




Philadelphia Private  
School

 Curriculum: US

Overall Rating:

Acceptable



"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		Students	
Location	Al Muhaisnah	Gender of students	Boys and girls
Type of school	Private	Age range	4-18
Opening year of school	2006	Grades or year groups	KG 1-Grade 12
Website	www.ppsdubai.org	Number of students on roll	1501
Telephone	04-2646202	Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Address	Muhaisnah 4, Qusais (Off Beirut St. and Halab St. Intersection) - P.O.BOX 185020	Number of Emirati students	55
Principal	Elizabeth Sadek	Number of students with SEND	34
Language of instruction	English	Largest nationality group of students	Syrian
Inspection dates	7 to 10 November 2016		
Teachers / Support staff		Curriculum	
Number of teachers	100	Educational permit / Licence	US
Largest nationality group of teachers	Lebanon	Main curriculum	US / California
Number of teaching assistants	23	External tests and examinations	MAP
Teacher-student ratio	1:15	Accreditation	NEASC
Number of guidance counsellors	2	National Agenda benchmark tests	IBT, MAP
Teacher turnover	21%		



## 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.

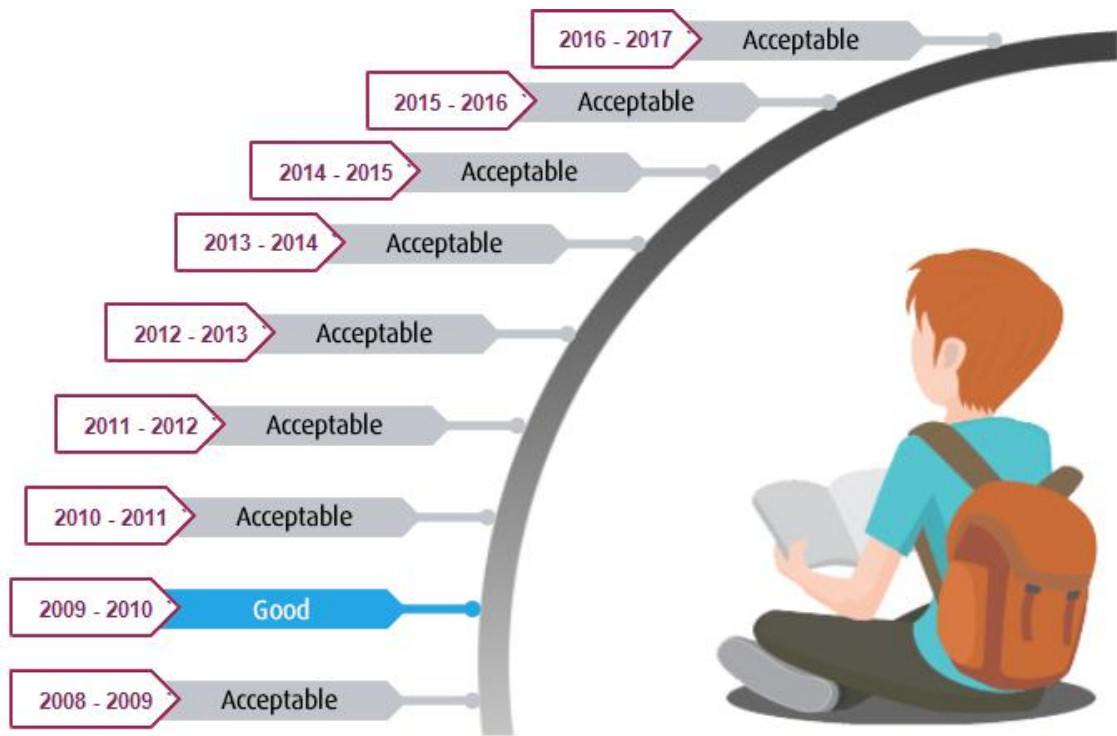
Inspection judgements are drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observation of students’ learning in lessons, review of their work, discussions with students, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and review of surveys completed by parents, teachers and students.

