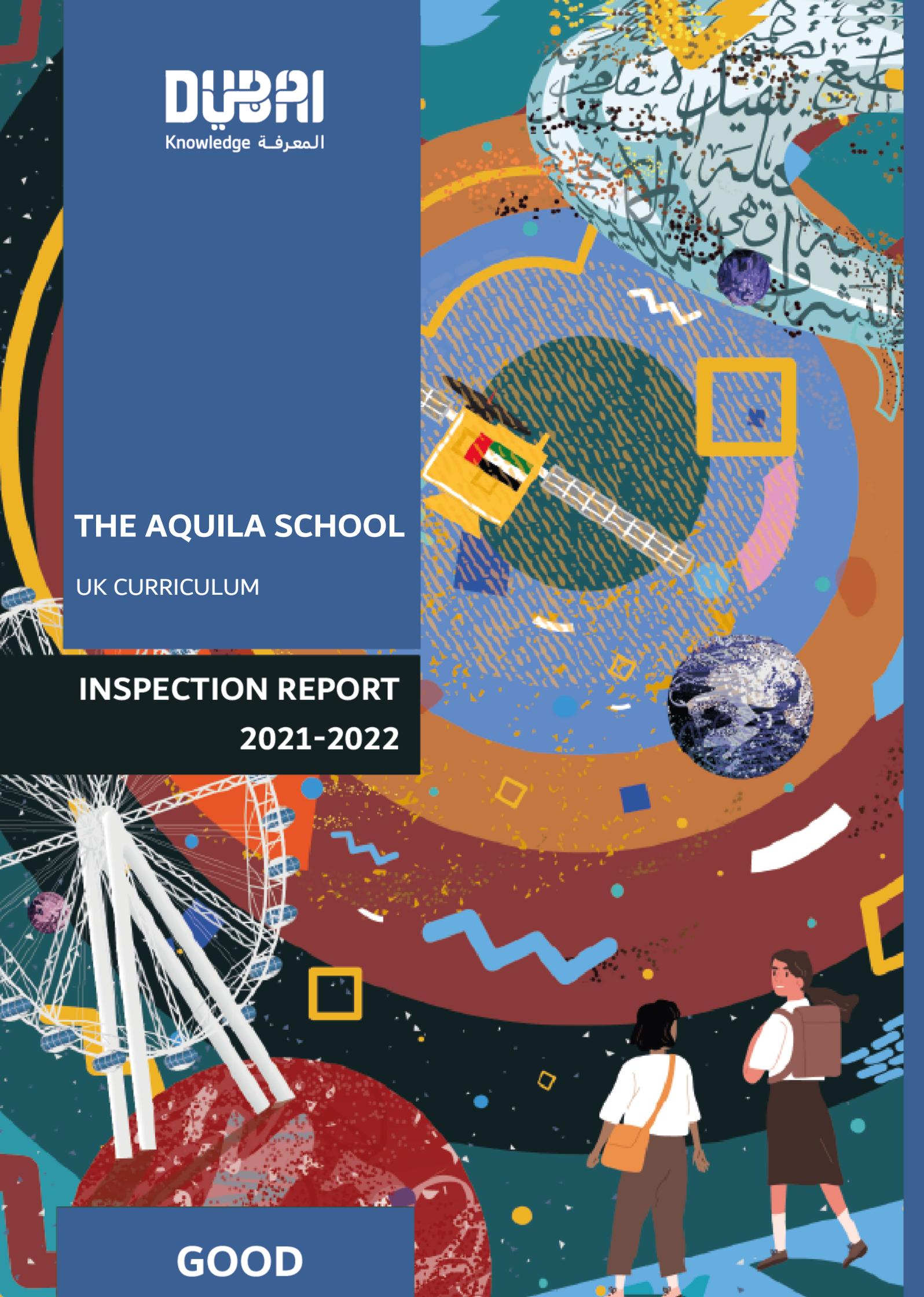


THE AQUILA SCHOOL

UK CURRICULUM

**INSPECTION REPORT
2021-2022**

GOOD



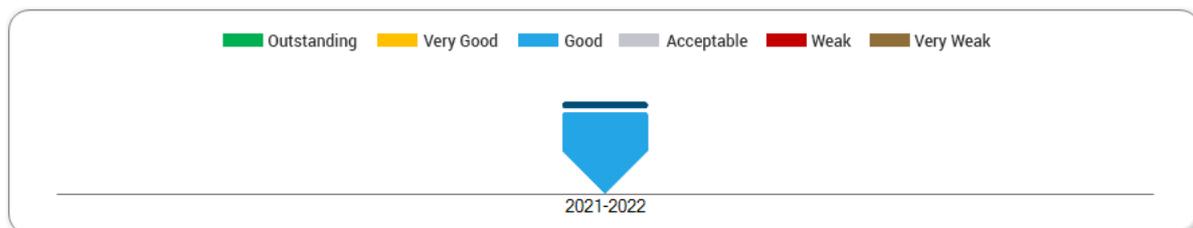
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School Information

General Information	 Location	Dubailand
	 Opening year of School	2018
	 Website	www.theaquilaschool.com
	 Telephone	045862700
	 Principal	Wayne Howsen
	 Principal - Date appointed	1/1/2018
	 Language of Instruction	English
	 Inspection Dates	07 to 10 March 2022
Students	 Gender of students	Boys and girls
	 Age range	3-15
	 Grades or year groups	FS1-Year 9
	 Number of students on roll	854
	 Number of Emirati students	26
	 Number of students of determination	75
	 Largest nationality group of students	Arab
Teachers	 Number of teachers	65
	 Largest nationality group of teachers	British
	 Number of teaching assistants	32
	 Teacher-student ratio	1:13
	 Number of guidance counsellors	1
	 Teacher turnover	10%
Curriculum	 Educational Permit/ License	UK
	 Main Curriculum	UK
	 External Tests and Examinations	PTE, PTM, PTS, GCSE, IGCSE, ASDAN, BTEC
	 Accreditation	BSO

School Journey for THE AQUILA SCHOOL



Summary of Inspection Findings 2021-2022

The overall quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The section below summarises the inspection findings for students' outcomes, provision and leadership.

Students Outcomes

- Students' attainment has improved and is consistently good in most subjects and across all phases. A particular strength of the school is the baseline assessment of students, gathered upon arrival. From the outcomes of this assessment, the school offers planned provision, particularly for those students with English language needs. Students in all phases make good progress in all subjects.
- Students have very positive attitudes to learning. They take responsibility for their own behaviour and are respectful towards one another and towards all adults. Bullying is rare. Students have a positive work ethic. They occasionally take the initiative to identify, plan, develop and implement their own projects, involving innovation.

Provision for learners

