



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational needs and disabilities



Innovation

## Inspection Report 2015-2016

Al Arqm Private School

Curriculum: MOE

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

<p><b>General information</b></p> 	<p><b>Location</b> Al Barsha</p> <p><b>Type of school</b> Private</p> <p><b>Opening year of school</b> 1990</p> <p><b>Website</b> www.Alarqam.ae</p> <p><b>Telephone</b> 04-3400888</p> <p><b>Address</b> Al Barsha 1</p> <p><b>Principal</b> AMJAD AL JUBR</p> <p><b>Language of instruction</b> Arabic</p> <p><b>Inspection dates</b> 15 to 18 February, 2016</p>	
<p><b>Students</b></p> 	<p><b>Gender of students</b> Boys and girls</p> <p><b>Age range</b> 4-18</p> <p><b>Grades or year groups</b> Kindergarten 1 to Grade 12</p> <p><b>Number of students on roll</b> 886</p> <p><b>Number of children in pre-kindergarten</b> 0</p> <p><b>Number of Emirati students</b> 340</p> <p><b>Number of students with SEND</b> 88</p> <p><b>Largest nationality group of students</b> Emirati</p>	
<p><b>Teachers / Support staff</b></p> 	<p><b>Number of teachers</b> 65</p> <p><b>Largest nationality group of teachers</b> Egyptian</p> <p><b>Number of teaching assistants</b> 11</p> <p><b>Teacher-student ratio</b> 1:11</p> <p><b>Number of guidance counsellors</b> 3</p> <p><b>Teacher turnover</b> 30%</p>	
<p><b>Curriculum</b></p> 	<p><b>Educational permit / License</b> MoE</p> <p><b>Main curriculum</b> MoE</p> <p><b>External tests and examinations</b> IBT, NAP</p> <p><b>Accreditation</b> None</p> <p><b>National Agenda benchmark tests</b> IBT</p>	

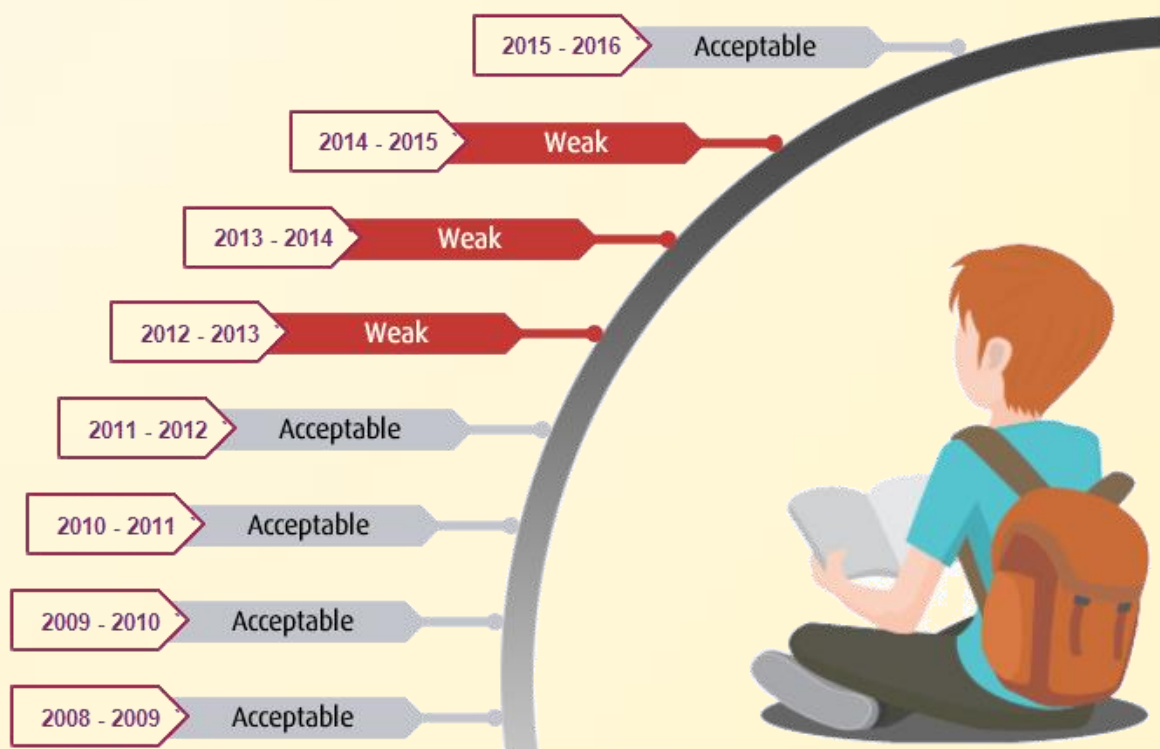


## Summary for parents and the community

**Al Arqm Private School** was inspected by DSIB from 15th to 18th February, 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 Arqm Private School** provided an **acceptable** quality of education for its students.

