



Al Mizhar American  
Academy School

 Curriculum: US

Overall Rating:



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

Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum



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## School information



General information	
Location	Al Mizhar, Mirdif
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2005
Website	www.americanacademy.ae
Telephone	00971-4-2887250
Address	P.O. Box 78484, 11A Street Mizhar 1, Dubai
Principal	Bridget Justen
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	5 to 8 December 2016

Teachers / Support staff	
Number of teachers	50
Largest nationality group of teachers	American
Number of teaching assistants	19
Teacher-student ratio	1:8
Number of guidance counsellors	1
Teacher turnover	14%

Students	
Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	3-18
Grades or year groups	Pre-K -Grade 12
Number of students on roll	601
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	11
Number of Emirati students	397
Number of students with SEND	31
Largest nationality group of students	Emirati

Curriculum	
Educational permit / Licence	US
Main curriculum	US
External tests and examinations	AP, SAT, PSAT
Accreditation	NEASC, CIS
National Agenda benchmark tests	MAP



## The DSIB inspection process



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

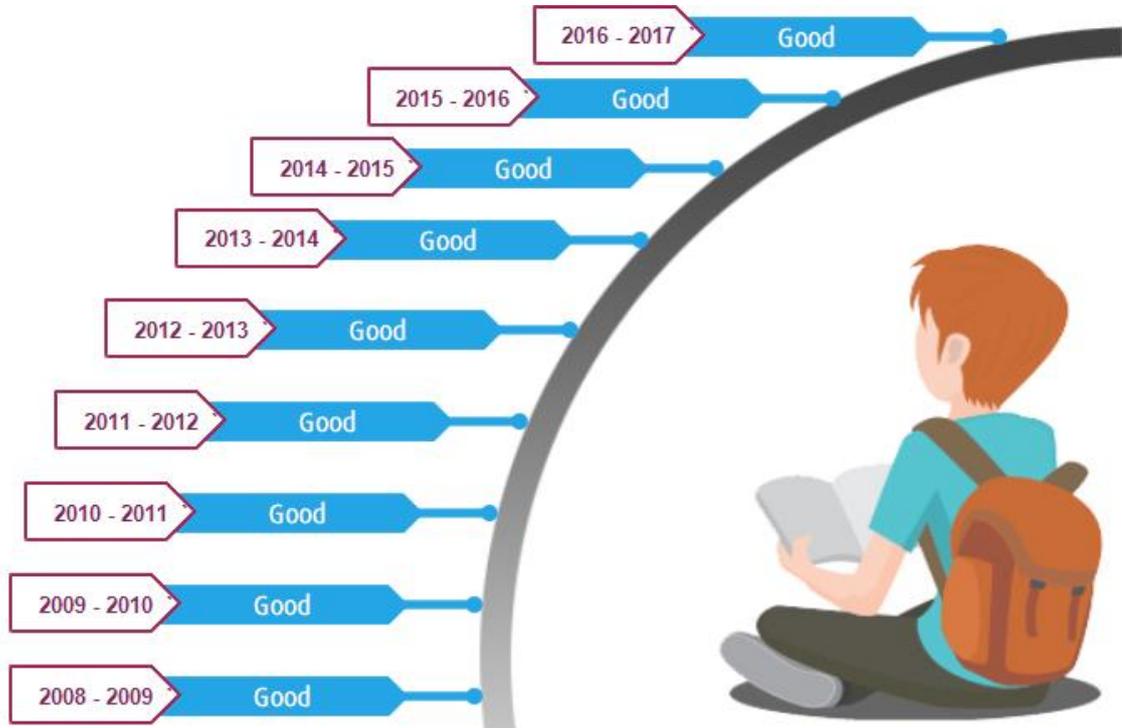
Inspection judgements are drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observation of students’ learning in lessons, review of their work, discussions with students, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and review of surveys completed by parents, teachers and students.

### Judgements are made on a six-point scale

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

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

## Inspection journey for Al Mizhar American Academy School



- Al Mizhar American Academy was established in 2005. Each year, it gives a good quality of education to boys and girls in the Kindergarten, and to girls alone in Grades 1 to 12. The girls receive a well-rounded US curriculum, enhanced by Advanced Placement courses in the high school, which prepares them well for university and their life goals.
- Students benefit from a safe and healthy environment, with clear child protection policies. There is good quality support for all students particularly for students with special educational needs and disabilities. Partnerships with parents continue to be a strength, as does students' sense of social responsibility.
- Recommendations over the past few years have included the need to improve the quality of teaching and the analyses of assessment data, to meet better the learning needs of all students. Teaching which increases the level of challenge, and which specifically builds students' critical thinking skills remains an area for improvement.