### 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 Philadelphia Private School



- Philadelphia Private School (PPS) opened in 2006, and grew each year until 2015 when it reached its current enrolment of just over 1500 students. The principal has led the school for just over two years, during which time the school started the journey towards accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). The teacher turnover rate of 21% is a reduction since last year.
- Over the past three years, students consistently displayed good personal and social skills. The health and safety of students has been outstanding each year, with safeguarding and other policies implemented very well to ensure the security of all students. Effective leadership and good communication with parents are consistent hallmarks of the school.
- Improvements to the quality of teaching, including the level of expectation for teachers, have been repeated recommendations, with a focus on improved student learning. The school has been asked each year to develop assessment practices to pinpoint and address students' learning needs better, with the overall purpose of improved student achievement.

## Summary of inspection findings 2016-2017



**Philadelphia Private School** was inspected by DSIB from 7 to 10 November 2016 . The overall quality of education provided by the school is **acceptable**. The section below summarises the inspection findings for each of the six performance indicators described in the framework.

- As in the previous year, there were some improvements in performance, with students making good progress in most key subjects this year. However, overall levels of attainment across all subjects remain acceptable, except in KG where children reach good levels of attainment and make good progress. Good learning skills are developed in KG and in post-16.
- The personal and social development of students continues to be good, with older students showing innovation through their learning. Students have a good understanding of Islamic values, and Emirati culture, and speak easily about different world cultures.
- Teaching in KG and high school shows the most consistent quality. While there are good lessons in all phases, teaching is less consistent in the elementary and middle school classes. There have been improvements to assessment, with the inclusion of external assessments and some modifications to internal tests, but there is still much to be done to use assessment information effectively to improve learning.
- The overall curriculum matches the school's adopted state standards well. The enhancements made to individualise it are well-considered, providing a reasonable breadth of subjects and experience. The first steps towards arranging the secondary phase to match the structure of a U.S. curriculum high school started this year with Grade 9.
- Health and safety, child protection and safeguarding continue to be outstanding. The acceptable judgement for care and support of all students is affected by some students' lack of punctuality to school and to classes, and by the lack of a programme for gifted students.
- All aspects of leadership are good, and well-supported by an extended self-study that helped school leaders to know the school well. Leaders plan and execute actions, and include the governors in a joint effort towards improvement.

## What the school does best

- School leaders' have a strong focus on improving student achievement.
- Improvement to all aspects of the Kindergarten (KG) are evident.
- The curriculum is well-rounded, providing opportunities for students to develop character, the arts, physical activities and sports. It includes a full range of academic subjects.
- A safe and secure learning environment is provided.
- Senior students make a responsible contribution to the well-being of the school community.

## Recommendations

- Improve the use of assessment to enhance students' learning, by:
  - providing clear and consistent guidance to teachers and leaders in how to record, interpret and use assessment data
  - getting all teachers to provide clear and targeted feedback to students informing them of their next steps in learning.
- Further develop teaching to improve attainment, by:
  - identifying good practice in teaching in the school and use it as a model for others
  - developing a range of strategies to develop and enhance students' learning skills
  - developing creative and innovative learning environments that motivate students
  - challenging students through differentiated, well-matched tasks which stimulate their learning
- Promote reading in the curriculum within all subject areas.
- Review the schools' vision and commitment to be a fully inclusive school. Revise the admissions policy to provide education for a wider range of students and ensure that those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and those with gifts and talents, are well catered for.

## 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:**

- Attainment as measured by the National Agenda Parameter tests in English, mathematics and science is not secure.
- The school meets the registration requirements for the National Agenda Parameter.
- The school leadership team adequately analyses MAP results and works with heads of department to identify areas of the curriculum that need to be addressed.
- The school aligns its curriculum with the UAE National Agenda requirements by using assessment information to identify students' weaknesses in terms of content and skills. They focus on the identified areas to strengthen students' skills.
- The middle leaders work with teachers in English, mathematics and science to increase the level of challenge, and the number of critical thinking questions and activities in lessons, especially to target the high achievers.
- Students show an adequate understating of their MAP results through the individual reports they receive. They use online resources to run basic research inside the classroom and more extended research outside the classroom.







Overall, the school's improvements towards achieving its National Agenda targets meet expectations.



