opportunities to realise their full academic potential as well as develop their personal interests and innate talents.
- The curriculum provides opportunities for students to transfer their skills across subjects because interdisciplinary learning is systematically planned. Students make connections in their learning and this is evident in their work.
- The school regularly reviews the curriculum and makes required adjustments to take account of curriculum changes and international expectations. Curriculum developments also take into account students' potential, needs and aspirations. The school maximises the use of innovative technology.
- The UAE social studies curriculum is taught as a discrete subject in the primary phase, and in the secondary phase from years 7 to 10. There are also learning opportunities for young children in FS. Post-16 students do not study UAE social studies. Teaching is in English and Arabic to meet students' needs. Teachers plan purposeful learning experiences and enrichment opportunities to enhance students' knowledge and understanding. There are links to other subjects through enquiry based learning. Teachers assess students through project work and written tests.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum adaptation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The curriculum meets the needs of all groups of students. Lesson plans show differentiation focusing on both input and group work. The broad ability range of students in each class is met by skilful adaptation, particularly for students with SEND, where additional support is allocated.
- Gifted and talented students are identified, and additional challenge and a range of curriculum opportunities are provided. Blended learning approaches enhance provision for students, and this innovative work has been further enhanced by the implementation of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).
- Key aspects of the UAE's culture and history are built frequently into a range of lessons, including social studies and Islamic education. Learning enquiry themes provide opportunities to study world issues and to gain understanding of other countries and cultures.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- A child protection policy is in place with designated responsibility. The staff receive ongoing training in this area. The school is aware of cyber safety and has electronic systems in place to protect students and monitor use. However, they are not sufficiently proactive in providing additional information and guidance to the whole school community. There is a central register of all adults who work with students.
- There are effective policies and procedures in place to ensure that students are kept safe. The staff have a very good understanding of their responsibilities towards the health and safety of the students. There are appropriate security measures in place. There is a very efficient school transport system provided on contract and monitored by the school. Students report that they feel safe in school.
- Health and safety procedures and records are maintained and up-to-date. Regular fire drills, evacuation and lock-down procedures take place. There are sufficient health personnel to carry out appropriate checks and to support the health needs of the school. Student health records are well-maintained. Medicines are stored securely and the nurse or duty doctor is responsible for administering medicine if necessary.

- The school premises, equipment and resources are well kept, maintained and fit for purpose. There are regular maintenance checks and embedded procedures for staff to identify additional maintenance needs. The processes are effective and efficient. There are lifts for access to all floors, in addition to stretcher seats in case of no lift access. Risk assessments are completed for all out- of-school activities.
- The school curriculum provides opportunities for all students to take part in physical activity. In addition, there are opportunities to take part in a wide range of optional extra-curricular physical activities. The school has several cafeterias each with an appropriate range of snacks and drinks. Healthy living is embedded in the taught curriculum and is also emphasised as part of the tutorial programme in the secondary school.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Care and support	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Relationships between students and all staff are exemplary. The systems used to monitor students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are very effective. The management of students' behaviour is outstanding in all parts of the school. The house system has had a very beneficial effect on positive behaviour.
- The school's approach is very successful in promoting good attendance. Punctuality is a strong feature, and, as a result of a determined approach from all leaders, there is no delay to learning at lesson changeover times.
- The management of SEND is outstanding. The key leaders show commitment and ensure that systems result in progress for all students, irrespective of need. The system of identifying students with SEND begins early, frequently before they enter the school, as a result of good links established both with parents and with feeder schools. The identification of gifted and talented students is also well established.
- The school provides outstanding support for almost all students with SEND. There are some with complex needs and the effective use of interventions by skilled staff results in strong progress by these students. Those who are gifted and talented receive a tailored curriculum and clearly differentiated work within classes. Parents feel fully informed about their children's needs and report that communication systems are positive and effective.
- The well-being and personal development of all students, both academically and pastorally, is excellent. A team of counsellors provide support for students and offers safe opportunities to discuss concerns. Students and parents are provided with accurate feedback and effective guidance and support as students move to different phases of education within the school, and, subsequently, into higher education.

Inclusion

Provision and outcomes for students with SEND

Outstanding

- The practices established by the leadership of SEND are exemplary. The skilled leadership of the department has enhanced provision over time to its present excellent position. The key staff are committed, enthusiastic and attend to every possible detail in their drive to improve progress for all students in their care.
- Identification procedures are well-established, and ensure that, as far as possible, no student is missed. Staff liaise with feeder schools and involve students in the transition process, and, as a result, students' needs are identified as soon as they begin in FS1. Once in the school, the students' specific needs are recorded in detail, with additional external support utilised when necessary.
- The partnership with parents is very strong. Parents report their satisfaction with the school and praise staff and the quality of provision. They appreciate the communications they have with the school.
- There is a wide range of modifications and support available. Staff ensure, through regular review, that provision is meeting a student's individual needs and, if not, make adjustments so that it does so more effectively. Staffing levels to support students are high and the training of all staff is considered to be very important to the ongoing work of the department.
- Students make outstanding progress, due to the excellent leadership of SEND; the commitment of all staff to do their best for the students in their care; and the security of the systems in place. Tracking data is used systematically to ensure that support is effective. This ensures that there is little to no achievement gap between many students with SEND and their peers.