## Summary of inspection findings 2016-2017



**Al Mizhar American Academy School** was inspected by DSIB from 5 to 8 December 2016. The overall quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The section below summarises the inspection findings for each of the six performance indicators described in the framework.

- Students maintain a good level of attainment and progress across most subjects in each phase of the school. They make very good progress in English and mathematics in the Kindergarten, and in Islamic education in the high school. Achievement in Arabic as a first language is more variable, particularly in the middle and high school phases. Students' learning skills are good overall across the school although their skills in critical thinking are underdeveloped.
- Students' personal and social development is good or better. Their behavior and attitudes are mostly good with a few exceptions. Their understanding of Islamic values, their knowledge of Dubai and their care for the environment are all well-developed.
- Teaching and assessment are good overall in all phases. There are elements of good teaching across all subjects, and assessment processes are effective in many respects. The extent to which teachers provide appropriate challenge for all students is inconsistent
- The curriculum is well-established and closely aligned to the school's adopted state, with assessment processes matched to each phase of the school. There is an appropriate balance on developing students' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- The arrangements for ensuring students' health and safety are very effective. The school provides well for most students with additional needs.
- School leaders share a common vision for the school. The school's communication and relationships with parents is a strength of the school. The school is richly resourced the materials to create opportunities for students to explore their interests, particularly the newly-refurbished library.

### What the school does best

- The school enables students to achieve consistently well in all subjects in the Kindergarten and elementary phases, and in the large majority of subjects in the other phases.
- The inclusivity of the school, and the care and support for students with SEND are commendable.
- The attention given to students' health and safety is a strength of the school.
- The communication and the relationship between parents and the school are very positive.
- The school is very well-organised and resourced.

### Recommendations

- Improve students' attainment and progress in Arabic as a first language in the middle and high school by ensuring all lessons have an appropriate emphasis on the development of all language domains, particularly students' speaking and writing skills.
- Ensure that in developing students' personal and social skills, attention is given to the value of diversity and the appreciation of cultural differences.
- Improve teaching and raise student achievement by making full use of assessment information, including reliable measures of cognitive abilities, to plan work that:
  - is suitably challenging for all groups of students, particularly those capable of high achievement
  - develops higher-order and critical thinking skills
  - utilizes effective teaching strategies across all subjects.

## National Agenda Parameter



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

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

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

- The school meets the registration requirements for the National Agenda Parameter.
- Attainment as measured by the National Agenda Parameter tests meets expectations in English and is not secure in mathematics and science.
- Subject coordinators' analyses of the IBT and MAP data are basic but secure. Assessment information is used to identify weaknesses in the curriculum.
- The school is developing its basic use of results from the benchmark tests to fill in gaps in content and skills in the curriculum. For example, the secondary mathematics now includes a unit on statistics and probability, and there is a greater emphasis on developing students' reading comprehension.
- Teachers are beginning to adapt their teaching strategies to promote critical thinking, investigation and inquiry. In science, students have some opportunities to learn through investigations and inquiry-based lessons. In mathematics, some lessons include problem-solving linked to real-life examples. In English, teachers encourage self-directed learning and promote student collaboration in projects.
- Older students understand their results on the National Agenda parameter and have set their own MAP goals. They are developing their skills in research for projects and presentations.

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



Overall school performance

Good

1 Students' achievement

		KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Islamic education 	Attainment	Not applicable	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Not applicable	Good	Good	Very good ↑
Arabic as a first language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Good	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable
Arabic as an additional language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Good	Good ↑	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good	Good	Good
English 	Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Very good	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics 	Attainment	Good	Good	Good ↑	Good
	Progress	Very good ↑	Good	Good ↑	Good
Science 	Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Good ↑
	Progress	Good ↓	Good	Good	Good
Learning skills		Good	Good	Good	Good

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

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

## 3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good	Good
Assessment	Very 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	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good
Care and support	Good	Good	Good	Good