- The attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science were weak in the Kindergarten (KG) and acceptable in all other subjects across the school, except for the progress in mathematics in Cycle 2 where it was weak. Most students in Cycles 1, 2 and 3 were engaged in their learning. Students learning skills were acceptable in Cycles 1, 2 and 3 but were weak in the KG.
- Students were generally well behaved across the school and most students were active in their learning. Their understanding of Islamic values and appreciation of Emirati culture were strong. Their social responsibility and innovation skills were generally acceptable, although in KG they were weak.
- Teaching and assessment were acceptable in Cycles 1, 2 and 3, where teachers knew their subjects well and ensured positive interactions with their students. Teaching skills and knowledge of how young children learn best was limited in the KG. Improvements were required in the development of independent learning skills across all phases of the school.
- Curriculum design was acceptable across Cycles 1, 2 and 3 but weak in KG, where children had few choices. Curriculum adaptation to meet the individual needs of students was also acceptable across Cycles 1, 2 and 3 and weak in KG. Modifications were made based on an analysis of the National Assessment Programme (NAP) results to address weaknesses in skills and knowledge in Cycles 1, 2 and 3. Little adaptation took place in the KG.
- Provision for health and safety was acceptable across all phases. The school had made improvements to arrangements for the safety of students. Provision for the care and support of students was acceptable, across the school. Relationships between staff and students were strong and attendance was well managed.
- Leadership and management were acceptable. The Director needed greater support from the Governing Board to improve the rate of progress. The senior leadership team knew the school well and were committed to further improvement.



### What did the school do well?

- The vision, drive and commitment of the Director had been successful in establishing a common sense of purpose and ambition to improve the school.
- The oldest students showed self-discipline and a sense of responsibility.
- Students across the school had a strong understanding of Islamic values and demonstrated these in their day-to-day lives.



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

- Increase the composition of the senior leadership team, through governing board support, to ensure that senior leaders:
- better co-ordinate the identification, support and monitoring of students with special needs and disabilities (SEND).
- better coordinate the design and adaptation of the curriculum to meet the needs of most groups of students.
- develop more effective communication and cohesion across the KG, and the senior sections of the school.
- Develop the understanding of leaders and teachers of how young children learn and establish best practices in KG education.
- Use the best teaching experience that exists in both the girls' and boys' sections, to improve the engagement of students in all classes and subjects through providing greater opportunities for:
  - Independent learning
  - Collaborative learning
  - Active learning
  - Discussion between students
- Improve the quality of teaching in all classes and subjects by making better use of the results of assessment to modify curriculum and lesson planning in order to meet the needs of groups of students.



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

- The progress of students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) was acceptable in Arabic, in Islamic education and in Cycle 3 in English, mathematics and science. The progress of SEND students in English, mathematics and science was weak in all other cycles of the school. Progress of students attending withdrawal classes was good.
- Reports were sent to parents regularly, on a monthly basis. Parents were updated on the progress of their children but the school did not always share the next steps that were to be taken.
- Most communication with parents was through telephone contact, email and text messaging. Parents were free to visit the school if they wished, but only a minority took that opportunity.
- Parents were involved in the process when their children were first identified as having SEND. However, they had little, if any, involvement in the drawing up of the individual educational plans (IEPs) for their children apart from agreeing on what the school had decided.
- The student counsellors supplied some support to parents but there was no single designated person that the parents could contact if they needed further information or had a concern.

### 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 met the registration requirements of the National Agenda Parameter but had no attainment data from the parameter to make a judgement on the progress towards meeting the National Agenda targets.
- The school was supportive of the National Agenda and had communicated with all stakeholders. Various posters promoting the National Agenda were viewed in the school. Members of the school community had a basic understanding of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum's vision for the UAE but were less confident in their understanding of international benchmark testing and its significance. Students were impressive in their understanding and support for any initiative that would help raise the academic standards and reputation of their school.
- Attempts had been made to modify the curriculum to support the school reaching the National Agenda targets. However, these changes were not being delivered consistently in lessons in any subject.
- Many teachers were not sufficiently skilled in questioning and lesson planning to engage students in critical thinking. Enquiry and problem solving were only viewed in the better lessons and were not being developed consistently as a core skill even within science and mathematics.
- Technology resources in were very limited. Students did not have access to technology within lessons. Most student research was conducted as homework projects. The Ministry of Education (MoE) workbooks, supplemented by worksheets and information sheets, were the students' main resource.