6. Leadership and management


The effectiveness of leadership

Outstanding

- The senior leadership team, under the direction of the principal, has articulated a clear strategic direction for the school. Current improvement plans are underpinned by key aims, for example, 'To achieve a genuine desire for learning within the school and promote the value of lifelong learning within our community'. Commitment to the UAE's educational priorities is visible and widely shared.
- Leaders demonstrate a common determination to raise the quality of the students' experience through their efforts to continually develop the curriculum and the way it is taught. Sharing of best classroom practice and coaching by those most skilled, has helped establish high expectations of teaching quality. Strong leadership of the FS classes has brought about a common commitment to excellence.
- Relationships within the school are marked by mutually supportive professionalism. Communication is efficient and most staff understand exactly what is required of them. Performance management is rigorous and even the best teachers are encouraged to fine-tune their practice.

- Senior leaders effectively seek to devolve responsibility in order to maximise staff's value to the school, and to ensure that its leadership capacity is expanding. Opportunities to take responsibility by leading improvement are widely available, and initiatives such as 'digital pedagogy' or 'blended learning' enable staff to develop and share their enthusiasm for innovative approaches to teaching.
- Leaders know their school well. Through highly developed systems of reporting on performance, they monitor the quality of all aspects of its work and foster a sense of collective responsibility. Whilst contributing to the vibrancy of the school, at times, the number of initiatives can fully stretch leadership and there is a need to ensure that developments are fully understood before moving on to new challenges.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Outstanding 

- Leaders are proactive in driving forward improvement. Self-evaluation is rooted in accurate and refined analysis of information on standards and takes into account a wide range of internal and external monitoring data. There are systematic and robust processes in place to ensure that the school precisely identifies its strengths and weaknesses. This is used to inform improvement priorities.
- The school monitors the quality of teaching in all subjects. The evaluation of monitoring information is used to shape improvement plans and professional development for teachers. Leaders set high expectations and continuously pursue opportunities to raise the quality of teaching and learning. This has a positive impact on student achievement in most subjects, but developments are slower in Arabic and Islamic education.
- Students' attainment is extensively analysed. Improvement plans are highly detailed, precisely focused and based on accurate self-evaluation. They are ambitious, and promote innovation, creativity and the development of a range of learning skills. Improvement plans demonstrate commitment to the UAE national priorities. This has a positive effect on students' academic achievement and personal development.
- The school demonstrates commitment to ensuring improvements in relation to recommendations from the previous inspection. Whilst improvements have been recognised and professional development provided, these have not yet raised attainment and progress sufficiently in Arabic and Islamic education.

Partnerships with parents and the community

Outstanding

- Parents are very supportive of school leaders and play a vital role in their children's education. Their views are valued and they actively participate in shaping initiatives and the continuous development of the school.
- Communication between the school and parents is highly effective and the introduction of the new communication system is well received by parents and students. Parents highlight the introduction of the student conference days as being a very effective method of communication.

- Parents receive regular and informative reports on their children's progress and attainment. They are well informed about their children's next steps in learning and have many opportunities to meet with teachers to discuss and contribute to their children's learning journey.
- The school demonstrates a strong partnership with the community, including with other schools. Various groups within the local community have a range of opportunities to use the school's facilities, and this contributes to the consolidation of the school's place in the community.

Governance	Outstanding
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- Governance is fully inclusive of key stakeholders. The newly formed Executive Strategy Group represents diverse elements of the local community, and the Parent Council contributes strongly to the school's strategic direction. In-depth surveys ensure that the governors understand stakeholders' views, and their regular presence on-site, enables them to keep a finger on the pulse of the school. This insight is used well to steer and support further improvement.
- The school's performance is rigorously and systematically monitored at all levels and leaders are held to account against clearly agreed and appropriate criteria, including the performance and well-being of students and staff. Extensive data are made available and regularly analysed as an ongoing monitor against current targets. The governors' 'talent board' summarises the leadership potential to support the development of leadership capacity from within.
- Governors act as a critical friend to the school. They actively seek out areas for improvement and are responsive to the school's proven development needs. Significant support is offered as needed, for example, increased resourcing of specific subject areas and, most effectively, by the funding of extensive and carefully targeted professional development, whose impact is thoroughly evaluated.




Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding
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- The school runs very efficiently on a day-to-day basis and is very well-organised. Information on the website for teachers and students is regularly updated. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. Staff members know their responsibilities and carry them out efficiently.
- Staffing levels are generous and this contributes to the smooth running of the school. Teachers benefit from regular high-quality professional development, which matches the school's priorities and the teachers' own personal development needs. The staff work very well together, supporting each other in lesson planning and provision. The sharing of best practice across classes is a strong feature of the school's ethos.
- The school site provides a safe, inviting, positive learning environment to meet the needs of all students. Classrooms have ample space for resources and activities. Displays are lively and colourful, and the outstanding study spaces, including the different learning areas in the FS, support all staff in promoting students' learning and well-being.
- An excellent range of resources support teaching and learning in all phases, and this enhances the educational experience for the students. The well-stocked libraries, blended learning centres and high-quality, creative, learner-focused facilities around the school, are effectively used to facilitate students' learning.

The views of parents, teachers and senior students

The views of parents, teachers and senior students

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

Responses to the surveys		
Responses received	Number	
 Parents*	2016-2017	557
	2015-2016	386
 Teachers	202	
 Students	178	

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

- Parental comments indicate that they are very satisfied with their children's rich and varied learning experiences, but keen to see more progress and better attainment in Arabic and Islamic education.
- Those parents who responded to the survey believe that the school environment is healthy, safe and conducive to learning.
- Teachers who responded to the survey feel that they are valued, and that management recognises their hard work and contributions to the school on a daily basis.
- Students who responded to the survey, feel safe and well cared for.

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