## 6. Leadership and management

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

# Main inspection report



## 1. Students' achievement

 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	Very good
Mathematics	Good	Very good ↑
Science	Good	Good ↓

- Internal assessments indicate that a majority of children are attaining above curriculum standards in all areas of literacy. In lessons and their daily work, children use their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in all subjects. This results in very good progress over time. The children regularly use their writing skills to label and write sentences for meaning and purpose.
- The knowledge and skills of the majority of children are above curriculum standards in mathematics. Their ability to use these skills in real-world applications results in very good progress from their starting points and as measured against the learning objectives of the curriculum. Assessment information and children's work indicate that most children's knowledge of number is higher than expected for their age, and they demonstrate a good understanding of measurement, geometry, addition and subtraction.
- The majority of children have secure knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts. They are aware of their environment in relation to the weather, can tell the difference between living and non-living things and can describe animal habitats. Assessment information shows that children make good progress from their starting points as they begin to realise their place in the world and their relationships to ecosystems. Their skills in inquiry and investigation are underdeveloped.

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

- In Islamic Education, internal assessments indicate that the attainment of the majority of students is above Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum expectations. In classes, students have good levels of understanding. For example, in Grade 3 students know the daily prayers and demonstrate understanding of different manners. Recitation of the Holy Qur'an is very good for a majority of students.
- In Arabic as a first language, students' demonstrate a good level of language skills. This is consistent with previous years in this phase. Speaking and listening skills are well developed. They listen and understand in lessons, and they are making good progress from their starting points in speaking and reading. They make slower progress in improving their writing skills.
- In Arabic as an additional language, the majority of students attain levels that are above curriculum expectations. They show good skills in reading and listening. Speaking skills with high frequency words are developing well. Students' writing skills are less secure. Progress is good compared to students' starting points. The majority of students make better than expected progress, for example, in naming the rooms in the house and their purposes.
- In English, students make good progress from their starting points. As a result, although there is variation in some year groups, attainment for the majority of students is above curriculum standards. This is consistent with the school's internal assessments but not with the results of external benchmarking tests. In lessons and in their work, however, the majority of students make better than expected progress and attain good levels, particularly in their reading, speaking and listening skills. Weaknesses in spelling and grammar have an adverse impact on extended writing.
- In mathematics, the majority of students achieve levels of attainment and make progress at a rate that exceeds expectations. In recent work and in lessons, the majority of students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts and operations beyond the curriculum standards. However, their ability to apply their learning to the real world is still developing, particularly in the upper elementary grades. Most groups of students, including those with SEND, are making better than expected progress. Over the past three years attainment levels measured against international standards have shown steady improvement.
- The majority of students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts that exceed curriculum standards. Grade 4 students, for example, can design a structure that resists wind and weathering, applying engineering concepts. In lessons, students make good progress towards their learning objectives. External test data indicate lower levels of attainment and progress than those evident in the lessons and in their finished projects.

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

- Students' attainment levels in Islamic education are good when measured against curriculum expectations. Most students in Grade 8 know the reasons and causes of the concepts behind the prohibition commands. Recitation of the Qur'an is good for most students. Attainment levels in internal assessments have improved since the previous inspection. Most students make good progress in lessons. More-able students make acceptable progress.
- In Arabic as a first language, the attainment level of most students is in line with the MoE curriculum standards. Students' listening skills and their knowledge of grammar is secure. Their speaking skills are broadly acceptable, although their responses are usually short and in colloquial rather than standard Arabic. Their reading skills are adequate. However, their literary analysis of complex text and their creative writing skills are less developed. In lessons, students make acceptable progress.
- In Arabic as an additional language, the majority of students attain levels that are above curriculum standards. Students are competent in most language skills although writing is less secure. Students are able to form correct short sentences orally but they are less confident when applying this to their writing. Progress is better when students are fully engaged and the topic is related to their real life. For example, Grade 8 students enjoy talking about travel and exploring places. New students just beginning to learn Arabic, and those with additional needs, make good progress from their starting points.
- In English, as a result of good progress, the attainment of the majority of students is above curriculum standards. Most students are confident readers who are able to comprehend the main points in both literary and informational texts. Students' speaking and listening skills are particularly well developed and, in discussion, they are able to articulate their thoughts with clarity and confidence. While a few students write thoughtful and personal narratives using relevant descriptive details, extended writing skills in general are not as well developed as reading, speaking and listening skills.
- Internal and external assessments confirm that the majority of students attain standards above curriculum expectations in mathematics. All groups of students make good progress from their initial starting points. In recent work and in class, the majority of students demonstrate knowledge and understanding beyond curriculum requirements for example when writing and solving their own linear equations, and when using probability to calculate potential profit and loss. The trend in attainment over the last three years shows steady improvement.
- Students' science attainment and progress are good. Middle school students frequently use hands-on activities to draw conclusions. In Grade 7, for example, students use ropes and coils to create waves and then measure the amplitude and wavelengths. External assessment data do not fully support the levels of attainment and progress seen in classes and internal tests. In lessons, students make good progress.