- Teachers plan lessons systematically in all phases. In the strongest lessons effective planning provides appropriate focus to prior learning and key vocabulary. However, in some lessons, teaching lacks sufficient pace and challenge. Teachers use questions well to prompt thinking and to test students' learning and understanding. They use information gained from assessments well in planning for learning.
- The school has developed a systematic programme of curriculum review. The curriculum ensures continuity and breadth for students as they move from year to year. It provides effective support for those students whose first language is not English. The school provides a broad range of extra activities to enrich learning and to enhance personal and social development.
- The highly-effective procedures and monitoring arrangements to keep students safe at all times are particular strengths. They are consistent in all phases. Relationships between teachers and students are very positive. Procedures for the identification of students of determination and those who are gifted and talented are appropriate.

Leadership and management

- Senior leaders set a clear direction and promote a vision that is communicated to, and shared by, the whole school community. Across the phases, leaders are effective in establishing a positive climate for learning. They have been particularly successful in managing a developing school through the additional challenges brought on by the pandemic, and in maintaining consistently good outcomes.

The Best Features of The School:

- Strong promotion of the school's values, policies and procedures; developing a strong community feel and helping the school run smoothly on a day-to-day basis
- Good provision for teaching, assessment and the curriculum, leading to consistently good learning outcomes in most subjects
- The very respectful relationships which students have with staff and with one another, which underpin a very positive climate for learning
- The safe, secure environment for learning and the rigorous procedures for the safeguarding of students, including child protection
- The high quality, well-resourced premises and specialist facilities that allow access to all and are conducive to effective teaching and learning.

