



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational  
needs and disabilities



Innovation

## Inspection Report 2015-2016

Al Nibras International private School

Curriculum: US

Overall rating: Acceptable

Read more about the school



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‘Without  
challenges,  
we won’t feel  
the taste of  
success and  
happiness’



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

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## School information

### General information



Location	Green Community
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2005
Website	www.nisdubai.ae
Telephone	04-885-3330
Address	Dubai Investment Park, PO Box 54084
Principal	Agnes Shaw
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	6 to 10 March 2016

### Students



Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	4-18
Grades or year groups	Kindergarten 1 to Grade 12
Number of students on roll	977
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	30
Number of students with SEND	81
Largest nationality group of students	Arab

### Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	61
Largest nationality group of teachers	Irish
Number of teaching assistants	22
Teacher-student ratio	1:16
Number of guidance counsellors	1
Teacher turnover	31%

### Curriculum



Educational permit / Licence	US
Main curriculum	US / Colorado
External tests and examinations	ISA, SAT, PSAT
Accreditation	None
National Agenda benchmark tests	ISA

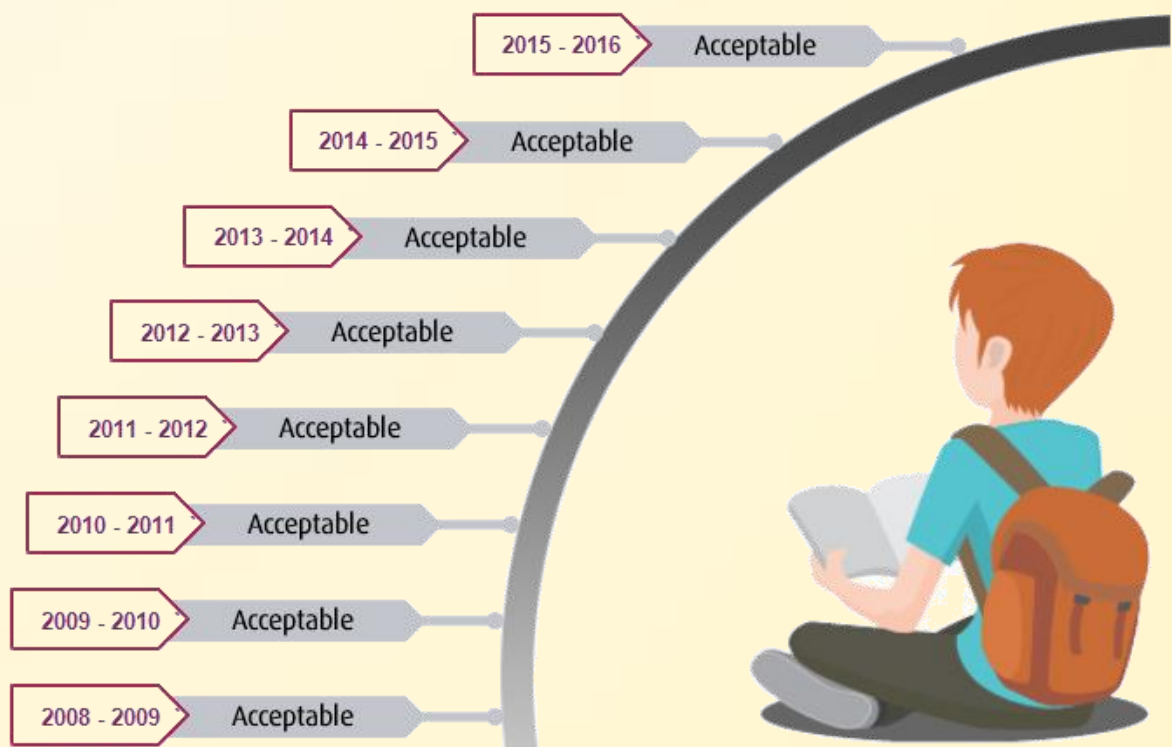


## Summary for parents and the community

**Al Nibras International Private School** was inspected by DSIB from 6 to 10 of March 2016. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **acceptable**.

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

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





### How well did the school perform overall?

Overall, **Al Nibras International School** provided an **acceptable** quality of education for its students.

- The kindergarten (KG) children showed good levels of attainment and progress across the three key subjects of English, mathematics and science. Although students' outcomes were acceptable in Islamic education, their performance in Arabic was less secure as it was mainly weak in the middle and high Schools. Apart from their better results in science, most elementary students' attainment was in line with curriculum expectations in most other subjects. High school students had adequate levels of achievement in most key subjects, except Arabic. The KG children were good at developing their learning skills, whereas students in all other phases demonstrated acceptable learning skills.
- Students' personal and social development was better in the KG, Elementary and High Schools. Although students were mostly courteous and respectful, some Middle and High School students did not behave as expected in lessons and in the hallways. The students' understanding of the impact of Islamic values and the Emirati and world cultures on their lives was strong. Their community and environmental contributions were demonstrated generally well across the school, but less so in the Middle School.
- Both teaching and the assessment of learning were better in the KG than in the other phases of the school. There were good practices across the various subjects, but the effectiveness of teaching varied. The application of assessment policies and procedures was inconsistent. The internal assessment data were often inflated and did not align with the results from external examinations. Assessment information was not used well by teachers to modify teaching and the curriculum.
- The curriculum's breadth, balance, delivery and review were better in the lower phases of the school. The curriculum was poorly adapted to meet the needs of all groups of students, particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), low-achieving and gifted or talented students. The curriculum was not fully aligned with the requirements of the State of Colorado and did not provide enough options for students.
- The health, safety, care and support for students were effective in the KG and elementary phases. However, evacuation procedures were not efficient, and safety measures in the science labs were not well established. The medical facilities required further development, whereas the promotion of healthy living was well managed. The identification, provision and support for students with SEND were weak.
- The leaders and governors of the school were committed to making improvements, but had varied capacity to do so. The school's self-evaluation, improvement planning, and governance were weak aspects of leadership. The levels of accountability and support for leaders was underdeveloped. School leaders and governors did not have a realistic understanding of the school's performance. The school's links with parents and the community were good. The professional development provided to teachers was not always effective in having a positive impact on improving students' learning. The school facilities were adequate. Learning resources, particularly books and information technology (IT), were in need of development.





