



GEMS FirstPoint School

🇬🇧 Curriculum: UK

Overall Rating:

Good



"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	The Villa Project, Dubai	Gender of students	Boys and girls
Type of school	Private	Age range	3-17
Opening year of school	2014	Grades or year groups	FS1 - Year 12
Website	www.gemsfirstpointschool-dubai.com	Number of students on roll	1412
Telephone	97142978700	Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Address	Dubai Al Ain Road, The Villa - Dubai	Number of Emirati students	53
Principal	Mr. Stephen Sharples	Number of students with SEND	33
Language of instruction	English	Largest nationality group of students	Other Arab
Inspection dates	23 to 26 January 2017		
Teachers / Support staff		Curriculum	
Number of teachers	112	Educational permit / Licence	UK
Largest nationality group of teachers	British	Main curriculum	UK
Number of teaching assistants	46	External tests and examinations	IGCSE, GCSE, AS level
Teacher-student ratio	1:13	Accreditation	NA
Number of guidance counsellors	2	National Agenda benchmark tests	GL
Teacher turnover	5%		



## 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.

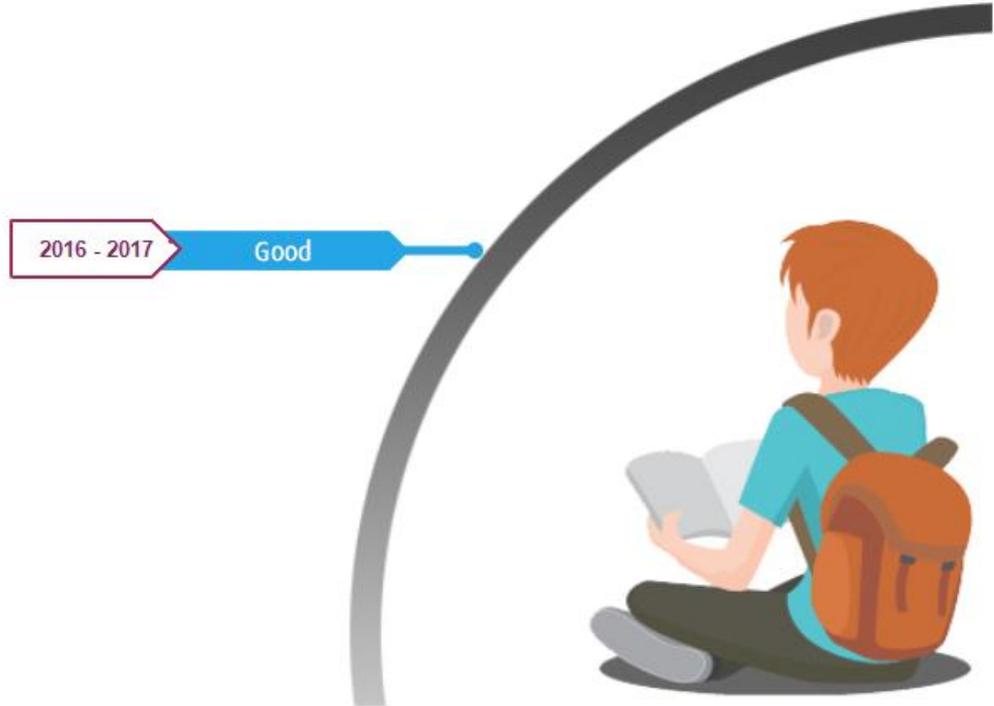
Inspection judgements are drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observation of students' learning in lessons, review of their work, discussions with students, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and review of surveys completed by parents, teachers and students.