Overall school performance

Acceptable

1 Students' achievement

		KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Islamic education 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good ↑	Acceptable	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	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good ↑	Acceptable	Acceptable
English 	Attainment	Good ↑	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Good	Good ↑	Good
Mathematics 	Attainment	Good ↑	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
	Progress	Good	Acceptable	Good	Good
Science 	Attainment	Good ↑	Acceptable	Good	Good
	Progress	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good	Good

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

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

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

## 3. Teaching and assessment

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

## 4. Curriculum

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

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

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






## 6. Leadership and management

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

- Assessment, including checklists and observational notes, indicates that a majority of children are attaining above curriculum standards in all areas of English literacy. Students' daily work shows that the integrated curriculum promotes good cross-curricular links, allowing children to develop and use their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in all areas. This integration results in good progress being made during lessons. The children consistently use their writing skills to label and write sentences for meaning and purpose.
- The majority of children attain levels of knowledge in numbers, operations and geometry that exceed their grade level standards. Their knowledge of counting, sequencing, addition and subtraction is the foundation for their continued understanding of mathematical concepts. Over time, the children have progressed well in using their skills to solve problems and connect math to their own experiences. For example, children use the number of boys and girls in the class to determine the total present and absent.
- In science, the majority of children are secure in their understanding of the world. The majority reach standards that are above expectations. They make better than expected progress in lessons as they use their newly developed investigative skills to predict and observe changes in the environment. Through daily activities and focused lessons, their understanding of the weather, living and non-living things, and a healthy lifestyle shows good progress when compared to their starting points.





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

- In Islamic education, most students are working at the expected level. They understand the significance of the five pillars of Islam, can read and interpret short Surahs of the Holy Qur'an and understand its importance as the word of the Allah as revealed to Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). In lessons and in their most recent work, a majority of students make better than expected progress as a result of interesting teaching which involves all students in learning.
- In Arabic as a first language, the majority of students achieve at higher than expected levels. For example, in Grade 3, most students apply their comprehension skills when learning about a robot. They can respond to questions using the appropriate standard Arabic. In Grade 5 they can write three paragraphs appropriately. While their language skills are progressing steadily, their free reading is under-developed. Overall, a majority of students are making better than expected progress in this phase.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students demonstrate knowledge, skills and understanding that are in line with curriculum expectations. Students understand teachers' instructions and respond to simple questions. In lower grades, students can read and understand single familiar words and short sentences. At the end of the phase, students can read grade-level appropriate texts, understand and discuss their meanings, summarise a short story and write a string of sentences about past events. The majority of students make better than expected progress.
- The majority of students are working above curriculum expectations in English, with particular strengths in the lower grades. The use of external measures to determine attainment is beginning to have an impact on student performance, although internal test scores are consistently higher than external measures. Students' oral language is well developed. In lessons and in their work, most students are developing reading and writing skills well. From their starting points, progress for all students exceeded the projections in the MAP assessments. By the end of elementary school, most students have made good progress.
- In mathematics, most elementary students attain at the expected level. Although external benchmarking is at variance with the school's assessments, the work produced by students shows an acceptable standard against the mathematics curriculum. Students in Grade 1, work well with addition and subtraction equations, and Grade 5 students can perform operations with multi-digit numbers. The majority of students make at least the expected level of progress from their starting points, and develop mathematical skills adequately over time.
- Students' attainment is acceptable in science. They make appropriate use of hands-on activities and achieve an appropriate level of understanding of scientific concepts. Although internal assessment data show a high level of attainment, the external data does not support that. All groups of students make good progress in lessons, which is supported by the good progress indicated in MAP assessments. They are developing their investigative skills well.

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

- In Islamic education, most students demonstrate knowledge, skills and understanding of Islamic concepts, beliefs and values, in line with curriculum expectations. Students know the manners of entering a mosque. They understand the concept of Tawheed and the signs of its manifestation in Allah’s creation. Their recitation skills are emerging. In Grade 8, students understand the meaning and the significance of Qur’anic verses dealing with natural phenomenon, such as the eclipse of the moon. In lessons and in their recent work, most students make the expected progress.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students' attainment is in line with expectations. They sometimes express themselves using slang Arabic. They can listen and respond reasonably, although they lack confidence. Students' free reading is limited so they are not confident in their comprehension when reading independently. Students can write simple paragraphs, although they are still building basic grammar. Students demonstrate progress at the expected level in their work over time.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students demonstrate knowledge, skills and understanding that are in line with curriculum expectations. Students understand teachers’ instructions and requests. They are able to present basic information about immediate members in their family. They can read and understand a dialogue about a familiar topic such as the five senses. They can summarize a simple familiar story. Some students mispronounce words when they read aloud. In lessons and in their work over time, most students make the expected progress.
- In English in the middle school, attainment is acceptable. External test results show lower attainment levels than the scores in internal tests and in their work in lessons. Students’ oral language skills are strongest, with some inconsistency in written work. Extended writing shows progress for some students but not for all. External MAP assessments show that Grade 6 students are surpassing their progress projection in reading, and all three grades are meeting progress projections for language use. In the stronger lessons, students use critical thinking opportunities to deepen their understanding.
- In mathematics, students’ attainment is acceptable. The majority of students perform very well in internal assessments although this is not the case when compared to the performance of students internationally. Students develop basic mathematical skills as they move through the phase, although their critical thinking skills are not strong. Students reached, or surpassed, their progress projections in MAP assessments in Grades 7 and 8, with all groups of students making above average progress.