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

- In Islamic Education, the majority of students attain levels that are above the expectations of the MoE curriculum standards. Students' understanding of key concepts, such as the existence of the universe from Islam's point of view, is good. In lessons and in their most recent work, students make very good progress in developing their understanding of the laws of Islam (Fiqh).
- In Arabic as a first language, students' attainment is in line with the MoE curriculum standards, and remains consistent with previous years. Students communicate their ideas with acceptable clarity. However, they lack the confidence to express their responses using standard Arabic, and to use this language fully in all respects as expected at their age. In lessons, students make sufficient progress in acquiring knowledge of the different types of text. They make slower progress in applying this knowledge in extended writing using standard Arabic.
- In Arabic as an additional language students' demonstrate adequate competencies in reading and listening. Their speaking and writing skills, in particular their ability to write in depth, are underdeveloped. Grade 9 students make good progress, for example, when learning about sports games. Students who are just beginning to learn Arabic also make good progress from their starting points.
- Students demonstrate good progress and attainment in English. Reading and comprehension skills are particularly strong. Grade 9 students, for example, demonstrate a good understanding of the complex relationships explored in the novel 'To Kill a Mockingbird.' Most students express their views confidently and to listen intently to others. Creative writing is improving as students develop understanding of the techniques of storytelling across different genres.
- The majority of students are attaining levels in mathematics above curriculum standards as measured by internal and external assessment data. Both in lessons and in their recent work, students demonstrate an understanding and mastery of skills, for example, when applying functions to real life situations. Over the previous three years attainment has shown steady improvement in each aspect of the high school mathematics curriculum. Most groups of students, including students with SEND, make good progress.
- The majority of students have a good knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts in physics, chemistry, and biology and make good progress in lessons. Their external assessment data show areas needing further development, while their internal assessment data demonstrates improvement. Students make good use of teacher-designed practical work to strengthen their understanding of topics in the sciences. They can, for example, dissect an organ to identify its different parts and link that to their understanding of its functions.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Learning skills</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Students are generally well motivated and eager to learn. They can work for extended periods without close teacher supervision. This is particularly true in the Kindergarten where children engage in many independent learning activities. In all phases, students respond well to teacher feedback. However, in science, too few opportunities for self-assessment limits students' understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses.
- In most classes, students work purposefully together for long periods of time. They enjoy sharing their ideas and learning from each other. Most students listen carefully and show respect for the views of others. This was seen, for example, in a well-informed discussion in a Grade 9 English lesson, where students explored the social and moral issues in a classic novel.
- Meaningful connections are made to the real world in many lessons. Students enjoy exploring real-life issues and are able to draw on their learning from other curriculum subjects, for example when investigating population-settlement and growth in Grade 6 social studies. However, connections of learning to real-world applications are not consistently developed across all subjects.
- Students generally enjoy the challenge of researching and finding things out for themselves. Most students demonstrate, from an early age, that they are competent in the use of technology to support their learning and investigations. However, the development of critical thinking and enquiry skills has not been fully embedded in all subjects and there is inconsistency in students' use of learning technologies.

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Personal development</b>	Very good	Good	Good	Good

- The majority of students have positive attitudes and take responsibility for their own actions. They are self-reliant and independent learners and generally respond well to feedback from their teachers. Children in the Kindergarten often show initiative and ask and answer their own questions. They use feedback to understand and complete their activities.
- Behaviour in class is very good with students and children demonstrating self-control and cooperation. Outside of class, a minority of students occasionally demonstrates inappropriate behaviour towards others.
- Children in the Kindergarten are sensitive to the needs of each other. Across all phases, inclusion of students with SEND is a positive feature of the school. Almost all students are supportive of each other in class. Relationships between staff and students are respectful and positive.
- Students are aware of how to be healthy. They choose mainly healthy foods and take sufficient water, sleep and exercise. They take appropriate actions to protect themselves in cyberspace and to participate in a range of activities that promote healthy lifestyles.