### 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 Gems FirstPoint School



- The school opened in 2014. The principal has been in post since September 2015. The number of students has increased from 340 on opening, to 890 in 2015, to its current number of 1412. Over 60 new teachers joined the school this year in anticipation of the growth in student numbers.
- Amongst the school's strengths are students' personal development and well-being, children's achievement in the Foundation Stage (FS), the arrangements to ensure students are safe and healthy, the inclusive ethos, the innovative and evolving curriculum, the principal's ambition for the school, and the high quality facilities.
- Priorities for further development are to improve achievement in Islamic education and Arabic, to review the processes for self-evaluation, by ensuring the accuracy of students' attainment and progress information; to use this information to promote high achievement for all students; and to provide effective support for students with English language learning needs.

## Summary of inspection findings 2016-2017



**Gems FirstPoint School** was inspected by DSIB from 23 to 26 January 2017 . The overall quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The section below summarises the inspection findings for each of the six performance indicators described in the framework.

- Children in the Foundation Stage have very good learning skills and achieve well in English, mathematics and science. In other phases, learning skills are good but attainment and progress are variable. Attainment is weak in Islamic education and Arabic as a first language in secondary; Arabic as an additional language in primary and secondary; and post-16 science.
- Students' personal development is a strong feature of the school particularly with regard to their behaviour, their enjoyment of school and their healthy lifestyles. Students' social contribution, their work ethic and innovation skills, and their care for the environment are very well developed.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. It is more variable in Islamic education and Arabic, particularly in the secondary phase. In Arabic as an additional language, there are insufficient opportunities for students to practise their speaking skills. Teachers do not always provide appropriate challenge matched to individual needs, especially for higher achieving students. Assessment in Arabic is not accurately aligned to curriculum standards.
- The curriculum is well-designed and planned in most respects. It is effectively modified to meet the needs of most of the school's diverse population. However, in Arabic as an additional language, insufficient account is taken of the number of years students have been studying the language. In Islamic education students in the primary and secondary phases have limited opportunities for analysis and inference and for applying their learning to the real world.
- The school takes very seriously its responsibility for ensuring students are safe, healthy and well-supported. As a result, students are happy in school. They feel secure and valued, and their attendance is very good. Support is generally good although there is insufficient targeted support for older students for whom English is an additional language.
- The principal, together with the support of other leaders and governors is ambitious for the school and is determined to ensure all students, regardless of background and ability, achieve their potential. Parents effectively play their part and are engaged in a positive partnership in the best interests of their children. The governors provide facilities of the highest quality and ensure a plentiful supply of appropriate resources.

## What the school does best

- Students enjoy learning very much. They are happy, healthy and extremely well-behaved. They are sensitive and show empathy towards the needs and differences of others.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in all subjects.
- The arrangements to ensure students are safe and healthy are outstanding.
- The school welcomes students of all abilities and caters well for their needs by providing an innovative and evolving curriculum.
- The principal has a clear and ambitious vision for the school and, with the governors' support, ensures there are ample staff and high quality facilities to enhance learning.

## Recommendations

- Accelerate progress in order to raise attainment in Islamic education and Arabic by ensuring:
  - teachers have high expectations for all students in line with the curriculum
  - teachers have a clear focus on what they want students to learn in each lesson
  - students have regular opportunities to apply their learning to the real world.
- Improve the processes for self-evaluation by:
  - ensuring the accuracy of students' attainment and progress information
  - ensuring that this information assists in meeting students' learning needs when organising class groups
  - routinely monitoring students' attainment and progress across all year groups to consistently promote high achievement.
- Ensure that all students with English as an additional language, particularly in the secondary and post-16 phases, make optimal progress by:
  - providing sufficient targeted support
  - equipping all teachers with the strategies to meet these students' needs.