- The majority of students exceed the curriculum expectations in their knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts. Although internal data point to high levels of attainment, external data do not support those levels. In Grade 8, students differentiate between acids and bases in their practical work and tell whether they are weak or strong. The majority of students make better than expected progress towards their learning objectives and over time. This is evident in their lessons and is supported by their MAP progress assessment results.

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

- In Islamic education, most students are working at the expected level. They understand and apply rules of the Holy Qur'an recitation adequately. Students understand the significance of the story behind the revelation of Surat Al-Noor. They memorize verses from Surat Al-Kahf and can use Arabic resources to find interpretations of the Surah. Students write various papers on the miracles of the Holy Qur'an. In lessons and in their most recent work, a majority of students make better than expected progress as a result of purposeful teaching, extracurricular activities, and good learning skills.
- In Arabic as a first language, students attain levels in line with expectations. Internal assessment is not an accurate representation of attainment. Most students are not consistently using standard Arabic. They lack confidence, although a few students are better when making presentations. They can respond to basic text, both verbally and in writing, with few grammatical mistakes. Grade 9 students recognise metaphors in poetry, although not all are able to apply this understanding. All groups of students demonstrate progress at the expected level in their work.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students are working in line with curriculum expectations. They respond to the teacher's questions in Arabic. They can read a relatively long passage and understand the main ideas and events. Students are able to gather simple information about a topic such as a tsunami, and share it with the teacher at a simple level. In lessons and in their most recent work, students make progress in line with curriculum expectations.
- In English, students achieve grade level expectations within the curriculum in internal tests and class work, but perform more poorly in external tests. The language skills of speaking, reading, writing and listening are demonstrated very well by almost all students, although higher order skills such as inference are not strong. Grade 9 students make significant progress compared to MAP projections, although later grades fall short of those goals, making acceptable progress.

- In mathematics, the majority of high school students attain at levels above curriculum expectations. On external assessments, Grade 9 students have improved attainment levels and exceed their progress projections on MAP assessments. However, progress is less strong in other year groups. Internal assessments continue to show higher attainment compared to students internationally. High school students develop competence as mathematicians, working with greater confidence and fluency. Almost all groups of students make good progress.
- Students attain levels in science above curriculum expectations. They demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of concepts in the different sciences. Across the phase, students use fair tests to generate information following the steps of the scientific method. In Grade 12, for example, students use their understanding of osmosis to determine the concentrations of unknown solutions. Students' external data support lower levels of attainment over the past few years. All groups of students make good towards the learning objectives in lessons. This is supported by MAP results.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

- When given opportunities, a majority of students take responsibility for their own learning. In some classes, learning targets are used, and many students can explain what they are learning, although not always why they are learning it. This aspect of learning improves as students get older.
- Students interact and collaborate well. They make better progress in developing their learning skills when classes have a balance between independent and collaborative group work. A majority of students are developing their communication skills well. Across most subjects, there is not enough precision in how students present their work, making it more difficult to use prior work to revise topics from week to week.
- Younger children benefit from realistic lessons which help them make connections with real life and between subjects. They apply their learning in constructive ways, showing good learning skills. Across all phases, students are not well skilled in making these connections on their own. They are often unsure how to use what they learn in practical ways or across different subjects.
- Age-appropriate higher order and critical thinking skills are underdeveloped for most students. While lesson plans include these aspects, students rarely build these skills in class. There are pockets of skilful practice, for example in comparing literature to current affairs. However the level of reasoning and problem solving achieved by students is too low.