- Attendance is good overall and very good in the middle phase. Students are punctual to school and to lessons.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures</b>	Good	Good	Good ↓	Good

- Students have a clear appreciation of Islamic values. They know the famous mosques in the UAE, and the importance of having the prayer rooms at the school. They are convinced that the development of Dubai goes along with respecting the values of Islam. Elementary school students recite the Qur'an accurately during morning sessions and in some after-school activities.
- Students respect and appreciate the culture of the UAE and can discuss the main features in Dubai and its development. Students give examples of the different landmarks and cultural tourist attractions such as forts, the Culture Village and the Al Bastakiya area. In addition, students recognize many modern buildings and projects.
- Students demonstrate a basic understanding and awareness of other cultures by respecting different traditions and learning about other countries. They take part in some activities like International Day. However, their exposure is not sufficient to make them fully appreciative of diversity. Kindergarten children celebrate other cultures through the various art displays in the corridors.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Social responsibility and innovation skills</b>	Very good	Good	Good	Very good ↑

- Students across the school are well aware of their responsibilities towards society. They proudly share their experiences and involvement in a range of activities both in and out of school. Middle school girls are eager for more opportunities to participate and make contributions. High school girls organise a range of events including raising funds for Dubai Cares.
- Kindergarten children are keen to work with their peers and teachers. They take very good care of their surroundings and demonstrate very positive work ethic at an early age. Older girls are positive about the value of belief in oneself and the need to work hard towards goals. Their innovative skills are emerging with excellent examples in some lessons.
- Most girls understand their responsibilities towards the environment. They have sound understanding of conservation and its impact on resources. Student councils are leading a range of activities to raise environmental awareness and enhance the school's environment.

### 3. Teaching and assessment

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

- Most teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and understanding of how students learn in most lessons. Many teachers consistently engage students in work that allows them to learn actively. In the best lessons and use effective methods to accelerate learning.
- Teachers prepare detailed lesson plans that align well to the curriculum standards. They use time and resources effectively in most lessons. Lesson planning does not always take account of the needs of more-able students. In a few lessons, the pace is too slow which does not allow students to achieve the expected learning objectives.
- Most teachers ask a variety of questions, often requiring students to demonstrate their reasoning and critical thinking skills. They often involve students in a two-way dialogue, particularly at the beginning of the lesson, to enable students to understand their learning objectives. In a few lessons, the dialogue is slow and superficial, especially when teachers ask questions which do not require students to think deeply.
- Teachers diversify their teaching strategies to meet the needs of different groups. They often use worksheets and plan activities with different levels of challenge, although these are not always well matched to the needs of higher-achieving students. In the KG, teachers use multiple strategies in most lessons to meet the needs of all children; singing, movement, visual stimuli and technology enable children to be active learners.
- Teachers are increasingly effective in supporting students to become independent learners. They plan a variety of hands-on activities, particularly in the KG. The majority of teachers are improving their ability to secure independent thinking and problem-solving. Innovation skills and the development of critical thinking, however, are a developing feature of their approach to teaching for effective learning.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Assessment	Very good	Good	Good	Good

- Internal assessment processes, both formative and summative, are linked to the school's curriculum standards. The more formal approach to mid-term exams and final summative testing is contributing to a more focused approach to learning, particularly by older girls. Internal assessments at all levels show improved measures of academic growth.
- External assessment takes several forms. It includes a cognitive ability test, which highlights students' potential for learning, and the curriculum-aligned MAP tests for attainment and progress. Together, these results support internal measures in calibrating students' achievements.