### What did the school do well?

- The Kindergarten children showed sound personal and academic performance, and that was mainly due to effective provision and leadership in this phase of the school.
- The students, particularly in the KG, Elementary and High Schools demonstrated good understanding of Islamic values and Emirati culture and a sound level of community and environmental responsibility.
- Some leaders exhibited good capacity to improve in certain phases and departments of the school.



### What does the school need to do next?

- Restructure the governing board to include a broader representation of stakeholders, eliminate conflicts of interest and provide higher levels of support and accountability measures to leaders.
- Develop and implement a school improvement plan based on a comprehensive and accurate self-evaluation in order to:
  - improve teaching and learning, particularly in the Elementary, Middle and High Schools
  - raise the effectiveness of leadership at all levels
  - ensure high levels of achievement by students in all subjects, particularly in the upper phases.
- Improve the school's curriculum by:
  - adjusting the progression and course offerings to align to Colorado state standards
  - providing a variety of age-appropriate resources and teaching materials.
- Develop school-wide assessment policies and procedures to:
  - use assessment information to modify the curriculum and teaching to meet the needs of all student groups
  - track the progress of individual students and that of different cohorts
  - use external data to validate and ensure the accuracy of internal data
- Improve the identification and support of students with SEND and monitor their personal, social and academic progress frequently.



### How well did the school provide for students with special educational needs and disabilities?

- The progress by students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) was weak overall. Almost all students had no access to expert teachers in literacy or numeracy and thus were not able to make better progress in these areas of learning.
- The quality and regularity of reporting to parents on the progress of their children was inconsistent. The tracking of students' progress over time was not well managed, and parents required more information on the specific learning targets in literacy and numeracy.
- The levels of communication between the school and students' homes varied. There was only limited involvement of parents in the planning process.
- The SEND coordinator valued the involvement of parents, but their engagement with classroom teachers was interrupted by regular changes in the teaching staff.
- The school's efforts to support parents and students in the high school with appropriate guidance and advice were unsuccessful. Career guidance to help students make the transition from school to work, college or university was not always consistently of a high quality.

### 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 intent 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. This academic year, KHDA introduced 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.

#### Main points:

- The school did not fully meet the registration requirements of the National Agenda Parameter.
- The attainment data available was insufficient to judge the progress towards the National Agenda targets. The school had promoted the National Agenda to the staff and students. Most had some knowledge of the requirements and the rationale. They were less knowledgeable about the external and international examinations such as ISA, PISA and TIMSS. Despite a campaign involving parents through presentations, text messages, the school's website and newsletters, parents knew little about the National Agenda. The Chairman of the Board was supportive of the National Agenda. Students were the most knowledgeable group within the school community.
- In mathematics, the curriculum had been modified to include more geometry within a 'spiral' curriculum plan and to include problem solving and data analysis. In other key subjects, curriculum modifications were starting to be implemented.
- Science and mathematics teachers included some critical thinking questions and tasks for their students. However, these were inconsistently observed in other subjects. The students' abilities to conduct investigations was weak overall. The scientific method did not underpin the science curriculum across Grades 1-12. Regular and focused professional development was required for teachers to develop the skills needed to promote the National Agenda in their lessons.
- The school had insufficient resources for students to develop research skills for independent learning. The library was at an early stage of development, and there was a shortage of books in the English program. The school's IT was not often used effectively to do research and develop understanding.



## Innovation in education

The *UAE Vision 2021* sets out the National Agenda 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’. It provides a basis for evaluating public and private schools in order to deliver a world-class education for all children in the UAE.

Innovation is driven by a commitment to excellence and continuous improvement. It is based on curiosity, the willingness to take risks, to experiment and to test assumptions as well as questioning and challenging the status quo. Being innovative is about looking beyond what we currently do well, identifying the great ideas of tomorrow and putting them into practice.




## Promoting a culture of innovation:

- School leaders and the governing board had begun to articulate a vision for promoting an innovation culture in the school. The Principal had been identified to lead teachers' professional development for innovation in their teaching. In the Elementary phase, the school had tablet computers for students. A 'bring-your-own-device' program was implemented in the High school to help students become innovative in their use of technology to support their learning and development. The curriculum had begun to be adapted to promote the development of students' innovation skills in different subjects and activities.