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

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

- Students are independent in their learning and need little supervision around the school. They are motivated and work hard in their classes and appreciate feedback from their teachers in order to improve.
- Behaviour in the school is positive, especially in the KG and elementary sections. Students respect and follow school rules, contributing well to the positive learning environment. They feel supported and valued by their teachers and display self-discipline during the school day.
- Students relate well to each other and are courteous towards their teachers. They understand that their school is a community of acceptance and that everyone deserves respect.
- Almost all students make good choices with regard to healthy eating and exercise. They participate in activities that support good health, including outside of school. Lessons and displays in the school indicate that this is a priority. The school canteen has made an effort to offer more healthy choices for the students but there are still some improvements to be made.
- Overall attendance in the school is good. However punctuality to classes is variable and continues to be an area for improvement.

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

- Students demonstrate a clear understanding of Islamic values and how they influence contemporary society in the UAE. They understand about tolerance and apply it in their everyday lives.
- Students appreciate the Emirati heritage and culture. They can give examples of traditions, arts and culture which are typical of the Emirates. Students are fully involved in celebrations such as National Day, Flag Day and Martyrs Day.
- Students across the school appreciate and respect their own cultures. They have adequate knowledge of popular historical monuments around the world, such as the Eiffel Tower, the pyramids and the Statue of Liberty. However their understanding of folklore, music and global art are still developing as they build appreciation of world cultures.

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

- Students understand their roles as members of the school community and participate in many extracurricular activities, including sports. High school students initiate and lead a number of activities which help to maintain a harmonious school environment through community service and the publishing of a weekly newsletter. They donate packages to Dubai Cares.
- Students show a positive work ethic and take responsibility for improving their learning and work. High school students undertake creative initiatives, such as during business week, to sell products for profit. They demonstrate innovative skills, for example through designing and building a robot that won the first prize in a robotics fair in Dubai.
- Students care for their school and participate in activities to improve the environment through recycling projects, green spaces, and the conservation of electricity. Older students recycle waste and sell it to encourage a culture of sustainable recycling. They are in the planning stage for introducing a composite project and donating the money to children in Nepal.

### 3. Teaching and assessment

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

- Most teachers have a secure knowledge of their subjects. In KG, teachers' understanding of how students learn is stronger than in other phases of the school. In most subjects, particularly in the elementary and middle schools, only a few teachers use the best methods to meet the needs of all learners.
- In KG, teachers plan purposeful lessons that make good use of time and resources. Planning is effective in the other phases where, in the better lessons, plans are matched to the needs of learners. Teachers' slow initial pace in some lessons, for example the prolonged introductory activities in English and mathematics, occasionally reduces the time for personalised and effective learning in the rest of the lesson.
- Students benefit from positive interactions with teachers, which help to engage them in their learning. Skilled teachers make good use of questioning, although this is not fully developed across the school. In upper grades, interactions are productive and encourage thinking but there is not a consistent and effective approach across all phases, to motivate students to reflect and consolidate their learning.
- Lesson plans give detail of how students with different needs will be supported. Teachers are improving their skills in accurately setting targets for groups of students. Effective approaches that provide challenge take place but are not consistent. Too frequently, there is a lack of challenge in most subjects, and particularly in Arabic as an additional language, mathematics and English.

- Teachers understand the need to enhance students' learning through problem-solving and developing thinking skills. However, their teaching skills are not good enough to ensure that students make the intended progress in developing their critical and higher order thinking skills. Students use learning technologies effectively in lessons to support their learning.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Assessment	Good ↑	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- The school aligns its internal assessments to the California standards and the MoE curriculum. Although aligned with the standards, internal tests are not well calibrated with the age level outcomes, when compared with external assessments. In Arabic as an additional language, internal assessments are not aligned with the curriculum. In KG, checklists and observational notes of children's work, link to the intended learning outcomes of the curriculum.
- The school benchmarks its students' outcomes against appropriate external tests that include MAP and IBT. These provide a realistic picture of students' academic performance, as MAP, in particular, is directly designed for California standards for students whose first language is not English. The school is working to improve the alignment between internal and external assessment results.
- Leaders analyse assessment data adequately and they are improving their skills in the use of external results to identify groups of students with common learning needs. Assessment procedures are being diversified to include portfolios and projects. In KG, staff track progress after each monthly theme. The assessment data are analysed and used to determine next steps for learning.
- The school uses the assessment information available to make decisions that influence teaching and the curriculum. School leaders, for example, use internal assessment results to modify the course offered in the high school. They use exam results to target specific areas of learning that the data reveal as weak or in need of improvement.
- Teachers check students' workbooks regularly. They leave written feedback in the workbooks but it does not consistently provide sufficient information on how students can improve the quality of their work, or about their next steps in learning. In KG, teachers know each child's strengths and weaknesses and consequently provide appropriate feedback, challenge and support that have a positive impact.