Overall school performance

Acceptable ↑

1. Students' achievement

		KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
<b>Islamic education</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	<b>Progress</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Arabic as a first language</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	<b>Progress</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
	<b>Progress</b>	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
<b>English</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	<b>Progress</b>	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Mathematics</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	<b>Progress</b>	Weak	Acceptable	Weak	Acceptable
<b>Science</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	<b>Progress</b>	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
<b>Learning skills</b>	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

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

	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Personal development	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good	Good	Good
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

## 3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Teaching for effective learning	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

## 4. Curriculum

	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Curriculum design and implementation	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Curriculum adaptation	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

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

	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Care and support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

## 6. Leadership and management

	All phases
The effectiveness of leadership	Acceptable
School self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
Parents and the community	Acceptable
Governance	Acceptable
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	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as an additional language	Not applicable	Not applicable
English	Weak	Weak
Mathematics	Weak	Weak
Science	Weak	Weak

- Most children had age appropriate knowledge of some key principles and worship of Islam, such as the five pillars. They knew the names of the five prayers, their times, Salah manners and could perform basic Salah movements and Wudu' (ablution). Recitation skills were strong. They memorised a number of short Surahs, Hadiths (the Prophet's sayings), and Duas (supplications). They demonstrated simple knowledge of the Prophet's life and knew the names of some of his companions. The attainment of children was in line with curriculum expectations in lessons and work samples. Over time, most of the children in KG made expected progress. However, in lessons, KG 1 children made better progress than children who were in KG 2.
- In Arabic as a first language, most children attained at levels that were in line with curriculum expectations. Most children understood the teachers' instructions and responded well to them. They could link words to pictures. Towards the end of the KG phase, children were able to write words that they heard and they understood their meaning. Most students made acceptable progress in lessons.
- The large majority of children entered school with limited English. Progress in their speaking skills was better than in their other skills. They had knowledge of single sounds and the names of letters. However, in reading most children were unable to blend sounds together to make words. They listened to and understood simple instructions and could reply in short phrases. They learned new vocabulary and revised familiar words at levels that were below expectation. Children were given little opportunity to form letters and practise their writing.
- In mathematics, children developed an understanding of number and of shape. By KG 2 children could count and order numbers to 10. They could name basic two-dimensional shapes and primary colours. Children were given very little opportunity to practise their skills in practical activities, linked to real life, such as role-play, shopping, construction and number games. This reduced their opportunities to make more rapid progress in their understanding and application of mathematics.
- Most children developed a limited scientific vocabulary and knowledge of science. Their skills of investigation were at a very early stage of development. Children's progress was hindered by the lack of opportunity for them to engage in enquiry-based learning. Most children could recall scientific facts but they had very few opportunities to apply their knowledge to the real world in order to consolidate their understanding. Access to, and resources for, practical investigation activities were limited.

### Cycle 1

Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as an additional language	Not applicable	Not applicable
English	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mathematics	Acceptable	Acceptable
Science	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Most students demonstrated an appropriate knowledge of Islamic concepts, values and principles that were in line with curriculum standards. They knew the value of knowledge in Islam and talked about famous Muslim scientists. They had age-appropriate knowledge of the Prophet's life (PBAH) and that of his companions and followers. They had adequate knowledge of the interpretation of parts of the Holy Qur'an. They could elicit rules from some of its verses and they had strong recitation skills. School test data indicated better levels of attainment and progress by the girls, compared with the boys.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students attained levels that were in line with curriculum expectations. This was supported by students' assessment results. Most of the students had good listening skills. They understood the meaning of spoken text and could read longer sentences using standard Arabic. Their writing skills were developing. Girls in Grade 5 were performing better than the boys, while in Grade 3 there was little difference between boys' and girls' progress.
- Students' attainment in English was broadly in line with curriculum expectations. This was reflected in their average scores in NAP tests. There had been an upward trend in the results of international benchmark assessments over the previous three years. Grade 5, students took part in conversations, making themselves easily understood. Students' progress in reading and writing was acceptable, although girls generally made quicker progress and reached higher levels than boys. Students' progress during lessons was acceptable, although it was weaker in Grades 1 and 2.
- In mathematics, students entered Cycle 1 with attainment levels below age expectations. Progress in Grades 1 and 2 was weak. Grade 3 NAP tests showed students' attainment was well below Dubai averages. Trends in these tests showed student performance consistently below expectations over the past four years. However, by Grade 5 students were performing above the average for Dubai schools. Progress in lessons was acceptable from Grade 3 to Grade 5, with little difference between boys and girls. By Grade 5, students knew basic multiplication facts and understood that multiplication could be expressed as repeated addition. They could recognise and compare angles that were smaller or larger than a right angle and identify cylindrical shapes.
- In science, most students were performing in line with MoE curriculum standards. Progress was not as strong in the lower grades or within the boys' classes. Most students demonstrated levels of knowledge and understanding that were age appropriate although their ability to apply and use the knowledge was less secure. Application of the scientific method, practical work and skill development were not regular features of science lessons and this weakened both attainment and progress. In a few of the better lessons, students were involved and enjoyed enquiry, investigations and meaningful practical activities, which were related to real life.