## 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 based on National Agenda parameter benchmarks is below expectations in English, mathematics and science.
- The school meets the registration requirements for the National Agenda Parameter.
- The school analyses the National Agenda Parameter reports and has a comprehensive action plan to improve the standard of education. Students' performance in international benchmark tests is analysed. Information relating to students' cognitive ability and potential is gathered for all students in the primary and secondary phases from Year 2. The use of this information by teachers and leaders to ensure that all students realise their full potential is developing. Outcomes from National Agenda parameter benchmark tests are available for all stakeholders including parents and students.
- Analyses of international benchmark tests are used to identify specific gaps and inconsistencies in the curriculum, such as the need for discrete guided reading sessions and for problem-solving in mathematics. However, the curriculum is not yet fully aligned to the requirements of TIMSS and PISA and the skills and abilities that students need in order to be globally competitive.
- Lesson plans now include reference to assessment data. The new curriculum for years 5 to 8 provides opportunities for students to link the core values with learning skills, make meaningful connections across the curriculum, to apply their learning to real life contexts and to be enterprising. They also have opportunities to attempt questions from international tests.
- Students can articulate their understanding of the National Agenda, and are developing their understanding of the skills they need, such as critical thinking, to achieve well in TIMSS and PISA. They can gather their own information from different sources, including technology, but their ability to evaluate their findings is limited. Students demonstrate that they are able to take risks and direct their own learning when provided with the opportunity to do so.

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



Overall school performance

Good

1 Students' achievement

		Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Islamic education 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Weak	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Arabic as a first language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Weak	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Arabic as an additional language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Weak	Weak	Not applicable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not applicable
English 	Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Very good	Good	Good	Acceptable
Mathematics 	Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Good	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good
Science 	Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Good	Weak
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good
		Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Learning skills		Very good	Good	Good	Good

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Very good	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good	Good	Very good
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Very good	Very good	Very good	Good

## 3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good	Good
Assessment	Good	Good	Good	Good

## 4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum design and implementation	Very good	Good	Good	Very good
Curriculum adaptation	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Care and support	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good

## 6. Leadership and management

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

# Main inspection report



## 1. Students' achievement

 Foundation Stage		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Not applicable	Not applicable
Arabic as a first language	Not applicable	Not applicable
Arabic as an additional language	Not applicable	Not applicable
English	Good	Very good
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science	Good	Good

- Children enter school with limited skills in speaking English and a large majority make better than expected progress in relation to the curriculum standards. In FS1 they listen carefully, learn a range of vocabulary and follow instructions about school routines. Children quickly learn initial letters in words and enjoy listening to stories. By FS2 they recognise and read words and confidently talk about book characters. They listen to stories with increasing understanding and make up rhyming sentences. Children's independent writing skills are developing at an age appropriate level.
- In mathematics, the majority of children make better than expected progress from their starting points and reach a good level of knowledge and skills. They make shape pictures and describe their properties. They use appropriate vocabulary to describe their measurements of the beans they are growing. FS1 children link their knowledge about numbers to stories, for example, to talk about the amount of food eaten by a hungry caterpillar. By FS2 they have an increasing knowledge of numbers and counting, and can order numbers to at least twenty.
- FS children make good progress in science and the majority reach levels that are above curriculum expectations. In FS1, they know that creatures can have different kinds of body coverings and different kinds of feet. Children know frogs live near water and worms and beetles near or in soil. In FS2, their improving language skills enable them to make good progress in understanding more complex words such as habitat and life cycle. They are beginning to use observation skills, particularly in free flow lessons. Children are beginning to use technology toys and enjoy finding out how they work.