## 4. Curriculum

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Curriculum design and implementation</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good


- The curriculum, aligned with California Common Core State Standards, has a clear rationale and offers a broad range of experiences for all students. It values teacher contributions, with student input and interests being a common feature at its core. In Arabic as a first and additional language, collaboration with the school's curriculum team helps enhance and enrich both subjects.
- The curriculum's scope and sequence plan allows students to develop their potential. The curriculum is vertically aligned to ensure there is a progression of skills development.. Particular attention is given to transitions between phases.
- A wide range of curriculum electives offers enhancements to subject areas. The U.S. high school credit system has been launched in the first year of high school (Grade 9). Extra-curricular activities, relevant to the needs and interests of all students, are offered; such as pre-engineering and anatomy. Students have options of courses, including those that relate to their interests and areas of future study.
- Cross-curricular links are developing in lessons and across the school through comprehensive efforts to address independent learning, writing and reading. Teachers and students have the flexibility to explore on-line learning. A variety of educational programs are used.
- Curriculum reviews are conducted annually. The opportunity offered by a dedicated software package to review the curriculum on a continuous basis is in its infant stages. The school is committed to using this curriculum tool, which gives opportunities for frequent feedback and to use research-based practice to make changes when needed.
- UAE social studies is taught as a stand-alone subject, in collaboration with the curriculum coordinator for the school's US social study program, and cross curricular links with other subject areas, often as a thematic approach. The course also allows students an opportunity to present to the wider school community through assemblies and programs about UAE history and culture

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



- Teachers create modified lesson plans as needed for students with SEND. These students receive support in withdrawal classes and within the classroom. Additional Grade 9 classes provide instruction in core subjects. Secondary regular education support classes assist students who are new to instruction in English. Enhanced learning opportunities for gifted or talented students are not offered.
- The school offers opportunities for innovation and social contribution at the high school level where students are actively engaged in their learning through activities such as a robotics class, designing solutions to real-life problems with KG classes, and 'Think Outside the Box' Arabic activities. Middle school students work on environmental projects such as composting and sustainability.

- Students make connections to the UAE through classroom activities that celebrate the Emirati culture and values. Science classes study topics such as homeostasis in relation to the temperature levels of Dubai, and the acidity of UAE soil considering the low levels of rain. Middle school students learn of the history of the UAE and about the Emirati culture in the UAE social studies class.

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

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

- Child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place. Parents, students and staff are aware of these and students know who to speak to if they have any problems, such as with bullying and cyber-bullying. Staff are equipped to deal sensitively with students' concerns. Effective arrangements are made to ensure that the school is secure. The school is an environment where students feel safe.
- Safety measures are comprehensive and appropriate systems are in place. Students are very well supervised at all times. Senior student volunteers play an effective role in the supervision of younger students. All students are encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility for their own health and safety. The premises are clean well maintained.
- The school environment supports students' learning. Record keeping is thorough and any incidents are efficiently dealt with, recorded and reported to parents, as appropriate. Medication is checked on a routine basis, secured and administered by qualified staff. The science laboratories are well equipped and all materials kept securely.
- School facilities are appropriate for all grades and learning needs, including for students with SEND. All maintenance records are up to date and regular inspections take place. Although there is no elevator, the school has arrangements to support those who require assistance. In other areas of the school, ramps are installed to allow access for students with mobility problems.
- Effective procedures are in place to promote healthy living. Students know the importance of exercise, and healthy eating. In KG, snacks are monitored to ensure healthy choices are made. The school's policy on the promotion of healthy choices extends to the cafeteria. Students are informed about the importance of dental hygiene and care.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Care and support</b>	Good	Acceptable 	Acceptable 	Acceptable

- School systems are well implemented so that students are well behaved in classrooms and outside in the corridors. Generally, the school's approach successfully encourages students to take responsibility for their own discipline. However, there are a few individuals whose behaviour is not at the expected standard.