## Overall school performance

Acceptable

### 1. Students' achievement

		KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Islamic education</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Not applicable	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable	Acceptable
	<b>Progress</b>	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Arabic as a first language</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Not applicable	Good	Weak	Weak
	<b>Progress</b>	Not applicable	Acceptable ↓	Weak	Weak
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Not applicable	Acceptable	Weak	Weak
	<b>Progress</b>	Not applicable	Acceptable	Weak	Weak
<b>English</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	<b>Progress</b>	Good	Acceptable	Weak ↓	Acceptable
<b>Mathematics</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	<b>Progress</b>	Good	Good ↑	Good ↑	Acceptable
<b>Science</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
	<b>Progress</b>	Good	Good	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable

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

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

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

## 3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Very good ↑	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

## 4. Curriculum

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Curriculum adaptation	Good	Acceptable	Weak ↓	Weak ↓

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Good	Good	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓
Care and support	Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable

## 6. Leadership and management

	All phases
The effectiveness of leadership	Acceptable
School self-evaluation and improvement planning	Weak ↓
Parents and the community	Good
Governance	Weak ↓
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable



## Main inspection report

The Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) is responsible for inspecting and reporting on the standards reached by students and the quality of education provided in Dubai's private schools.

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



Using this scale, the *Main inspection report* contains the judgements about the different aspects, phases and subjects that form the work of the school.

It provides the reasons for the answers to the questions in the *Summary for parents and the community*:

- How well did the school perform overall?
- What did the school do well?
- What does the school need to do next?

## 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	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science	Good	Good

- In English, the majority of the children made progress which was above the expected levels in speaking, listening, phonics and writing. The younger children were able to identify and write the letters of the alphabet and matched some sounds with letters. They were also able to read some three letter words. The older children performed above the expected levels in literacy. They were able to write with meaning and purpose. Most children could write at least two sentences when asked and had composed simple letters to H.H Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum. The reading skills of all children were progressing, although they were not strong. There was good overall progress being made by children learning English as an additional language.
- In mathematics, the majority of the children demonstrated a good understanding of mathematical concepts and skills that were above the curriculum standards. The children made good progress in relation to their starting points and as measured against the learning objectives. Their numeracy skills, including counting, sorting, measuring and patterning were progressing well. The children performed mathematical operations above the expected levels of difficulty. The children could represent addition and subtraction problems using multiple strategies, such as counters and drawings.
- In science, the majority of children made progress in their understanding of the world that was above the expected curriculum standards. For example, they understood age-appropriate earth and life science concepts. The older children were studying modes of transport and could compare and contrast the many attributes they observed. They also understood their places in the world through recycling projects. Their inquiry and investigative skills were in the early stages of development.



### Elementary

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

- In Islamic education, most students showed acceptable attainment by the last year of the elementary phase. Most students demonstrated age-appropriate knowledge and understanding of basic Islamic concepts. In Grade 5, a large majority of students understood the importance of Salat-ul-Jama-ah and where this prayer was performed. Most students made acceptable progress compared to their starting points. Students developed an acceptable range of Islamic terminology such as 'Athan,' 'Iqama' and 'Tasbeeh.' A minority of students could relate some of these terms to their own lives.
- In Arabic as first language, the students' listening skills were strong. Most students were able to independently understand the complex meanings of words. Most students exhibited good speaking skills; however, their confidence and fluency were not sufficient to engage in conversations. Their progress was acceptable and students had developed an acceptable Arabic vocabulary. The writing done by most students across this phase met expectations. Most students could write short paragraphs on a range of familiar topics; however, their writing was characterized by frequent spelling and structural mistakes.
- Students learning Arabic as an additional language had acceptable attainment. Students in the lower elementary grades had developed good listening skills with appropriate responses and some independent writing. Most students in Grade 2 were able to write at least three sentences describing their favorite animals in the zoo. In the upper elementary grades, their reading and speaking skills were in line with expectations, but only within familiar contexts. Their progress was acceptable. Most students acquired new vocabulary but showed weakness when using it to form complete sentences. Their progress in developing writing skills was acceptable when compared to their starting points.
- Nearly all English students were working at levels that aligned to the curriculum's expectations. Students were able to read and discuss age-appropriate books, make connections between similar stories and debate questions related to them. Most students were able to summarize, analyze, and synthesize information as defined by the curriculum standards. Most students were able to engage with complex texts, discuss essential questions and write reflective narratives. External assessment results demonstrated that students continued to perform below the international benchmarks. Most students progressed appropriately against their learning objectives, although progress was not consistent among students with SEND. Low achieving students did not progress as quickly. They were unable to close the gap between their understanding and the curriculum's expectations.

- In mathematics, the work of most students was in line with grade expectations. Most students' internal examination results showed inflated scores when compared with external standards. Their attainment against these was broadly acceptable. In lessons, most students made better than expected progress against appropriate learning objectives. Their application, problem solving and critical thinking skills were developing inconsistently. In the better math lessons, students were involved in 'hands-on' and inquiry activities. They used range of materials to support their learning. Students were able to use accurate math terms to explain their work. Students with SEND made weaker progress than the others.
- In science, students' attainment and progress were good when compared with the curriculum standards. Internal assessment data over the previous three years indicated that their attainment was very good. No recent international or external benchmark test results were available. Students' attainment in lessons and in their recent written work was good. As students moved through the grades, they gradually improved their use of scientific language to explain increasingly complex ideas, such as the adaptation of animals to different habitats. Students' answers to scientific questions were better developed in the lower grades, where they were testing their predictions in experiments on leaves. The progress made by students with SEND was weak because their individual learning needs were not effectively met.