### Cycle 2

Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as an additional language	Not applicable	Not applicable
English	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mathematics	Acceptable	Weak
Science	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Most students demonstrated a clear knowledge of Islamic values, the principles of Islam and Islamic laws that were in line with curriculum standards. They had a developing knowledge of the Prophet's life (PBUH) and most could discuss some of the lessons learned from his life. Students could interpret adequately the Holy Qur'an and could describe the rules from a number of its verses. Students had strong recitation skills of the Holy Qur'an and showed adequate understanding of recitation rules. In lessons and work samples, attainment of all students was in line with curriculum standards. However, school assessment data showed better attainment by the girls. The girls made better progress in lessons and over time from their starting points compared to the boys.
- In Arabic, as a first language, the attainment of most students was in line with curriculum expectations. MoE and NAP assessment results confirmed this. Most students had good listening skills. They could analyse and evaluate oral messages and explain their views using standard Arabic language. Their reading skills were improving and they could write extended texts. The trend of assessment results showed acceptable attainment over the past three years. A comparison between results of the diagnostic tests at the beginning of the year and the end of term one showed that most students made the expected levels of progress. Overall the progress of girls was stronger than boys.
- Students' attainment in English was broadly in line with curriculum expectations. The results of external assessments varied a little from year to year; a little above average in 2013 and 2015. During lessons, students spoke with a growing confidence, using words in the correct contexts. Girls in Grade 8, eloquently voiced their ideas about 'life on the moon'. When reading, students were increasingly adept at using dictionaries to look up unfamiliar words. Such skills contributed to their steady progress in writing. Students' writing demonstrated greater fluency and grammatical correctness as students moved through the grades. Students were making at least acceptable progress from their starting points and typically, girls made better progress than boys.
- By Grade 9, NAP assessment results showed that student attainment in mathematics was acceptable overall. Over the past three years, attainment trends were inconsistent but generally in line with the average for other MoE schools in Dubai. By Grade 9, students could match fractions with corresponding percentages and decimals, and convert improper fractions to percentages. Progress was stronger for girls as determined by the NAP tests and in lessons observations across Cycle 2. Progress was very weak for boys.

- NAP science test data analysis showed that students in Grades 7 and 9 were performing at higher levels to those in other MoE schools in Dubai. Girls attained at higher levels and made better progress than boys. Learning in science was mainly focused on the acquisition of knowledge. However, the practical skills of most students, including their development of controlled and independent investigations and hypothesising, were poorly developed. Students' attainment and progress were strengthened when their science topics had meaning and were related to real life examples. At the beginning of this Cycle, the majority of students were able to explain simple weather systems. By Grade 9, students understood the position of the Sun and planets in the solar system. The progress of students with special educational needs was weak.

### Cycle 3

Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as an additional language	Not applicable	Not applicable
English	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mathematics	Acceptable	Acceptable
Science	Acceptable	Acceptable

- The Islamic education test data indicated good levels of student attainment overall. However, in lessons and work samples, most students demonstrated levels of understanding of Islamic values, Islamic laws, Qur'an recitation and interpretation that were in line with curriculum standards. Students had a good understanding of the Holy Qur'an and memorised long Surahs using accurate recitation rules. Most students in Grade 12 were able to interpret assigned verses from the Holy Qur'an and make conclusions. They could apply meaning to real life problems such as the rules of marriage and the conditional laws of the universe. The girls' attainment was better than that of boys. Students' progress in lessons was in line with expectations, although girls made better progress overtime.
- In Arabic as a first language, students' attainment was in line with curriculum expectations. The school used national assessments from MoE for monthly and end of term exams. Most students could analyse and evaluate poems that had been read to them and they could present their points of view in standard Arabic. Most of the students, especially the girls, could write using the correct structure and correct grammatical phrases. Assessment data over the last three years showed acceptable attainment. Progress of students, as measured by comparing diagnostic test and end of term exams, was acceptable. Most of the students progressed in reading poetry with appropriate intonation. All groups of students were making similar levels of progress.
- Students' attainment in English was broadly in line with curriculum expectations. Almost all students had met the minimum standards in the MoE tests at the end of Grade 12 in 2015, with similar results in previous years. Most students were making acceptable progress in lessons, with the girls performing better than the boys. Students were gaining confidence in discussing facts, ideas and experiences and in reading complex texts with understanding. Students' writing skills were advancing steadily. This was especially evident in the girls' section where they wrote articles, expressing their ideas, using increasingly accurate sentence construction and grammar.

- In mathematics, assessment data and lesson observations indicated that the attainment of most students was in line with national standards. Students could use a probability tree diagram, calculate averages and solve simple permutation problems. They could identify properties of complex two-dimensional shapes and solve problems involving volume, area and length. They could interpret graphs including domain, range, gradients, intercepts and continuity, and apply differentiation rules such as the product rule. There was little difference in progress between girls and boys in advanced mathematics but students' progress in general mathematics groups was slower.
- Students' attainment and progress in science were acceptable when measured against MoE science standards. In the better lessons, opportunities were provided for students to use enquiry and investigation to support their learning. When lessons included meaningful practical work, students' progress was enhanced and there were opportunities for problem solving, data analysis and critical thinking. Students in these lessons demonstrated expected levels of knowledge, skill and understanding. Test results reflected inconsistent attainment and progress over recent years. The majority of girls in Grade 10 were able to investigate Hooke's law, graph the results and draw appropriate conclusions. Boys in Grade 12 could explain their understanding of the effect of osmosis on simple organisms. Students with special educational needs made acceptable progress overall.