- The school's attendance is closely managed and monitored by office and administrative staff but systems to improve the punctuality of students to lessons are not fully effective.
- Students with SEND are identified during enrolment, or by teachers as needs become apparent in class. Relatively few students have been identified as having SEND across the school. The identification criteria are narrow and not fully inclusive, running the risk of some students not being identified. Gifted and/or talented students are not identified.
- Students who have been identified with SEND are provided with good instructional support through pull-out and in-class instruction provided by SEND support staff and classroom teachers. Students who are gifted or talented do not receive appropriate support as procedures to identify them are not developed.
- Guidance and support are provided by the elementary and secondary lead teachers of SEND who also serve as the school's counsellors. The college and careers counsellor co-ordinates external testing and provides relevant counselling for students in Grades 10-12. Students are provided with information to guide them through the selection of colleges locally and internationally, and to support the preparation of their college applications.

## Inclusion

### Provision and outcomes for students with SEND

Acceptable

- Leaders recognize the need for more attention and support to be provided to students with SEND and have hired the two new heads of SEND. The school intends to provide training so that all SEND support teachers are able to provide the guidance needed for students with SEND both in the classroom and in pull-out sessions. No current staff member holds a teaching qualification in special education.
- Processes are in place to identify current students who have SEND. However, this identification is not always used effectively to provide appropriate support in a timely manner to improve progress within the classroom. The school rejects some students on the basis of their SEND, which means that it is not as inclusive as it could be.
- Parents of students with SEND feel well informed about their children's progress through frequent contact with the heads of SEND. They say they are welcome to participate in the design of their children's IEPs and they appreciate the help and guidance they receive. Parents say that they would like further information on how to handle behavioural or developmental issues that might arise within the home.
- Planning in lessons is often individualized and curriculum modifications are provided in response to the identified students' needs. This helps the students to stay focused on the lesson, to enable them to learn more and make more progress
- Students with SEND make better progress when the assistance of support teachers and pull-out classes is provided and when the classroom teachers are knowledgeable and able to provide in class modifications.

## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Good

- The principal, senior and middle leaders share a common vision for the well-being of all students in a positive learning environment. There is a unified approach and commitment to school improvement that is evident at all levels. School leaders have embraced the UAE priorities and are beginning to find ways to make better progress towards meeting the school's National Agenda targets.
- School leaders and teachers work well together to strengthen aspects of the curriculum, aligning the content and structure with the U.S. curriculum and ensuring consistency of standards. Leaders show initiative and demonstrate a willingness to try different methods as they identify and promote best practices for teaching, and strategically develop provision for students with SEND.
- Communication is well managed in the school, with students and parents making full use of an open door policy. The numerous staff teams for the accreditation process have built collaborative skills. These continue to be evident in the positive relationships between teachers and leaders, as they are continually updating their professional skills and working towards key improvements in the school. Teacher retention is positive, particularly in the early elementary school.
- Senior leaders have supported the development of the middle leaders this year, resulting in more individuals being able to develop new competencies and skills, supported by a reduced teaching load. This input brings informed expertise about the students to the management teams. There is a greater awareness of what needs to be done to improve student outcomes, supported by an improving understanding of the use of external data.
- The schools' performance shows improved progress in many subjects since last year, reflecting the positive effect of a strong leadership, and a unified vision. Leaders understand what is needed next to lift student attainment. They have enacted steps to build teacher capacity and competency towards that result. Leaders ensure the school is compliant with statutory and regulatory requirements.

### School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Good

- The school looks deeply at its strengths and where it needs to improve through the accreditation process and through evaluating the recommendations from the previous inspection. Staff evaluate the learning environment and the school's performance. This information, along with assessment results, contributes to improvement planning. Overall, the judgements in the self-evaluation form this year are a fair reflection of the findings of this inspections.
- The ongoing review of teacher performance initiated within the last year is sound, and centred around effective teaching strategies. Peer observations, individual targets, and directed feedback are all part of this new process which shows good potential to impact on student achievement, when combined with informed analysis of external assessment data.
- School improvement plans are extensive, with progression based on the results of the analysis of the school. Actions are specific, detailed and carry measurable goals towards improved teaching and student achievement. However, the school's National Agenda targets are not effectively impacting

on practice in terms of students' learning skills and teachers' strategies towards developing higher order thinking.