### Middle

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

- In Islamic education, most students demonstrated age-appropriate knowledge of Islamic concepts. In Grade 8, most demonstrated acceptable understanding of the different types of congregational prayers in Islam. Students were able to differentiate between the obligatory and recommended congregational prayers. The majority of students were able to explain some terms associated with this topic. Their progress was acceptable as measured against each lesson's starting points. A large majority of students improved their understanding of Hadeeth as prescribed in their lesson's objectives. They could explain the main ideas of the Hadeeth and how these related to their own lives. Only a few students were involved in more advanced, high-level thinking.
- In Arabic as a first language, students' listening skills were acceptable and the extended speaking skills of most students were below expectations. Their conversational skills were weak and students frequently spoke using colloquial Arabic. Their abilities to read long texts with understanding were limited; most students lacked independent comprehension skills. As a result, most developed only a limited range of Arabic vocabulary. Their progress overall was weak. Although most students' writing skills had improved over time, their progress was slow and this was due to their lack of independence in developing their learning and writing skills.

- In Arabic as an additional language, students' listening skills were acceptable but their abilities to respond were weak. Few were able to answer oral questions related to a picture or text with the expected levels of confidence. Students also had difficulty engaging in simple, genuine conversations. The writing of most students was restricted to copying. Overall, their independent writing was underdeveloped. Their progress was weak in the development of basic language, particularly the skills of speaking and writing.
- In external tests, most students' levels of English attainment were below the international standards and did not show the expected growth from sixth to eighth grade. In lessons, students used simple texts to discuss literary terms, identify author's techniques, engage in debate and plan for oral presentations. Students demonstrated adequate skills in persuasive writing. Students discussed controversial questions appropriate to their grade levels and made meaningful connections to their lives. Their progress in reading was limited. Few students received critical feedback on their writing and speaking skills, which limited their progress. Most groups of students made the expected progress in lessons; however, those with SEND and the low achieving students did not progress as quickly as others.
- In mathematics, students' attainment was acceptable and their progress was good. In the better lessons, opportunities were provided for collaborative group work, inquiry and investigation which enabled good progress. Most students worked co-operatively to solve problems, demonstrating the expected levels of knowledge, skills and understanding. Critical thinking was a developing skill. Students' examination results over recent years showed that most had achieved levels in line with both national and international standards. In lessons, a majority of students made better than expected progress when the learning objectives were aligned with the curriculum standards. Students were often able to apply their mathematics to everyday life and to communicate concepts using accurate mathematical vocabulary. Students with SEND made weak progress, but the high achieving students made good progress when provided with suitable challenges.
- In science, students' attainment and progress were acceptable when compared with the curriculum standards. Internal assessments over the previous three years indicated that the attainment of Middle school students was weaker than those in the elementary grade. As in the elementary, there were no recent international and external test results available. Students' attainment in lessons and in their recent written work was acceptable. By the last year of this phase, students could understand the processes of meiosis and mitosis. Their investigative and practical skills were not well developed. Students who attained well were not sufficiently challenged and the progress by students with SEND was weak.

## High

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

- In Islamic education, most students demonstrated acceptable levels of knowledge and understanding of Islamic concepts and principles, such as awareness that Allah was the source of wealth and poverty. The majority of students were able to make a connection between their belief in destiny 'Alqadr' and how it affected our sustenance 'Rezq'. Their progress in lessons and over time was acceptable. Students improved their understanding of some Islamic terms, such as Rezq, Taqwa, Sadaqah and Alqadr. Across the phase, students made only limited progress in reciting the prescribed verses of the Holy Qur'an and applying the required rules of recitation and Tajweed. Students had not developed age-appropriate inquiry and critical thinking skills in this subject.
- In Arabic as first language, the listening skills of most students were in line with expectations, but their speaking skills were weak. Students used short sentences, but many lacked the skills to engage in deep or detailed discussions. Students frequently reverted to colloquial Arabic when speaking. Their comprehension when reading extended texts was limited. Students lacked independence and confidence when interpreting and analyzing texts. Their progress was weak, with only limited acquisition of Arabic language skills, particularly in speaking and writing, as compared to their starting points. Their use of Arabic in their daily lives was not strong.
- In learning Arabic as an additional language, the students' listening skills were at the expected levels. A few students were able to respond correctly to their teachers' instructions and give answers to basic questions about familiar topics. Their communication and speaking skills were weak. Students were not able to engage in simple dialogue without relying on their teachers. A majority of students were able to read Arabic out loud. However, only a few could understand the main ideas and the key details. Most students made weak progress in developing their basic Arabic language skills. Most struggled to write a few correct sentences independently. Their progress in acquiring writing skills was underdeveloped.
- Most English students made the expected progress and demonstrated knowledge, skills and understanding that were aligned to the curriculum standards. However, their attainment on the ISA and SAT assessments was below the expected levels. In lessons, students connected different ideas to create learning outputs aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Although some students struggled to understand the curriculum, they were able to build vocabulary to discuss and write in line with the English curriculum standards. Most students were able to give multi-media presentations, evaluate a presentation's effectiveness and engage in relevant discussions. Although the gifted and talented students made better progress within the High school, students with SEND continued to make below average progress.
- Students' attainment and progress in mathematics were acceptable. In the better lessons, students were able to inquire, apply and solve problems. Critical thinking was a developing skill. Students generally worked cooperatively and effectively to solve problems and use IT. In lessons, most students demonstrated the expected levels of knowledge, skills and understanding. Over recent years, the attainment of most students was broadly in line with both national and international standards. Students were confident when applying their mathematical knowledge to real life. They could explain their work using accurate mathematical terms. The High school boys and girls made equivalent progress and achieved similar academic outcomes.