	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Learning skills	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Students in KG and Grades 1 and 2, were not able to work independently as most of their learning was teacher directed. Across the remainder of the school, girls generally showed the most positive attitudes to learning; they were able to work well independently. Students had some awareness of what they needed to do to improve but were not helped to identify their own strengths and weaknesses.
- Most girls were able to work collaboratively in all subjects. However, the boys in younger grades lacked the essential skills to work effectively in groups. They had not learnt to listen, to share ideas or to make useful contributions to complete a group task successfully. In higher grades students were more confident at working successfully together.
- A strong feature of most Arabic lessons was the connections students made to real life and other subjects such as Islamic education, mathematics and science. Children in the KG phase, rarely linked their learning to real life or to other subjects. Across Cycles 1, 2 and 3, girls were more confident learners who were better able to apply their knowledge and understanding to unfamiliar situations in order to support their learning.
- The opportunities for students to use technology were limited and rarely viewed in lessons. Most independent research and project work was set as homework. Independent thinking, problem solving and enquiry were underdeveloped skills in all subjects across the school. Occasionally a research project was shared and enjoyed within lessons. In Islamic education, students presented research projects in class on the life of the Muslim explorer, Ibn Battuta.

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

	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
<b>Personal development</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

- Most students had positive attitudes to their learning and they engaged well in their lessons. This was a particularly strong feature of lessons that involved active learning strategies and those in the higher phases. Students in Cycle 3 contributed confidently and responded well to their teachers' advice.
- In almost all phases of the school, except in the KG phase, students' interactions were appropriate. In the girls' section of the school, good behaviour was evident in all classes. Not all younger boys showed the same self-discipline and attitude to their learning. In Cycle 3, the behaviour of the students was of a good standard reflecting well on their maturity.
- Relationships across the school were mostly of a courteous nature. The students generally had positive relationships with each other and the school's staff. During recess, students chatted amicably and engaged cooperatively in a number of ways. The relationship between the children and the teachers in KG was good but the interactions between children were less developed. They were reluctant to share and to help each other.
- The school had engaged in a number of projects to promote healthy eating such as 'Milk and Dates Day', 'Fruits & Vegetables Day', 'Healthy Food Day'. It was clear from the students that these initiatives had met with some success as most lunch boxes had a good balance of healthy food. Physical education lessons were provided for all students and a range of sporting activities was also available.
- Attendance was acceptable in KG, Cycle 1 and in Cycle 2, and good in Cycle 3. Most students arrived punctually each morning. The organisation of the buses was well managed to ensure that students were on time. Most students returned to their classes promptly after recess.

	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
<b>Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Students across the school appreciated the values of Islam in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and modern Dubai. They talked about the importance of demonstrating Islamic values and accepting others regardless of their culture or religion. KG children knew about mosques and prayers.
- Students in all phases showed a high level of respect for the UAE heritage and culture. They talked about public places in Dubai and described several cultural activities and celebrations such as the National Day and the Martyrs' Day. Children in the KG sang the UAE National Anthem enthusiastically in Arabic and most could name the seven Emirates. Displays and cultural corners across the school represented many aspects of the UAE life and traditions.
- Students from different nationalities demonstrated high levels of respect for cultural diversity in the UAE. They celebrated their own cultures. They talked about the foods and the famous places in their countries. However, their awareness of wider world cultures was limited across all grades.

	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Students across the school demonstrated adequate levels of social responsibility and contributed to the school initiatives and to the wider community. For example, they talked positively about a 'Business Day' and a 'Healthy Food Day'. Outside of the school, the boys participated in activities such as Dubai's cleaning campaigns. In the KG such participation was less evident.
- The majority of students had a good work ethic. They appreciated the need to work hard and study to be successful in life. They talked about the importance of having targets and flexible plans to achieve them. Many of them participated in the school's Holy Qur'an recitation competitions, and some achieved high positions in Dubai competitions.
- Students demonstrated appropriate levels of environmental awareness. They talked about environmental challenges in the modern world, such as pollution caused by cars and factories. Students in Cycle 1 planted their own gardens in the school. The senior students talked about global warming and explained the need for using renewable energy, greening the desert and recycling to conserve the environment. Children in the KG phase had less environmental awareness.