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

- In Islamic education, most students demonstrate levels of knowledge, skills and understanding in line with the Ministry of Education curriculum expectations. They know and understand the Pillars of Islam and Iman. However, their skills in reciting and memorising the prescribed verses from the Holy Qur'an are insecure, particularly for non-Arabs. In lessons, students make acceptable progress. They can provide reasons why Muslims should follow the rules and guidance of the Holy Qur'an, but make limited connections between Islamic values and their daily lives. Overall, non-Arab students make better progress from their starting points.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students attain the expected levels in listening and speaking. Internal assessment information shows that most students make expected progress, but this is more variable in lessons and in their recent work. Whilst students in the lower grades make better progress, only a minority of students across the phase speak fluently. Most have limited vocabulary and their writing is limited to copying short answers. A few older students can write short summaries and paragraphs reasonably well.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students demonstrate levels of attainment that are below curriculum expectations considering their years of study. A majority of students understand the main points from a short passage of familiar language. A minority of students are confident in reading, understanding and writing a few short sentences using familiar expressions. In lessons, their progress is acceptable. They can hold a short conversation about familiar sports using visual clues for support. Their ability to complete simple sentences using familiar verbs is developing.
- In English, most students attain in line with expected national and international standards. Some exceed this despite one third being additional language learners. Students make good progress particularly in their speaking and comprehension skills. Year 1 students, for example, can use nouns and adjectives to describe personality and appearance. Students read with increasing clarity, and are developing their writing abilities across the phase. In Year 6, they make very good progress. Students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) progress equally well.
- In mathematics, most students' attainment is in line with the National Curriculum expectations although it fluctuates across year groups. Internal assessments indicate that the majority of students achieve above curriculum standards in all year groups. However, international benchmarks reveal levels of attainment that are significantly below expectations for most students, except in Year 2 where outcomes are well above. Students demonstrate knowledge of a range of mathematical concepts and skills that are relevant and appropriate to their age. In lessons and their recent work, the majority of students make better than expected progress over the phase.

- In science, internal assessments indicate that most students reach levels that are in line with curriculum expectations. However, these results do not align with those from external benchmark assessments where a large minority of students do not reach international expectations. In lessons and in their recent work, the majority of students make better than expected progress. Their skills in working scientifically are secure and they are able to carry out simple experiments

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

- In Islamic education, most students attain levels that are below curriculum expectations. Only a minority of students can confidently apply the correct recitation rules of the Holy Qur'an. Their ability to infer, illustrate and apply Islamic values is insecure. Students make acceptable progress in developing their knowledge of the differences between the Zakat and Sadakah and how to calculate Zakat. However, they are not always secure in using critical thinking skills when asked to apply Islamic concepts to their lives. Non- Arab students make better progress.
- In Arabic as a first language, the majority of students attain levels below curriculum expectations. Most students can understand standard Arabic but they respond using dialect and a limited vocabulary to express their ideas. Most students make expected progress against lesson learning objectives. Their writing skills are limited to copying short answers, with only a few students able to write short summaries and paragraphs. They have difficulty understanding and interpreting curriculum prescribed poems.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students' work is below expected curriculum standards. Only a minority of students can answer simple, familiar questions using standard Arabic. They have limited vocabulary and need the support of visual prompts. Students make adequate progress in developing their listening, responding and speaking skills. They can repeat words and phrases and demonstrate awareness of basic sound patterns. In reading and writing, they understand the main points from a topic and can write a few short sentences using familiar words and phrases.
- In English, the majority of students make good progress from their starting points and most attain levels in line with international standards and curriculum expectations. Most students speak confidently and engage in purposeful discussions, developing persuasive arguments. They obtain information from texts and are progressing well in analysing settings and characters. Most apply grammar and punctuation rules effectively in short written reports and news articles. Their writing skills vary in quality, as does the presentation of their work. Students' ability to produce extended pieces of writing is under-developed.

- In mathematics, the majority of students attain levels that are above curriculum expectations. Internal assessments indicate that attainment is above expectations for a large majority of students but this is not reflected in international benchmark results. In their lessons and their recent work, students demonstrate secure understanding of a range of mathematical concepts and skills, reflecting good progress from their starting points and over time.
- In science, attainment is good when measured against external international benchmarks. Internal assessments indicate that attainment is very good and improves as students move through the secondary phase. In their recent work, students show a good level of attainment that is not always evident in lessons. Students in the lower secondary phase, and those who have recently joined the school, have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. A large majority of students make better than expected progress, but progress is slower for those who are most able.