- In science, students' attainment and progress were acceptable when compared to the curriculum standards. Internal assessment data indicated good recent attainment, while over the previous three years it was acceptable. As in the other phases of the school, there were no recent international and external benchmark test results available. Students' attainment in lessons and in their recent work was acceptable. Grade 10 students explored inherited genetic traits and diseases. By Grade 12, students could analyze symptoms in an age-appropriate medical case study. Their investigative and practical skills were still not well developed by Grade 12. As in the Middle school, students who attained well were not sufficiently challenged and the progress of students with SEND was weak.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- In the KG, children took responsibility for completing their work independently. In the other phases, in mathematics and science, students were able to assess their own levels of understanding towards the end of a lesson. In English, although students were eager, the lessons rarely required them to engage in sustained reading or writing. In some lessons, particularly in the middle and lower high school grades, some students lacked motivation and were easily distracted.
- Collaborative learning was a feature of most lessons. It was most effective when each student had a key task to focus upon. In some lessons, the tasks set did not lend themselves to collaboration and students were unsure of how to work in pairs or groups. In a few lessons in the middle and lower high school grades, students were unable to work collaboratively.
- In most subjects, teachers made learning relevant by establishing connections between what students were learning and real contexts. For instance, KG children were able to explain how they came to school when discussing transport. Older students' understanding of ethos, pathos, and logos was strengthened when they applied these words to advertising techniques. Links between different areas of learning were not a common feature in the Elementary, Middle and High schools.
- In the KG, children were enterprising in terms of how to use classroom resources to accomplish a task. Elementary and High school students were able to problem solve and apply prior knowledge to new circumstances with their teachers' direction. Students' use of IT was sometimes limited by a lack of available resources, especially in the upper grades. The development of students' critical thinking was still developing.



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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Personal development	Very good ↑	Good	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable

- Most students were positive about school and responded well to their teachers' assessments in order to improve. They were eager to learn and wanted to succeed. However, the attitudes toward learning of a minority of students in the upper two phases of the school were not always as good as expected.
- Students' behavior was positive, especially in the Kindergarten and Elementary phases. The students related well to each other and were courteous towards their teachers. They felt supported and valued by the school's staff. Nevertheless, some lessons were disrupted by inappropriate behavior, particularly in the Middle and High schools. A few older students demonstrated boisterousness and rough behavior in the hallways.
- Positive relationships with the staff contributed to the daily life of the school. Students, particularly in the lower two phases of the school, cooperated and helped each other during lessons and in other school activities. However, when the teaching was not engaging enough, a few older students did not interact respectfully with their teachers.
- Almost all students made good choices with regard to healthy eating and exercise. They participated in activities, in and out of school, that supported good health and a decrease in illness.
- Students' attendance was good. Most were punctual when arriving to school in the morning, and understood the link between attendance and success at school.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good	Acceptable ↓	Good

- Students demonstrated good understanding of Islamic values and their impact on the lives of people in Dubai. This was evident in their appreciation of the UAE's Islamic social aspects, such as celebrations and festivities and their respect for people's different beliefs and rituals. Students believed that Islam had a positive influence on their personal lives. The Middle school students showed less developed understanding in this respect.
- Students across most phases exhibited positive attitudes towards Emirati heritage and culture. They understood and could explain the importance, relevance and value of these to the people living in the UAE. Their knowledge of the history and present society of the UAE was evident during discussions.
- Students showed good awareness of and appreciation for their own cultures and other cultures around the world. They valued the cultural diversity in their own school and had open and accepting attitudes towards others in their communities and in Dubai.

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

- Across the school, students were responsible members of the school community. They were active in the Student Councils in all sections of the school, including the KG. This provided a forum wherein students' views and ideas were heard. There was a successful program in place whereby older students were mentoring and tutoring the younger students in the key subjects.
- The school's culture promoted a good work ethic. Students enjoyed working on worthwhile projects such as raising money for charities. Elementary school students participated and achieved good results in the 'Schools of the Future' competition. Students in the High school were actively involved in several work projects in the community, such as the 'Young Entrepreneur' competition. Senior students participated in real work experiences in different community businesses for few days a year.
- Students demonstrated good understanding of environmental sustainability and made efforts to recycle and use less water in school and at home. They promoted less paper use and had planned an upcoming 'Green Day' for the school.