### 3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Teaching for effective learning	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Teachers generally had a secure knowledge of their subjects. This was most evident in Cycle 3, where teachers' insights enabled them to extend students' understanding and address their misconceptions. In the KG and Grades 1 and 2, teachers' understanding of how young children learn through purposeful play and independent exploration of their own ideas, was weak.
- Teachers lesson planning was inconsistent. It was more effective in the girls' section. Here, teachers often included specific ideas for gaining students' interest through practical approaches, such as role play and group discussions. Across the school resources were limited and included a heavy reliance on textbooks in many subjects.
- Where teachers established a dialogue and prompted students to think deeply rather than demand one-word answers, students progressed quickly. For example, boys in Grade 7 successfully collaborated and gave thoughtful answers to the teachers' open questions. In contrast, teachers of Grades 1 and 2 students often repeated the same simple questions many times and did not challenge the students.
- Teachers too often set very similar tasks for all their students. The more able were not always sufficiently challenged. Simpler tasks were routinely provided for the less confident students but additional resources, such as visual material and more practical strategies, rarely supported these tasks. There were some exceptions, such the prevalence of open-ended tasks for girls in Cycle 3.
- In the KG and the younger grades in Cycle 1, teachers tended to dominate lessons. Children were seldom encouraged to find things out for themselves. Across the school, students were rarely given opportunities to develop problem-solving skills. However, in some science lessons, students undertook investigations and learned to hypothesise, analyse and make conclusions.

	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
<b>Assessment</b>	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Student diagnostic tests, closely aligned to the school's curriculum, were being used in all core subjects. The results had been analysed and students had been placed in subject groupings. Historical MoE testing was also used to help determine students' attainment and progress, as were quizzes, projects, homework and skills assessments. Baseline testing was used to place students in KG classes but not to measure their progress.
- The school was beginning to analyse and make use of its NAP data. Some planned curriculum changes had been made. Results had been compared to the performance of students against Dubai averages. The school had begun using international benchmark testing to better understand students' areas of strength and weaknesses.
- The collection, collation and recording of assessment information was organised efficiently on a termly basis. The analysis of assessment data to monitor students' progress was developing from its early starting point. Students' test results were entered into an on-line database for parents to access. Tracking of formative data had not been established. Assessment in the KG phase was at a very early stage of development.
- Teachers had begun to make some use of data analysis to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of students. Data was used to determine extra withdrawal support for some students and to modify some aspects of the curriculum. At the time of the inspection, day-to-day assessments, which influenced future learning, were not a feature in the majority of classes.
- Most students in Cycles 1, 2 and 3 received support from their teachers who generally understood their levels of achievement. This was stronger in the girls' section where oral feedback was regular and helpful. Student self-assessment and peer assessment was a developing feature in Cycle 3 but its use was not consistent. Some teachers used assessment rubrics to support the evaluation of students' learning.

#### 4. Curriculum

	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
<b>Curriculum design and implementation</b>	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- The school's curriculum had a clear rationale. Based on the MoE curriculum, it focused mainly on developing students' knowledge and a few skills. The KG curriculum did not give sufficient emphasis on the personal and social development of the children. The school had recently enhanced the curriculum through the provision of art, physical education, and computer technology.
- Transitions between the different phases of the school were being supported through the use of the MoE curriculum framework. The school had devised its own English curriculum for KG and Cycles 1 and 2, before using the MoE curriculum in Cycle 3.
- The school separated students in Grade 12 into either a literature or a scientific stream with an appropriate array of curricular options that met their needs. In Grades 10 and 11, students were appropriately placed in either the general or advanced streams. Children in the KG phase had few opportunities to make choices about their learning and to follow their interests.

- The KG curriculum was not sufficiently well planned to maximise the benefit of appropriate, holistic learning for young children. Cross-curricular links were included in most of the lesson plans in Cycle 1, 2 and 3 but links were not sufficiently evident in lessons. Additionally, opportunities for independent learning and research were not always taken to reinforce connections between subjects.
- The school reviewed the curriculum regularly and modifications were made to meet, better, the academic needs of students. The curriculum was beginning to be adapted to include opportunities for students to be involved in school and community activities, such as Business Day, and World Day which focused on better understanding of different cultures.
- The social studies curriculum was aligned to the MoE UAE National Curriculum. Students had the opportunity to explore UAE heritage and culture. Grade1 students learned about UAE history.

	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
<b>Curriculum adaptation</b>	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- The curriculum was planned to meet the needs of the most of the students' learning abilities. As a result of the analysis of assessments, the majority of subjects were modified to address the weakness in students' skills and knowledge. The school provided additional lessons for non-native speakers of Arabic, in order to meet their needs better.
- The curriculum was largely based on the textbooks. Lesson planning was based on knowledge, with less emphasis on skills. The school was beginning to use the community to enhance its curriculum. A limited range of extra-curricular activities was provided to benefit students' academic and personal development.
- The school valued its links with Emirati culture and traditions. There were many displays and classroom activities. Across all phases, the school encouraged students to learn about Emirati heritage and its importance in UAE society. Students demonstrated an enthusiasm for living in the UAE and the opportunities it presented for their families.