- The school is developing its use of assessment data to inform teaching and learning needs and to identify groups of students who need additional support or challenge. Teachers set targets for students and are increasingly effective in monitoring students' progress towards those targets during lessons and over time.
- Assessment information is used increasingly to determine how well students are meeting the curriculum standards across all domains of a subject. Teachers are gaining a better understanding of their students' progress and how to identify what is needed for every child to make further progress.
- Assessment of students' learning during lessons is effective. Teachers have a good knowledge of the strengths of their students and support them well. The expectations for learning are usually clearly set and students are gaining a better knowledge of what they need to do to show good progress. In some classes, teachers' feedback on written work gives students a clear way forward on the path to improvement, although this is inconsistent

#### 4. Curriculum

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

- The curriculum is broad and balanced and aligned to Kansas which includes Common Core state standards and Next Generation Science. Arabic and Islamic education meets the standards and requirements of the MoE. There is a clear focus on developing the students' knowledge and learning skills in each subject. The newly-adopted science curriculum is being developed and aligned to the school's assessments.
- The curriculum is planned and sequenced so that it builds well on students' learning. Progression is organized to enable continuous development of students' prior knowledge for the majority of students. The high school course requirements closely match the framework of a U.S. high school, and students are well prepared for college and life beyond school.
- Students have a variety of curricular options. Advanced Placement classes are offered based on ability and interest with six courses available in the upper grades. During school hours, all students benefit from the CHIPS programme with its many extra-curricular activities, including drama, yoga, chess and book clubs. Topics are often initiated by students based on their interests and talents.
- Curriculum plans are purposefully designed to enable students to draw on knowledge from multiple subject areas. This happens most often in project-based work in the elementary phase. However, there is inconsistency in teachers' skills, and students are not always able to transfer their learning or apply knowledge between subjects.
- The school regularly reviews its curriculum. There is a systematic approach to review and revision by mid and senior leaders in the school. When gaps are identified through assessments and reflective practices, specific areas of the curriculum are adjusted to address the academic and personal development of students.

- The UAE social studies curriculum is drawn from the MoE curriculum. It is fully incorporated in the school social studies curriculum. The curriculum is systematically planned to provide students with a wide range of meaningful learning experiences. It is based on the balanced development of knowledge concepts and skills. Progression is planned by increasing the depth and breadth of curricular concepts. Students engage readily with learning activities and are competent in the use of modern technology. Assessment strategies are well structured and provide accurate data on students' attainment and progress.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Curriculum adaptation</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Teachers are increasingly effective in addressing the varied learning needs of all students. Modifications to teaching strategies allow more students with additional learning and language needs to remain in mainstream classes rather than be withdrawn for additional support. There are occasional opportunities for enhanced learning for gifted and talented students.
- Students across the school are encouraged to design innovative projects and participate in philanthropic initiatives that have earned awards and brought recognition to the school. These include examples such as 'Diego the Happy Plant', fundraising for Dubai Cares, and various science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) projects. The CHIPS extra-curricular programme offers a wide variety of imaginative learning activities to motivate and inspire students.
- The culture and values of the UAE are incorporated into various aspects of the school. The social studies programme teaches the heritage and UAE tradition, linking well to the UAE National Agenda and vision. Through projects, celebrations, exhibitions and a few field trips, students study and learn about the UAE culture and global citizenship.

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding</b>	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good

- The school's rigorous child protection policy clearly identifies roles and responsibilities. Procedures are well communicated to all stakeholders. The school and its administration have appropriate health and safety policies in place and the administration is active in protecting students in every respect.
- The school campus provides a very secure, safe and clean environment. Regular and thorough checks of equipment and facilities are conducted. The supervision of students and children is highly effective at all times. Procedures for safe arrival and departure from school, by bus or parent pick-up, are clearly established.

- The school’s facilities, including laboratories, gymnasium and swimming pool, are well maintained by a combination of in-house provision and external contractors. Maintenance, visitor logs, emergency drills and health records are comprehensive and securely stored. Incidents, and subsequent actions taken to reduce risk, are well documented.
- The school premises provide a safe and accessible environment for all. The spaces, stairs and corridors are large and allow ease of movement for wheelchair users. The entrances to the campus are securely monitored. Specialist areas within the school are well designed and appropriate for the learning needs of all students, including those with SEND.
- Within the curriculum, and through assemblies and new initiatives such as Happy Hour, the school promotes healthy living and safe lifestyle choices. Water and healthy food options are available to the students. Student playground leaders also take a role in ensuring the safety of each other.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Care and support	Good	Good	Good	Good