Key Recommendations:

- Increase attainment across all subjects, particularly in Arabic, by raising expectations and increasing levels of challenge.
- Develop the capacity of middle leaders to fulfil their role, with accountability to governors and senior leaders, so as to ensure very good quality outcomes for students.
- Increase the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation and involve more leaders, at all levels, in the process.
- Improve the quality of provision for students of determination.

Overall School Performance

Good

1. Students' Achievement

		Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
 <p>Islamic Education</p>	Attainment	Not applicable	Good	Good
	Progress	Not applicable	Good	Good
 <p>Arabic as a First Language</p>	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good	Good
 <p>Arabic as an Additional Language</p>	Attainment	Not applicable	Good	Good
	Progress	Not applicable	Good	Good
 <p>English</p>	Attainment	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Good	Good	Good
 <p>Mathematics</p>	Attainment	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Good	Good	Good
 <p>Science</p>	Attainment	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Good	Good	Good
		Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Learning skills		Good	Good	Good

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Personal development	Very good	Very good	Very good
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good	Good
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good	Good

3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good
Assessment	Good	Good	Good

4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Good	Good
Curriculum adaptation	Good	Good	Good

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection/ safeguarding	Very good	Very good	Very good
Care and support	Good	Good	Good

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	Very good

For further information regarding the inspection process, please look at [UAE School Inspection Framework](#)

Main Inspection Report

1. Students' Achievement

Islamic Education

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Not applicable	Good	Good
Progress	Not applicable	Good	Good

- Across both phases, the majority of students attain levels that are above curriculum expectations. This is supported by information from internal and external assessments. Attainment in Primary is better than in Secondary. Progress by Arab students in Secondary is less secure.
- Students have developed strong memorisation and recitation skills. Their knowledge of Fiqh and their understanding of Divine Revelations are improving. Their knowledge and application of the rules of Tajweed, and their knowledge of Articles of Faith, are adequate across the school.
- With improved provision in the curriculum, students now make appropriate connections with real-life situations. They are beginning to support their answers with evidence from the Holy Qur'an and Hadeeth. However, their answers often lack sufficient depth.

For Development:

- Improve students' knowledge and application of the rules of recitation.
- Ensure that students reinforce their answers with appropriate, detailed reference to the Holy Qur'an.

Arabic as a First Language

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not applicable	Good	Good

- The majority of students make better than expected progress in most language skills. Although information from internal and external assessments shows attainment to be above curriculum levels, attainment in lessons remains in line with expected levels. This is partly due to students' generally low starting points.
- Most students' listening and reading skills are developing well. They are making steady progress in their reading, comprehension and oral language skills. Students in Secondary are beginning to develop skills in literary analysis. Their creative writing skills are variable in both Primary and Secondary.
- The recent introduction of poetry in Primary is contributing to the development of oral and reading skills. Students across the school are starting to write for different purposes. However, their knowledge of how to accurately present their written work is limited.

For Development:

- Raise teachers' and students' expectations of the development of all language skills.
- Ensure that students use the appropriate conventions in the presentation of their written work.
- Improve students' attainment throughout the school.

Arabic as an Additional Language

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Not applicable	Good	Good
Progress	Not applicable	Good	Good

- Students in both Primary and Secondary attain levels that are above curriculum expectations. The majority make better than expected progress. However, this is not consistent across all groups. Students who are new to Arabic and those in lower primary classes make the strongest progress.
- Students' listening and reading skills are well developed. They are able to understand and respond to oral and written texts, using appropriate expressions. Students in upper Primary and Secondary are beginning to write at length, using descriptive language.
- Recent changes in the curriculum, and an increased focus on making the teaching of the language more relevant, are beginning to have a positive impact on students' attainment. However, students in Secondary do not respond consistently well to unfamiliar contexts, either orally or in writing.

For Development:

- Improve students' oral and writing skills in both Primary and Secondary.
- Provide students with tasks that are appropriate to their needs and ability.