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

	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
<b>Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- The school's leadership team had devised a safeguarding policy, including arrangements for child protection. All teachers had been trained to follow procedures. The procedures of communication and record keeping were in the process of becoming embedded. Internet safety was given a high priority.
- Students and staff benefited from a safe environment. The school's entrances were secure and visitors were routinely checked. Transport arrangements had greatly improved. Buses were parked in designated areas away from students. Staff supervision of embarkation and loading was effective and efficient. The school had separate medical clinics for the boys' and girls' sections. The medical staff provided useful advice on keeping healthy and fit. Medical staff kept detailed records of any ailments and minor injuries that they treated.
- The school kept detailed records of maintenance and followed the Civil Defence requirements for holding regular school evacuations. A system for notifying day-to-day damage was in place.

- The school's buildings were clean, well maintained and generally free from hazards. Soft safety surfaces had been placed under climbing apparatus. However, not all areas were covered; there were some rough surfaces and raised manhole covers. Science chemicals were securely stored and students used appropriate safety equipment in the laboratories when necessary. There were some ramps suitable for wheelchair users but no lifts between floors.
- The school promoted safe and healthy living effectively through the curriculum. The importance of a healthy diet was reinforced in science lessons and sometimes in other subjects. However, canteen food was limited; there was no fresh fruit available. There were adequate opportunities for students to participate in physical activities during lessons and after school.

	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Care and support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Staff-student relationships were positive and there was an atmosphere of mutual respect. Good behaviour was in evidence across all school sectors but particularly in KG and in the girls' school. There were very few instances of bullying. When these did occur, staff dealt sensitively with them, providing guidance in keeping with the school's underlying Islamic values.
- Procedures to promote good attendance involved parents and were effective. This had a very positive effect in promoting good attendance in all grades. Most students arrived punctually to school in the morning and returned to class after break periods in a timely manner.
- The school had recently identified a large number of students with SEND. There was a lack of precision in the identification of these students, which often led to inaccurate categorisation. The identification of students who are gifted and talented was in the initial stages of development
- Support across the school for students with SEND and for gifted and talented students was in its early stages of development. The school had recently invested in personnel and resources to ensure that support would be more focused. The small number of students attending withdrawal sessions received support well suited to their specific needs.
- The school's counsellors and class teachers provided regular and appropriate guidance to students in an inclusive and caring way. They supported students with advice on conduct and school rules prior to examinations and acted as a liaison between parents and the school. Some career guidance was available for students in the senior classes but this was not well developed.

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

The overall effectiveness of provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities	Weak
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- The school had appointed two teachers to support students with SEND this year and had provided dedicated learning spaces and resources for these teachers. However, there was no member of staff responsible for coordinating the whole area of SEND across the school and no clear policy on the school's position with regard to students with SEND.
- The school had employed an outside agency to identify students with SEND. This process had had some success but there were still a number of students whose classifications were not in line with the DSIB categories. The school had not made a distinction between students who required additional assistance for a short time and those students who needed to have more regular support.

- The school involved parents in the process of identification and shared the strategies that they planned to use to support students with SEND. Reports to parents were written very regularly, sometimes weekly but mostly on a monthly basis. Occasionally parents visited the school to discuss the needs of their children. Parental input in the construction of students' individual education plans was infrequent.
- Limited curriculum modification took place and, when it did, it was mostly through the use of differentiated worksheets. Planning for different learning activities matched to students' needs was rare. Most teachers did not have sufficient training to be able to integrate students with SEND effectively into their classes. Often, teachers had too low expectations of the students' capabilities.
- Students with SEND made the most progress when they were taught one to one during withdrawal sessions. However these students made acceptable progress in Arabic and Islamic education, and in Cycle 3 in English, mathematics and science while they were in mainstream classes.

## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Acceptable

- With support from governors and parents, the senior leadership team under the direction of the Director had recently rewritten the school vision and mission. It had a wide focus and included a commitment to the full educational development of each student. It expected the support of both the school and the family. The mission and vision were central to all decisions made. They placed the school firmly in the context of UAE's priorities.
- The senior and middle leadership teams were in the process of being restructured. Some responsibilities were being shared and some gaps in personnel, including a SENCO and a curriculum coordinator, remained. There was a greater emphasis in the senior leadership team on measuring students' learning and enhancing teachers' expertise. The school was fully committed to meeting the needs of those students with SEND in the school.
- Senior leaders in the school had clear lines of accountability. However, their roles and responsibilities were not sufficiently explicit. Meetings were regular and effective. They focused on the key performance areas of the school. Relationships were professional. There was a growing sense of collegiality in the school but many opportunities were missed to make use of teacher expertise in the different sections.
- There was a strong commitment to improve the school's performance. Leaders demonstrated an emerging understanding of how best to enhance the learning and personal development of the school's students. This was strengthened by the discussions that arose about external evaluation results. School leaders were receptive to staff suggestions. They valued staff and community feedback on the direction that the school was taking and the extent that it had progressed.
- As a consequence, there had been a number of measurable improvements in the school. Most notable had been the greater involvement of students in the community and the broadening of the curriculum, with greater opportunities to be creative, to engage in physical exercise and to use technology. The school leaders had ensured that the school was fully compliant with statutory requirements.