 Post-16		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Acceptable	Good
Arabic as a first language	Acceptable	Good
Arabic as an additional language	Not applicable	Not applicable
English	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mathematics	Acceptable	Good
Science	Weak	Good

- In Islamic education, the majority of students make better than expected progress from their starting points and most attain levels that are in line with curriculum standards. Generally, they have a strong knowledge of Islamic concepts and they understand Islamic morals and values. They can apply their learning to real life situations reasonably well, but have limited knowledge of the interpretation of Holy Qur'an and Hadeeth. Recitation skills are satisfactory. Most non-Arab students understand Sharia and Fiqh.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students attain levels that are in line with curriculum expectations. In listening, they understand and report accurately what they have heard. They make presentations using standard Arabic and evaluate their work. They express their ideas and feelings with increasing confidence. The majority can write with few grammatical mistakes. Their oral language skills are progressing steadily, but they do not regularly read independently. In lessons, the majority of students make better than expected progress against appropriate learning objectives.
- In English, most of the very small number of Year 12 students make expected progress and attain levels in line with national and international standards. In English Literature lessons, students are beginning to apply critical thinking skilfully in analysing and discussing authors' techniques. In both English literature and English language lessons, students demonstrate a developing knowledge of language structure. They increasingly use a range of research techniques. They read accurately, but they do not write texts of sufficient length and complexity.

- In mathematics, students recently embarked on the AS level course in Year 12. In lessons and their recent work, the majority make better than expected progress from their starting points and reach the expected AS level of attainment.
- In science, internal tests indicate that the large majority of students attain below expected curriculum standards and, in lessons, attainment is weak. All post-16 students are new to the school, and have considerable gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Consequently, their predicted grades for AS level are below expected levels. There are no external national examination results as the school has a year 12 cohort for the first time. However, internal assessment data and observations in lessons show that students make good progress from their low starting points, although this has not yet had time to produce higher attainment.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Learning skills	Very good	Good	Good	Good

- Across the school, students are motivated and eager to learn. In the FS in particular, children take responsibility for their own activities in learning zones, working and organising resources without supervision. Students often use 'confidence ladders' to assess their knowledge before, during and at the end of lessons. However, in some lessons, students are unsure about how to improve their work.
- Students collaborate in groups and pairs. They listen well, suggest ideas and confidently talk about their work. FS children organise projects such as building a house, making decisions about where the windows should go and what should be built first. Across the school, students readily contribute ideas in discussions. In group tasks, where resources are limited, learning skills are less well developed.
- Students are beginning to relate learning to everyday life and the UAE context. For example, they apply vocabulary about size when making tall models of the Burj Khalifa. In primary science, students discuss the importance of having a healthy heart and the incidences of heart disease in the UAE, and they build models to show their understanding of how a heart works.
- Across the school, there is a rich learning environment through which students are becoming skilful at finding out information for themselves. For example, primary students are enterprising when designing a new chocolate bar, and confidently use specialised vocabulary. Older students discuss the importance of research, and increasingly use critical thinking skills. These skills are improving in all other phases.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Personal development</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Very good	Outstanding

- Students demonstrate highly positive attitudes towards school. They respond well to opportunities to participate in class discussions. FS and lower primary children are particularly motivated to learn. A Year 5 class showed creativity in leading a stimulating Key Stage 1 assembly that promoted the school's core values, including positive attitudes to learning and care for others.
- Almost all students, across the phases, demonstrate exemplary behaviour. They show self-discipline and consistently follow school procedures, with older students acting as role models for younger students. Occasional incidents of minor bad behaviour, which occur mainly in the secondary phase of the school, are quickly resolved.
- Relationships amongst staff and students are very positive and caring. Students are respectful, relaxed and confident in interacting with their teachers and visitors to the school. They are very supportive of each other and often encourage others to succeed in sports and in class. They appreciate the diverse range of backgrounds, languages and cultures that make up the school community.
- Students are very aware of the choices they should make to remain healthy and safe. This includes eating healthily and taking regular exercise through participating in the many after school sports activities. Students are knowledgeable about the positive impact this has on their lives. Older students help raise awareness for younger students, by acting as role models.
- Overall, attendance is very good. Younger students respond very positively to the school's focus on promoting good attendance and punctuality. This is particularly evident in the enthusiasm demonstrated when chosen as the 'best attending class of the week'.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures</b>	Good	Good	Good	Very good

- Students have clear respect and appreciation for Islamic values. They understand the features and impact of those values on daily life in the UAE. Students across the school organise and participate in Islamic events such as the Ramadan charity campaign. The values of tolerance and compassion prevail throughout the school.
- Students have a good knowledge of and appreciation for the Emirati heritage. They show respect for the National Anthem. They enthusiastically participate in events linked to the UAE, such as National Day, Flag Day and Martyrs' Day.