### 3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Teaching for effective learning</b>	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Teachers demonstrated secure knowledge of their subjects and most could share this at suitable levels with their students. The majority of teachers, in particular those in the KG and the lower elementary grades, knew how children learn in developmentally appropriate ways. For example, in English teachers organized reading workshops with appropriately difficult tasks for their students.
- Lesson planning was effective and sufficiently detailed in most subjects. In the better lessons, the pace was well adjusted to allow students time to think more deeply. The use of resources to support learning was adequate in the elementary phase, but insufficient in the middle and high school phases. In the KG, teachers planned lessons and used materials that engaged the children in hands-on, interesting activities.
- In the KG, teachers promoted regular dialogue that checked for understanding and often resulted in support and feedback to enhance learning. In the majority of lessons in the other phases, teachers questioned their students skillfully to promote better understanding. However, in a minority of lessons, particularly in the middle and lower high school grades, students' behavior was not sufficiently well managed and consequently they made slower progress.
- In the KG, almost all teachers planned and implemented activities that met the needs of most children. In the other phases, although different tasks were often included in teachers' plans, most did not meet the learning needs of all groups of students. In particular, those students requiring additional help with their learning or those needing more challenge were not well served.
- In the KG, there were some opportunities for children to think critically and problem solve. In the other phases, problem-solving and independent learning opportunities were just developing. In English and science, some teachers used innovative content to engage students, such as persuasive techniques in advertising or reviewing medical case studies. The majority of teachers did not provide sufficient opportunities for students to engage in critical thinking.

- The teaching of Arabic as a first language in the middle and high schools was didactic in most lessons. Consequently, students' contributions in lessons was limited. Teachers' expectations of students were low and students produced limited individual work. Teachers' planning did not ensure the balanced development of the four skills.
- The teaching of Arabic as an additional language in the middle and high grades was still weak. In the majority of lessons, learning was entirely reliant on the teachers, and their expectations were very low. Teachers talked too much and students' contributions in lessons and the quality and extent of their work were low. Lesson plans were not sufficiently focused and the learning objectives were unclear. Few resources were used other than textbooks.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Assessment	Very good ↑	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- The internal assessment processes were linked to the Colorado State Standards in the key subjects, whilst Arabic and Islamic education assessments were linked to the Ministry of Education standards. The school conducted regular assessments of students' attainment in the key subjects and produced assessment data. However, the internal assessments were found to be inconsistent and the data were unreliable across most subject areas.
- The school benchmarked Grades 3 to 10 students' performances in English and mathematics against the ISA testing parameters. Unfortunately science was not included in the ISA examinations, preventing full comparison with international standards. The analysis of ISA data was used mainly to identify weaknesses. It was not used effectively to track the progress of cohorts of students, or to validate the school's internal assessments.
- Internal test results did not match the external results. The internal assessment results were inflated. The results of the PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS tests were reviewed and analyzed for comparison with students' outcomes internationally.
- Internal assessment data was analyzed but not consistently across the school. In some subjects such as mathematics and English, a 'student progress tracker' had been developed across Grades 1 to 12, but was not a school-wide system. In the KG there was weekly measurement of each student's progress, which was used purposefully to create class groupings.
- Assessment data was used by some teachers to plan lessons and adapt the curriculum to meet students' needs. This was more successful and evident in the KG, lower elementary grades and within certain well-managed subject departments. Assessment data was not used systematically to plan strategies and deliver focused lessons that met the needs of different groups of students.
- Most teachers had reasonable knowledge of the abilities of their students. Oral assessment frequently helped students to improve their work. However, in many classes there was a lack of challenge provided for the higher attaining students.
- The marking of students' work was irregular. Few informative, helpful teachers' comments were observed in students' note books. Some departments were integrating self and peer assessments, but this was not a consistent feature. In the KG, effective lesson closures helped to identify what the children understood. Target setting was occasionally evident but this was not consistently or effectively coordinated to ensure all students made at least good progress.

#### 4. Curriculum

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

- The curriculum was reasonably broad and balanced and generally aligned to the Colorado and Common Core State Standards. While the KG and lower elementary curricula were sufficiently balanced, the middle school and high school curricula did not address the full breadth and depth of the standards. Additionally, the high school course offerings did not consistently follow the statutory requirements of the school's authorized curriculum. The school was compliant with the requirements of the UAE Ministry of Education for Arabic language and Islamic education provision.
- The curriculum was planned and sequenced to adequately build upon students' learning. Curriculum maps were designed to meet the needs of the majority of students. However, the high school course requirements did not follow the standard progression for a U.S. curriculum. Students were inadequately prepared for the third and fourth phases of education and life beyond the school.
- Students had limited curricular options, which created a prescriptive approach to course selection. The range of options was narrow throughout the school, especially after Grade 9, when students chose a science or literature track. During school hours and as extra-curricular activities, students had some additional learning opportunities including music, art, sports, and world languages. Only a few students participated in these programs.
- Curriculum documents included some plans for cross-curricular learning, although few lessons drew on knowledge from multiple subject areas. Due to inconsistencies in teaching, students did not regularly transfer their learning or apply knowledge between different subjects.
- The school had some systems in place to review its curriculum. Phases and departments demonstrated a systemic approach to review and revision. However, most areas of the curriculum were not adjusted to address the academic and personal development of students. Teachers and instructional leaders had limited access to the curricular tools, data, and training needed to address the diverse needs of students.
- The school provided three lessons of social studies from KG 1 to Grade 2 each week. One of these was dedicated to learning UAE social studies. Across all the other grade levels, students had three lessons of social studies weekly. These covered US topics and concepts aligned with the Colorado State Standards, with some integration of UAE civics, geography and history when appropriate.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum adaptation	Good	Acceptable	Weak ↓	Weak ↓