### School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Acceptable ↑

- Teachers had written the school self-evaluation form (SEF) but most judgements had been guided by the school director. Governors were involved in reviewing the document and parts had been shared with parents. It was informed by analysis of students' MoE and NAP assessment results. Information from the SEF, along with external reports on the school, were collated into a small number of key improvement targets.
- A system, based on the DSIB framework, was in place to monitor the quality of teaching. In most phases of the school, it produced accurate data of teacher performance. To complement this information, a new system of teacher appraisal had been established. It involved the use of student performance data. This data was gathered and analysed. It was beginning to be used to monitor the effectiveness of the work of individual teachers and to modify the curriculum.
- The school development plan clearly identified responsibilities, budget and success criteria and was a working document. School priorities were clear to most senior leaders. Links with the National Agenda were implicit, for example with targets to improve students' learning skills in line with the expectations of PISA and TIMSS tests. It was too early to measure whether or not they had had a positive effect on student attainment and progress.
- As a result of the school development plan, there had been some improvements to previous recommendations. Most notably, procedures for the safety of students arriving and departing by bus had been successfully put in place. The quality of teaching in most phases had improved, as had the analysis and use of MoE and NAP assessment data. The school understood its strengths and areas for development much better than it had done previously. The provision for students with SEND remained a continuing weakness.

### Partnerships with parents and the community

Acceptable

- Parents were becoming involved in the life of the school in a greater number of ways. Parent committees were in place for parents to discuss issues relating to the lives of their children, such as the results of grade level assessments. There were also an increasing number of events, which provided opportunities for both parent and student participation. These included National Day, Flag Day and Martyrs' Day. The majority of parents felt that the school listened to their views.
- Most parents were satisfied with the effectiveness of home-school communication. They had direct access to teachers through the usual channels. Additionally, the school's on-line management system allowed parents to track their children's test results and access information about their learning programmes. Teachers were accessible before and after school and parents felt that any unforeseen concerns would be addressed promptly and effectively.
- Reporting to parents took place four times a year. A new system of collecting report cards before meeting with parents was showing success. The traditional report cards detailing the acquisition of knowledge were being modified to share the skills that the students' had learned. The majority of parents and students felt that the reports gave useful information. The school also surveyed parents on a range of issues.

- The school was beginning to reach out to the community for the benefit of the students. Partnerships had been formed with the Al Noor School and students had visited to lead workshops there. The school had become a member of the Emirates Environmental Group and was benefiting from sponsorship from a local football club. Students engaged in a limited number of sporting and Islamic education competitions with other schools.

## Governance

Acceptable ↑

- The governing body was made up of four joint owners, two advisers with educational experience and the school director. Some of the parents had direct access to the governors. One of governors participated in the life of the school on a weekly basis enabling him to have frequent conversations with students and teachers. There was no formal systematic means of the governors gathering the views of parents in order to inform their decision-making.
- Through the informal visits and the formal reports from the director, the governors had an improved understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Key information was shared on student performance and the quality of teaching. Progress with priorities in the school development plan was regularly discussed and this was the means by which the director was held to account.
- The governors were keen to develop the capacity of school leadership and teachers. An external consultant, who had been a previous principal of the school, was employed to support the director. The governors recognised the importance of the National Agenda parameters and had resourced the provision of externally benchmarked tests. Additionally, they had enhanced facilities with regard to site security, IT and sports.




## Management, staffing, facilities and resources

Acceptable

- The day-to-day management of the school was effective. Established routines and procedures, known to all staff and students, ensured that all parts of the school ran smoothly. All available spaces were utilised to meet the needs of the school's student population. The timetable was well organised to allow for appropriate breaks between learning and little time was lost due to student movement between lessons.
- The school had a thorough system for the recruitment and induction of teachers. There were sufficient teachers and they were appropriately deployed but a large minority did not have an educational teaching qualification. Professional development programmes, linked to the school's identified priorities, were in place. They were usually delivered by existing school staff. There was insufficient leadership training for senior and middle leaders.
- The school made good use of its limited accommodation. There were sufficient class spaces of an appropriate size for the number of students. Specialist resources supported the teaching of science to the older students and sheltered recreation areas, with some newly installed large play apparatus, provided attractive options for the girls and younger students. The boys benefited from a refurbished synthetic covered sports pitch.
- Many classrooms were equipped with digital projectors and these enhanced the learning of students. The libraries had an acceptable number of texts. Teachers had an adequate range of classroom resources.

### 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	27
	2014-2015	0
<b>Teachers</b> 	69	
<b>Students</b> 	94	

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

- Only a very small number of parents took part in the survey. The sample was too small to provide a realist view of parents' perceptions.
- Nearly all teachers completed the survey and they were positive about school performance.
- Teachers felt very strongly that students had a good understanding of Islamic values.
- Students were very positive about their learning.

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)