- Students are proud of their own culture and show respect for the many other cultures and nationalities within the school. Post-16 students have a very good understanding of food, music, art and literature from other cultures. In assemblies, students make presentations about world cultures celebrations such as Chinese New Year, Australia Day and Remembrance Day in the United Kingdom.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Social responsibility and innovation skills</b>	Very good	Very good	Very good	Good

- Students contribute willingly to the life of the school and wider community. They volunteer, initiate and lead activities, such as the International Day celebration, and they support charitable activities. Students embrace the leadership opportunities the school provides, for example, to act as digital leaders, student directors and ambassadors. They increasingly participate in charity work and local community events, in partnership with the Parents' Council.
- Students show a positive work ethic and have high aspirations. In the FS, primary and secondary phases, they are becoming more self-disciplined, resilient and socially skilled. They are developing the skills to innovate and be creative through activities such as the annual Enterprise Day. Students also participate in the 'Global Innovative Challenge' and the 'Makers' Day', to demonstrate their newly-acquired skills. In the post-16 phase, these skills are underdeveloped.
- Students care for their school and respond enthusiastically to conservation opportunities by reducing, reusing and recycling, for example, through the Eco-Club. They reflect on the environmental challenges facing the UAE. In the primary phase, students learn about the 'Dubai Desert Rose City' project. Students also take part in schemes to support the environment such as 'Clean the World Campaign' and the 'Healthy Children 2021' initiative.

### 3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Teaching for effective learning</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Most teachers have sound knowledge of their subjects and the phase they teach. FS teachers clearly understand the importance of learning through play. The school is making effective use of the expertise of secondary teachers to enhance primary teachers' skills in some specialist subjects. Teachers generally explain things well to students, and in the secondary and post-16 phases, most teachers provide valuable guidance on preparing for examinations.

- The structured format of lesson planning supports a consistent approach with a clear focus on learning. In the better lessons, teachers ensure that students know what is expected of them. Students' review of their own achievements is a feature of most lessons. Classrooms often provide a stimulating learning environment, particularly in FS and primary. Resources are used effectively to support learning.
- Teachers have very good relationships with their students and often create an environment where there is no fear of failure. In the better lessons, teachers ask probing questions and encourage debate. However, in Islamic education and Arabic as an additional language in the primary and secondary phases, questioning is used less effectively, and there are missed opportunities for students to develop their speaking skills through discussion.
- Teachers plan a range of activities for groups of students of differing abilities. However, expectations are not always closely matched to students' needs and, in some lessons, teachers do not provide enough challenge for the most-able learners. Some teachers lack the specific skills necessary to provide effective support for students who are at an early stage of learning English.
- The majority of teachers, especially those in secondary and post-16, are skilled in developing students' independent learning and critical thinking. In the most successful lessons teachers encourage students to consider real-life problems by posing questions such as 'what would you do if the water ran out in Dubai?' Specialist teachers provide good opportunities for students to engage in enterprise activities.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Assessment</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good