- A very calm, friendly, and welcoming campus is maintained for the benefit of students and staff. The guidance counsellor and pastoral care teacher provide on-going support and advice to students on a daily basis. This is in addition to discussion sessions addressing topics such as caring, inclusion, and empowerment. Behaviour management provides specific guidance when needed. Peer mediation helps students resolve issues with oversight provided by the counsellor.
- Attendance is recorded twice a day. It is closely monitored with daily reminders from the principal, employing grade-level officers to reach out to families by mid-morning. Rewards are given to students with excellent attendance rates.
- Students with SEND are identified at enrolment when diagnostic records are submitted with application paperwork. Parents and teachers identify other students who experience difficulty in lessons. Gifted and talented students are identified through MAP and cognitive ability tests.
- Students with SEND receive support from highly-qualified staff and increasingly effective teachers. Students with physical disabilities are being consulted over the re-design of campus facilities to enhance their mobility around school. The quality of support for gifted students is inconsistent.
- Students receive guidance throughout their school years. This includes class discussions with the pastoral program for elementary students, peer mediation during middle school, and individual counselling for high school students. College and career guidance is structured on a timeline starting in Grade 8, ensuring all options are considered in preparing and selecting colleges and universities, and applications are submitted on time.

## Inclusion

### Provision and outcomes for students with SEND

Good

- The school leaders have created effective provision for students with SEND through the appointment of a highly-qualified staff that supports students and provides on-going guidance for teachers.
- The specialist staff works closely with teachers and parents to identify students with additional needs and to design the best support needed to meet their needs. They ensure students are identified as early as possible to help prevent delays in development and academic growth.
- Parents of students with SEND are appreciative of the close contact maintained between the home and the school. They participate in writing their children's individual education plans and attend meetings with specialist staff each term. They appreciate the guidance they receive when in need of consultation and advice. They increase their knowledge and understanding of their children's needs by attending workshops and forums provided by the school.
- Planning is individualized and curriculum modifications are provided in response to each student's diagnostic profile. Most support for students with SEND is delivered within the mainstream classrooms. However, pull out instruction when it is incorporated into the students schedule meets their instructional needs more effectively.
- Most students with SEND make good progress in academic areas, supported by modifications to teaching, guided by their individual learning plan. The school's commitment to personal, social, and emotional growth is very strong and supportive of students with SEND.

## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Good

- The principal and school leaders share a commitment to the school and to its journey of improvement. They are developing effective and purposeful steps to advance school improvements. A common vision guides the leaders towards raising strong and independent young women with high academic goals. This results in new initiatives that are beginning to have a positive impact in some aspects of the school's performance.
- School leaders are familiar with the US curriculum and what constitutes very good teaching and learning in American schools of quality. They work well to promote a positive learning culture and to create opportunities for students to set and work towards high academic and personal goals.
- Relationships and communication are well established, with teachers, parents and students comfortable in bringing matters to the leadership team. Tasks are delegated well, helping teachers across subjects and year groups to take responsibility for overseeing students' progress. The school works conscientiously to build and develop a positive morale throughout the school.
- School leaders look for opportunities to encourage innovation and creativity. They are aware of the potentially invigorating effect of this level of thinking on students' learning skills and the impact on progress. Where there are obstacles to learning, leaders act in measured and purposeful ways to address these needs.

- In most respects, the school is an inspirational learning community, fostered well by its dedicated leaders and teachers. The long-term goals for the growth of the school are identified through regular discussions between leaders and teachers. They are aware of the qualities needed in both students and adults to reach those aims. Statutory and regulatory requirements are fully met.

### School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Good

- Self-evaluation processes use both internal and external data, the recommendations of last year's inspection report, information from Taaleem's school review and the knowledge of the school gained from experiences in and out of classrooms. On the whole, the school identifies its needs well and its areas for improvement.
- Effective monitoring takes place on a regular basis, ensuring that the development of teaching and learning is on track in relation to the school's vision. The senior leadership team, representatives of governance, and peer-review of teaching are included in a comprehensive plan to evaluate teaching towards the goal of using strategies which have a positive effect on student achievement.
- School improvement plans are built on a sound knowledge of the school, although they are sometimes optimistic in judging the time needed to bring about lasting change. Leaders are aware of the next steps to improve the school within its prescribed and articulated curriculum. These include broadening the high school curriculum by providing more opportunities for students to explore their interests.
- The recommendation of the previous inspection report has been addressed fully in regard to the curriculum. The recommendation regarding teaching for effective learning is being addressed but has not brought about sufficient improvements in the quality of teaching across the school.