English

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good	Good

- Attainment levels in internal and external assessments are strong in Primary and Secondary. From a low starting point in Foundation Stage (FS), most students make rapid progress in the development of their language skills.
- Students' listening and reading are stronger than their writing. In all phases and year groups, there is a wide variation in students' ability to speak clearly and to present their work orally using standard English.
- The strong emphasis given to reading skills is beginning to have a positive impact on the development of students' vocabulary. The rate of progress in the acquisition of writing and comprehension skills is also improving. However, students' ability to analyse written texts critically is not well developed
- In every phase, Emirati students' attainment levels are lower than those of other students.

For Development:

- Improve students' spelling, punctuation, and grammar by ensuring that they check their work for accuracy.
- Improve the standards of students' speaking throughout the school.
- Develop students' higher-order thinking and their critical analysis of texts.

Mathematics

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good	Good

- Information from external assessments for Primary and Secondary, and from internal assessments for all phases, shows higher attainment levels and more rapid progress than that which is typically seen in lessons and in students' workbooks.
- Students are competent in all areas of mathematics, apart from practical measuring in geometry. Their understanding of mathematical concepts is secure. They have regular opportunities to apply their mathematical learning to real-life situations, and to relate it to work in other subject areas.
- The emphasis on developing mathematical language, through supportive classroom displays, is equipping students with the ability to explain their thinking clearly and to justify their answers. Students' abilities to record outcomes accurately and to manipulate number concepts is variable across and within phases.
- Emirati students are achieving at similar levels to their peers.

For Development:

- Address the inconsistencies of students' recording of their outcomes and improve the accuracy of measurements in geometry.
- Improve the consistency with which students manipulate number concepts.

Science

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good	Good

- Children in FS acquire secure knowledge of the world around them. Students in Primary and Secondary have good scientific knowledge and understanding. The quality of their investigation skills varies. A minority of investigations are not linked effectively to the topics being taught.
- Work is usually well matched to the needs of all students, but sometimes it lacks challenge for the most able. In both Primary and Secondary, there is too little independent learning or research. Learning technology is underused.
- Senior leaders have recently established separate science courses in Secondary. They provide collaborative approaches which enable students to explore and broaden their understanding. Teachers in Primary and Secondary generally use well-planned practical work to give students opportunities to improve their scientific understanding and knowledge.
- Emirati students are achieving at similar levels to others.

For Development:

- Improve the quality of investigative work in Primary and Secondary.
- Provide more opportunities for students to develop their independent learning skills and their use of learning technology.

Learning Skills

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Learning skills	Good	Good	Good

- Children in FS have many opportunities to speak to one another and to develop good communication skills. Students in Primary and Secondary are enthusiastic learners, who often know how well they are doing and their next steps in learning.
- Students can collaborate well, share what they know and develop their thinking skills, notably in Islamic Education, Arabic and English. They do not have sufficient opportunities to use learning technologies or to carry out research, and the quality of their independent learning skills varies.
- Students make connections between learning in different subjects and use specialist subject terminology and vocabulary with accuracy. They can apply what they learn to the wider world and to life in the UAE. They develop their innovation and enterprise skills, usually within organised school events.

For Development:

- Improve students' independent learning skills and provide them with more opportunities to use learning technologies.
- Encourage the development of students' innovation and enterprise skills.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Personal development	Very good	Very good	Very good

- Students in all phases have very positive attitudes to learning, which contribute to a very harmonious learning community. They take responsibility for their own behaviour. They are respectful towards all adults and to one another. Bullying is rare.
- Relationships between students and staff are friendly and considerate. Students, in all phases, are sensitive to the needs of others, including students of determination. They are willing to support one another, both socially and in their schoolwork.
- Students are very aware of the importance of, and what constitutes, a healthy lifestyle. They frequently make healthy eating choices and participate in regular exercise. Average attendance is at least 96%. Almost all students are punctual to lessons, including after break times.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good	Good