- The recommendations of the previous inspection report have all been at least partly addressed. The first formal recommendation has been fully met, and each of the others show clear progress, with a structure for change put in place. The gains in the previous report, combined with this year's improvements, reflect sustained capacity for improvement.

### Partnerships with parents and the community

Good

- Parents feel they are a valued part of the school community. Their views and ideas are heard and help shape the school's priorities. They are involved through committees and the Parent Teacher Association and they make positive contributions to the well-being of the school.
- Communication is strong between the school and families. Parents consider themselves to be partners with the leaders and staff and they feel free to ask questions, share concerns and offer suggestions. They are kept abreast of their children's weekly lessons and targets as well as school events through emails, newsletters and the school's website.
- Reporting of academic and personal progress is ongoing and through report cards in a more formal format. Parents are informed about their children's learning, their areas of strength and paths for improvement. Parents appreciate that teachers know their children well and work with them to be contributing members of the school and wider community.
- Parents are enthusiastic about the new extra-curricular activities and competitions. These events regularly provide their children with both local and national experiences. For example, the Model United Nations event is a source of pride for families. Parents are consistently involved in school fund raising that support local charities and other worthy causes.

### Governance

Good 

- Governance has been expanded to include stakeholders from across the school community. It now has representatives from students, teachers, parents of students past and present, community members, and individuals who work in higher education, and business. This breadth of experience has a positive impact on providing a broad knowledge of the school.
- The governing body is aware of the students' personal and academic strengths, including the results of external assessments. Governors distinguish between attainment and progress, and recognise the impact of the school's work on student achievement. This knowledge enables the governors to hold the school to account for student performance.
- The school's performance remains a high priority which the governors support and are willing to invest in as needed. Their vision is long term. For example, they see the need for experienced, specialist personnel to support existing staff while addressing weaknesses, and to help establish a culture of excellence.

Management, staffing, facilities and resources




Good ↑

- The day-to-day management of the school is good. The timetable for the new U.S. high school year group and the rest of the school is skilfully created. Students know where they should be and all staff and middle managers work together well. Most routines in the school are efficient, although a few minor adjustments are needed due to punctuality concerns.
- Almost all staff are well qualified academically, although not all teachers hold teaching certificates in addition to academic qualifications. The teacher turnover rate has decreased this year, with more stability particularly in the lower elementary and KG. All staff benefit from targeted professional development, and are deployed well. A few key positions have not yet been filled.
- The premises and facilities support the delivery of the curriculum well. The multipurpose hall, and play areas are always well used and provide for a range of activities and learning to take place. The library provides a range of levels of books for all ages, with hundreds of promising new additions that include literature sets and research journals. Some students use the library to read for pleasure during breaks.
- Resources are available in classes to provide hands-on learning experiences, which are age appropriate and very varied. Elementary students enjoy the science lab, which encourages their investigative skills development.

# The views of parents, teachers and senior students

## The views of parents, teachers and senior students

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

Responses to the surveys		
Responses received	Number	
 Parents*	2016-2017	244
	2015-2016	36
 Teachers	104	
 Students	264	

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

- Almost all of the parents who responded to the survey are satisfied with the quality of education received by their children. This includes both personal and academic development.
- Most parents are happy with the leadership of the school and are pleased with the quality of the teaching staff, resources available to support learning, and the information received in report cards and parent-teacher conferences.
- A majority of parents have some concerns over their children's reading abilities both in Arabic and English and wish that their children would have more opportunities to read for pleasure both at school and at home. Support for children with SEND is an area mentioned by parents that needs improvement.
- All teachers are happy with their positions in the school and the support they receive from leadership. A few requested more training in order to improve their teaching strategies and skills.
- Most students feel there is a good range of resources and activities available to them in order to improve their learning skills. They report having good relationships with their teachers who show interest in them and want to help them do better. Most also feel that leaders and teachers listen to them but do not always include them when making decisions on class activities or rules.

## 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)