- The curriculum did not adequately meet the needs of all learners, particularly students with SEND and the gifted and talented students across three phases. However, KG children were both supported and challenged in response to their educational and social needs.
- The opportunities to promote essential knowledge, understanding or skills were limited and rarely promoted through innovation or enterprise. Some creativity was evident in the curriculum, especially within the KG and elementary grades. There were barriers to participation in the supplemental academic and extra-curricular activities.



- There were few strategic efforts made to develop students' knowledge of the UAE's cultural values. Although some efforts were made by individuals or groups to incorporate regional heritage into the curriculum, there was no comprehensive plan at the whole school level to include this topic.
- The school offered two 40-minute sessions per week of Arabic as a first language for all Arab and non-Arab students in the KG. The curriculum provided was designed internally within the school.

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

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

- The school had effective policies to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the staff, students and other visitors. The principal approved and monitored the arrangements for child protection and believed that safety was an integral part of all school activities. The majority of teachers were alert to the potential risks that vulnerable students could face when using the internet. School leaders were less secure in managing personal bullying issues among students in the middle and high schools.
- Bus transport was well organized and timely. The risk analysis of the premises was ineffective. This included the careful storage and secure use of chemicals in the science laboratories. The evacuation and fire drill procedures could have been more efficient. The school's alarm system did not effectively cover additional facilities, including the cafeteria.
- The school clinic was based in the KG and not easily accessible to students in the upper phases. There were insufficient medical staff members to carry out regular checks and support health education. Medication was securely managed and school's procedures for administering medicine were correct. Medical records were treated with sensitivity and only shared with relevant staff members to ensure the safety of specific students.
- Most parts of the building, external play areas and equipment were safe, hygienic and suited to a modern learning environment. The hallways were used by students to store schoolbags and personal items. They were not always safe and at times the bags inhibited people's movement between classrooms.
- The school encouraged students to contribute positively to their own lifestyle by choosing the healthy food options available in the school cafeteria. The closure of the swimming pool and reduced health education program limited students' opportunities to embed good habits and develop deep understanding of the importance of diet and exercise.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Care and support	Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable

- The school outlined a pastoral care policy and a range of positive behaviors that encouraged students to be respectful, considerate and honest. The majority of teachers promoted the values of trust, fairness and courtesy in their rapport with students. On occasions, a minority of students in the middle and high schools were less able to take responsibility for their own behavior.
- Efficient arrangements were in place to maximize attendance and punctuality. The Principal and senior leaders greeted parents upon entry to the school each morning and records of latecomers were



maintained. Through a range of strong home to school links and communication, parents were well aware of the school's arrangements and had a commitment to punctuality and high attendance levels.

- School policy documents outlined the procedures for identifying students with SEND and gifted and talented students.
- In the absence of key teaching supports in literacy, numeracy and behavioral management, almost all SEND students struggled to make good progress. When a formal diagnosis was confirmed, the school requested parents to provide a shadow teacher.
- A qualified counselor provided guidance and support to students in the areas of social and emotional development, subject choices and career options. The health education program was also part of the counselor's role.

### Provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

The overall effectiveness of provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities

Weak ↓

- The management of provision for students with SEND was ineffective. The systems lacked coordination and resulted in little or no support being provided for the majority of students across all phases. The SEND coordinator had a very good understanding and awareness of student's needs, but was not sufficiently resourced by governors to provide an effective system of support to students, parents or teachers.
- The implementation of policy on identifying students with SEND was not secure and confused both parents and teachers. The school had not fully understood the differences exhibited by children with additional language needs and those with specific needs and disabilities. There were unnecessary delays in the identification process and therefore it was uncertain whether children had been correctly referred for support.
- Discussions were held with parents before a recommendation was made to consider an external assessment for their children. If a student had a registered disability, the school requested parents to fund a shadow teacher to offer one-to-one support in classrooms. The provision, training and accountability of shadow teachers was not well managed by the school.
- Lesson observations demonstrated little evidence that teachers' planning was adapted to accommodate a wide variety of needs among students. The expectations of students with SEND were low and rarely was any reference made during lessons to the students' individual education plans.
- The progress made by students with SEND was weak overall. Few received the support to enable them to make consistent progress. In all phases, students had no access to extra help and they depended solely upon their classroom teachers for support. Students did not have access to literacy or numeracy experts and were not enabled to make better progress in these two important areas.

## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Acceptable

- Leaders, along with members of the school community, had reviewed and updated the school's vision and mission statements to focus on students' personal and academic achievements. The direction for development and the leaders' commitment were evident. Although the school admitted students with SEND, the leaders had not ensured that there was consistently good provision for these students to achieve well.
- The quality of leadership varied across the different phases and subject areas. A significant minority of leaders demonstrated solid understanding of high quality provision and outcomes. However, the lack of experience of most leaders in the planning, delivery and assessment of learning a US curriculum hampered the progress and personal development of students.
- Although relationships and communication between the leaders and the staff were professional, there was low morale amongst some members. The school had many written policies and procedures which were communicated through handbooks and via the school's website. However, the quality of performance reflected the leaders' ineffective communication of expectations, plans and success criteria.
- The majority of leaders demonstrated capacity to improve the school. However, only a few leaders took initiative that led to immediate improvements.
- Leaders did not ensure that the school was fully compliant with the requirements of a US curriculum school or the National Agenda parameter. Although the school had managed to improve some aspects of its performance, other areas had declined in quality since the last inspection.

### School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Weak ↓

- The school lacked formal, comprehensive and rigorous processes for evaluating its performance. Although stakeholders' views were sought, students' results were analyzed and major challenges were identified, these did not result in accurate evaluation of the school's effectiveness. As a result, most school self-evaluation judgments were overly optimistic and did not enable the governors to make good development decisions.
- Senior leaders and heads of departments shared responsibility for monitoring teaching. However, there was inconsistent understanding of what constituted high quality provision. The leaders' beliefs about the effectiveness of teachers were often inaccurate, particularly in the upper phases of the school. Although appropriate teacher appraisal and support were noted, these varied in quality across the school.
- Although the school had an action plan based on previous inspection recommendations, it lacked a formalized strategic development plan. The limited ability of the school to recognize its shortcomings led to ineffective improvement planning and action. Consequently, the effects on provision and students' personal and academic outcomes were limited, particularly in middle and high schools.
- There had been very limited progress in meeting the recommendations from external evaluations. The school's performance in some major areas had declined over recent years.

## Partnerships with parents and the community

Good

- The school regularly involved parents in a good range of activities such as 'Reading Tea Time', National and International Days and a spring fair, among others. The school's open-door policy ensured that all leaders and teachers were approachable, and this helped parents gain knowledge about their children's performance. Stakeholders' views were sought formally and informally.
- The school used various means, such as the website and portal to inform parents about policies, students' expectations and upcoming events. The regular parent-teacher conferences, the use of electronic mail and multiple parents' evenings and coffee mornings ensured smooth communication. Although the school published major initiatives such as the National Agenda, it did not successfully promote parents' understanding of this and other areas for development.
- The reporting on students' academic achievements was still underdeveloped. The students' termly reports, particularly in the upper grades, did not include comments on students' next steps in learning. The KG children's reports were of better quality.
- The school had involved its students in community activities such as the Young Entrepreneur and the Junior and Senior Model United Nations. The school had links with the Department of Economic Development for several high school students.

## Governance




Weak ↓

- The governing board lacked representation from a majority of stakeholders. The Advisory Board did not have the expertise or involvement to provide professional advice to the major decision makers. The Advisory Board had no formal process for communicating other stakeholders' concerns. The governing board frequently surveyed the parents, teachers and students; however, the results of the surveys had limited effects upon decisions.
- The governing board was comprised of the owners and the principal. This limited the board's ability to hold the school's leaders to account. The advisory board had no evident role in reviewing the leaders' success in achieving the school's mission.
- The governing board decided the direction of the school. It had recently expanded the school's middle leadership capacity and recruited more native English speaking teachers. However, most of the newly appointed teachers lacked experience in accredited US curriculum schools. The governing board demonstrated appropriate knowledge of the school's major challenges but did not have a realistic view of its performance. Consequently, the strategic plans and the actions taken were not effective.

Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most aspects of the school's routines were implemented in an effective manner. In the upper phases, timetabling lacked cohesion and clarity. Weak understanding of a US curriculum had resulted in disruption to the delivery of the full curriculum in some subjects.</li> <li>• The school was adequately staffed. However, the high turnover of teachers affected the smooth running of the school and their deployment. The professional development program was not sufficiently focused on student's outcomes.</li> <li>• The learning areas were mostly of adequate quality. There was insufficient accommodation to offer good quality provision to students with SEND. Access to the premises was well managed and secure.</li> <li>• Across all phases, insufficient resources were a feature of almost all classrooms. Most students were hindered in their learning by not having access to proper language, science and numeracy materials. The provision of IT for in-class research purposes was weak.</li> </ul>	

## The views of the parents, teachers and 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> 	2015-2016	51
	2014-2015	30
<b>Teachers</b> 	14	
<b>Students</b> 	82	

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

- A few parents and minorities of teachers and senior students responded to their surveys.
- The large majority of parents thought that the quality of education in the school was good.
- Only a large minority of students were satisfied with the quality of education they were receiving.
- Most parents and students agreed that progress was good in English, mathematics, and science.
- Only large minorities of parents and students agreed that progress was good in Islamic Education and in learning Arabic as a first or additional language.
- Only a large minority of students were satisfied with the range of extra-curricular options.
- Less than half of students believed that the school prepared them for the next phase of life and learning and even fewer believed that they would receive recognized qualifications after graduation.
- A large majority of students believed that the school did not provide adequate resources or facilities.
- Parents thought that their children were safe at the school.
- Less than half of the students thought that the school dealt with bullying effectively, and a majority of them indicated that other students did not behave well in school.

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)