- Students in Primary and Secondary have a strong knowledge and understanding of Emirati culture and heritage, and of the other world cultures represented in the school. Children in FS are less secure in their appreciation.
- Across all phases, students demonstrate a strong understanding of, and respect for Islamic values. Most show well-developed self-awareness. They are considerate. They participate in the food-bank collection during the holy month of Ramadan. They have limited participation in Islamic celebrations.
- Students take part in cultural events such as National Day and Flag Day. Through their work in UAE social studies classes, they have developed a strong knowledge and awareness of the factors that influence contemporary life in the UAE.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good	Good

- Students in all phases are aware of their responsibilities in the school. They show empathy towards others, including students of determination. The school provides some opportunities for students to take on leadership roles and to volunteer within the local community.
- Students show a positive attitude to work. They enjoy purposeful activity. Occasionally they take the initiative to identify, plan, develop and implement their own projects and entrepreneurial ideas.
- Students take care of their immediate surroundings. They are aware of the importance of environmental issues, which are well promoted through the hydroponics farm. Otherwise, they have limited participation in activities to support conservation and sustainability.

For Development:

- Provide more opportunities for students to initiate and manage their own innovative ideas, enterprise activities and entrepreneurial projects, and to participate in conservation and sustainability activities.
- Encourage more students to take on leadership roles and engage as volunteers in community activities.

3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good

- Teachers in FS have a good understanding of how young children learn best. Subject knowledge, across all phases, is generally secure. Although lesson planning is mostly effective, at times, it lacks sufficient focus and contains too many activities.
- Relationships with students in all phases are a strength. Teachers are open, supportive and skilled in their questioning. Most ensure a good range of activities, but they do not always meet the needs of all groups of students. The pace of lessons is sometimes inappropriate.
- Teachers encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning. They provide opportunities for students to reflect on their work and to think for themselves. Opportunities to promote critical thinking and problem-solving, and to use information technologies effectively, vary across subjects and phases.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Assessment	Good	Good	Good

- Teachers use a wide range of assessments to measure students' achievement, well-being and cognitive development. Internal subject assessment outcomes are well linked to external assessment outcomes and provide valid measures of students' attainment. Students are well prepared for external assessments.
- Assessment outcomes are carefully analysed to provide information about the performance of individual students and groups. Teachers routinely track the achievement of students over time. The information that arises from tracking is used to inform teachers' planning, and to adapt the curriculum for students of determination.
- In all phases, measurement of students' progress from their performance in lessons and from scrutiny of their notebooks is not sufficiently accurate. Teachers make effective use of an appropriate range of assessment strategies. Students have many opportunities to assess their own learning.

For Development:

- Use curriculum goals to plan learning objectives for different groups of students, so that activities may be matched more rigorously to their needs.
- Accurately measure students' progress in lessons and from their workbooks by judging attainment against the learning objectives of the lesson.

4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Good	Good

- The school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum for England. It is mainly well organised and provides continuity as students move through the school. Spanish is taught, but the time allocated is too brief to ensure that students learn the subject in sufficient depth.
- Links between subjects are secure. There is some, but not enough, planned guidance to prepare students for the next stage of education or for future careers. The school also provides suitable alternative vocational pathways for students.
- The school has a systematic programme of curriculum review to ensure continuity, breadth and balance for students as they move from year to year.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum adaptation	Good	Good	Good

- The school attempts to modify the curriculum to meet the needs of all students. However, it does not implement suitable modifications for the highest-achieving students, or for students of determination. Students whose first language is not English receive effective support.
- There are good links with organisations that provide opportunities for students to join in innovative and enterprise activities. A broad range of extra-curricular activities enriches learning and enhances personal and social development for those who participate.
- The school provides many opportunities for students to learn about UAE values and culture, and to celebrate national events. Students are from many different world cultures. They receive some opportunities to learn about these other world cultures, but not enough.