### Partnerships with parents and the community

Very good ↑

- The school is successful in involving and valuing parents as partners in the life of the school. Their participation on the Advisory Council and in other parent volunteer groups is essential to raising the standards of the school and guarantees the smooth operation of many school events. Attendance at parent-teacher conferences is high, ensuring that families have an active voice in the learning journey of their children.
- Communication with parents is a priority for the school. A wide range of effective methods, including technology, is used to communicate with the parents. The school is welcoming to all families, both in the classrooms and for special events. All concerns, ideas and suggestions are heard and acted upon promptly.
- Regular reporting of students' progress, strengths and next steps is a strong feature of the school. Reports to parents are detailed and give clear indications of students' achievements. Parent-teacher-conferences are held each term with students participating in the discussions and showcasing their work. Semester assessments include comments about the students' personal and social development as well as their involvement in extra-curricular activities.

- The school actively promotes involvement in the community. Students promote worthwhile causes and regularly raise money to donate to charitable organisations. Several students have attended the Singapore Space Academy, which has created partnerships with the Dubai and Space Agencies. Strong relationships with the community and participation in international programmes enhance the overall learning and development of the young women in the school.

<b>Governance</b>	Good
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- Governance includes representation from students and parents through connections with the Advisory Boards that have a regular presence on the executive board. Students' voices, their interests and initiatives, as well as the interests and needs of parents, are fully considered through these links. As a result, governors have a detailed knowledge of the school.
- The governing board has up-to-date knowledge of the academic performance of students and their personal and social development. Governors regularly discuss any matters of concern and assist the school in seeking solutions. They use external test results to hold senior leaders to account for the level of student achievement. At the same time, they are supportive of the school and provide opportunities for growth.
- The vision of growth for the school, combined with current and detailed knowledge, provides governors with a realistic view of the school's priorities. They ensure staffing and other resources are available to support learning. Consequently, they are having an increasingly positive impact on the overall performance of the school.

<b>Management, staffing, facilities and resources</b>	Very good 
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- The school is managed very well. School leaders and teachers collaborate regularly and productively to provide rich learning experiences for students. Changes to timetables are purposeful, particularly as the high school credit system expands and develops.
- Teachers are well-qualified; many bring personal experience of working in the USA, while others bring a wealth of diverse experience to support the vision and mission of the school. Professional development is built around the needs of students and is effective in instituting positive change. Peer-observation and the sharing of best practice are becoming more frequent.
- The facilities are very good, and provide a creative learning environment that supports the development of physical and cognitive skills. This approach is clearly evident in the Kindergarten, as well as in outside areas, corridors and classrooms. The refurbished library provides a stimulating and motivating space with an extensive range of books. Technology is widely available to enhance learning.
- Resources to support the curriculum have been upgraded, including textbooks, with ample learning resources across the school. Laboratories are well stocked. The investment made into learning resources is evident in all departments and in each phase.

## The views of parents, teachers and senior students

### The views of parents, teachers and senior students

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

Responses to the surveys		
Responses received	Number	
 <b>Parents*</b>	2016-2017	104
	2015-2016	161
 <b>Teachers</b>	49	
 <b>Students</b>	78	

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

- Almost all parents who responded to the survey are satisfied with the quality of education offered by the school and the strong promotion of literacy and reading in English. They are satisfied with the information they receive about their children's learning, progress and next steps for improvement. They say that leadership is responsive to their questions and ideas.
- Most parents feel the school welcomes and cares for children with special educational needs. They are positive about how the school encourages creativity and curiosity and the focus on the personal development of their children. Some parents express concerns about school transport and the longer day for kindergarten children.
- A majority of students report they feel happy, safe and included in the community environment of their school. They use a good range of resources and activities to support their learning and therefore do well in school.
- A large majority of students understand the value of working well with others, including their relationships with teachers. They say they use feedback from their teachers to improve and do their best.
- Almost all teachers feel the quality of teaching results in better learning skills. Most enjoy working at the school and feel confident in the leadership of the school. They report that there are very good relationships between the staff and parents. Support for classroom teachers working with students with special educational needs is mentioned as needing further development.

### What happens next?

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

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

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

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau  
Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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