For Development:

- Ensure that the learning needs of all students are met.
- Expand guidance opportunities to prepare students for the next stage of their education or for future careers. Increase the opportunities for students to learn about the wide range of cultures represented in the school.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Very good	Very good	Very good

- The school has comprehensive policies and procedures to ensure that the care, welfare and safeguarding of all students are implemented effectively and consistently. All staff play an active role in ensuring the safety and well-being of all students.
- The highly-effective procedures and monitoring arrangements to keep students safe at all times are particular strengths. The premises permit access for all groups of students. The promotion of students' understanding of health and well-being is very evident and effective throughout the school.
- Detailed maintenance records are kept for the buildings and facilities. There are clear procedures for the reporting of any concerns. Risk assessments are conducted regularly. All reported issues are quickly addressed. Completion dates of works undertaken are not recorded in the monthly log.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Care and support	Good	Good	Good

- The relationships between teachers and students are very positive. Systems and procedures for managing behaviour are well established. They are used consistently by most teachers. Expectations for behaviour are high. Consequently, in all phases, most students behave very well.
- Procedures for the identification of students of determination and those who are gifted and talented are effective. The school provides appropriate support for most students of determination. The majority of these students make only adequate personal and academic progress.
- The well-being and personal development of students is effectively monitored. High-quality guidance and support are offered to students and extended to their families when needed. The school's approach to managing attendance and punctuality is very effective.

For Development:

- Improve the quality of provision for students of determination and their personal and academic progress.

Inclusion of students of determination

Provision and outcomes for students of determination

Acceptable

- Governors and leaders communicate an inclusive ethos that is reflected in the diversity of abilities and starting points of the students. The school's provision for students of determination requires extension and accountability processes are underdeveloped.
- Appropriate systems accurately identify the needs of students of determination. Individual education plans, strategies and success criteria require development. They do not give teachers sufficient guidance on how to address barriers to students' learning.
- The school works closely with parents of students of determination and keeps them informed regularly of their children's progress. Parents' involvement and feedback contribute positively to the quality of provision.
- Support provided by specialist assistants is mostly consistent in quality and impact. Too often, class teachers monitor the progress of students of determination inadequately. They are therefore limited in their ability to apply supportive approaches, to clarify misconceptions or to promote students' progress.
- Lesson plans in mainstream classes do not consistently provide appropriately differentiated learning activities or learning objectives. Consequently, lessons do not always meet the needs of students of determination, whose rates of progress are uneven.

For Development:

- Improve the quality of individual education plans so that teachers can meet students' needs more effectively, and can measure students' progress more accurately.
- Ensure that teachers monitor students' progress carefully and inform the inclusion team of any support which they may require.

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	Very good

- The senior leaders, well led by the principal, share a deep commitment to the school. They set a clear direction and promote a vision that is communicated to, and shared by, the whole school community. They are effective in establishing a positive climate for learning. They have been successful in meeting the challenges of managing a developing school through the extra difficulties of the recent pandemic. They have maintained consistently good outcomes throughout the school.
- Systematic self-evaluation and regular monitoring of teaching and learning are integral parts of the school's improvement planning processes. Although planning is successfully geared towards promoting improvement in students' achievement, there remains scope for improvement in some subjects. Middle leaders are not sufficiently involved in ensuring progress towards achieving improvement goals. Developments in the school are managed carefully with a clear focus on realistic timescales. The setting of appropriate targets is sometimes less secure. Most staff in the school are actively involved in promoting strategies for improvement.
- Parents have many opportunities to contribute to the direction of the school. They welcome the regular surveys. They feel that their opinions are listened to and taken into account. Parents of all groups of students value the range of ways in which they learn about their children's development. Community, local, national and international partnerships have been sustained, to good effect for some students, even during the pandemic. The school is seeking to develop these opportunities for more students.
- The governing board includes representation from the school community, including parents. It meets regularly and seeks the views of most interest groups. Members of the governing board bring a range of expertise and knowledge. They use information on students' attainment to discuss the school's performance with senior leaders. As a result of their understanding of the work of the school, governors exert a positive and direct impact on its overall performance.
- Almost all aspects of the day-to-day management of the school are very well organised and have a positive impact on students' development. Procedures and routines are very effective. The school is staffed appropriately to fulfil its mission and vision. All staff are suitably qualified. The premises are of high quality. Specialist facilities for teaching and learning are designed to allow access to all. The well-resourced environment is conducive to effective teaching and learning.

For Development:

- Raise attainment in all subject areas, particularly in Arabic.
- Develop the capacity of middle leadership in the school.
- Improve target-setting in the school improvement plan.

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 QA.Schools@khda.gov.ae