- There are systematic and coherent internal assessment processes in place to gather information relating to students' achievement across the curriculum. In English, mathematics and science, internal assessments are aligned to UK curriculum standards and are becoming increasingly accurate and consistent. Internal assessments in Arabic are less accurate.
- There are no external examination results currently available to measure students' attainment against UK curriculum standards. All students' academic achievements in English, mathematics and science are benchmarked against international expectations in the primary and secondary phases. Outcomes from international benchmarks do not always correlate with the school's own internal assessments.
- Teacher assessments of what students know and can do when they start school, provide a baseline against which their progress is tracked over time. The school has also introduced GL progress tests in English, mathematics and science.
- The school has a wealth of assessment information for teachers to use to shape learning tasks to match students' needs. However, this is not always used effectively. For example, teachers are not always equipped with the relevant assessment information when students are regrouped for different subjects.
- Most teachers know precisely the strengths and weaknesses of individual students in their classes. The school now gathers more formal information about students' potential and cognitive abilities and the use of this information in setting targets for students is emerging. Teachers' marking is consistent in most subjects and helps students to identify their next steps in learning.

## 4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum design and implementation	Very good	Good	Good	Very good

- The school's ethos and values are at the heart of the curriculum, which has a clear rationale based on its vision to develop students as skilled global citizens. The curriculum is mainly broad and balanced and promotes enjoyment and interest. Statutory requirements are fully met. However, in Islamic education, there is insufficient emphasis on analysis, inference and application in the primary and secondary phases.
- In most subjects, the curriculum is structured to ensure that students are able to systematically build on previous learning. In Arabic as an additional language, the curriculum is planned for each year group without taking into account the number of years students have studied the language. This hinders the continuity and progression of their learning.
- In the FS, the new 'desert school' and the 'learning zone' enable children to choose from a diverse range of activities, such as using tools safely and observing a tortoise. Across the phases, the school provides a range of options to match students' preferences, interests and abilities. There is an extensive range of curricular options in GCSE and AS level courses, enabling older students to pursue their interests and ensuring they are well prepared for life beyond school.
- A key feature of curriculum design is the development of meaningful links between subjects. This is particularly successful when subjects within faculties work closely together to enable students to develop a range of skills. For example, staff in the Enterprise, Computing & Technology faculty plan interdisciplinary activities that successfully promote invention, collaboration and critical thinking.
- The curriculum is continuing to develop and evolve as leaders at all levels regularly monitor and review its content. They take account of the views of students and staff and carefully consider its impact on students' personal development and academic outcomes. As an example, the school is considering whether streaming or mixed ability classes is the most effective method of improving literacy skills for upper primary and lower secondary students.
- The school is skilfully integrating the UAE social studies curriculum as a course within the humanities programme. Teachers carefully plan the skills, concepts and knowledge to ensure continuity and progression. This includes developing students' knowledge of the UAE's 2021 vision, through activities such as contributing to 'The Year of Giving 2017' and researching the UAE's constitution, laws and leaders. Students are also developing their knowledge and understanding of Emirati traditions, culture and values. Through their studies, all students have an increasing appreciation of their roles in the development of the UAE.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Curriculum adaptation</b>	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good

- The curriculum is effectively modified to meet the needs of almost all students. Almost all lesson plans show modifications for high, medium and low achievers, and students with SEND are supported with learning targets and individual education plans.
- The school's enrichment programme effectively complements the main curriculum. Students have numerous opportunities to engage in a range of interesting and stimulating activities related to the world of business and innovation, and to develop skills such as leadership and team-building. The enterprise and technology curriculum very effectively enhances student's understanding of core values for the 21st Century.
- There are very strong links with Emirati culture and UAE society, evident in the social studies programme taught across all phases from FS2. A range of interesting cultural visits, for example to key religious sites, deepens students' appreciation and understanding of UAE society.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The school's highly effective policies and procedures ensure the safety of students and staff. These are communicated well and updated regularly. Staff have benefited from recent training regarding child protection, bullying and risk management. Students are alert to the risks of cyber-bullying and know that they need to be vigilant.
- The premises are safe and secure. School managers and staff are meticulous in carrying out rigorous safety checks throughout the premises and on the school buses. The school regularly reviews fire safety procedures and has highly practiced lock-down procedures in the event of any incidents.
- The premises are very well maintained and are cleaned regularly and thoroughly. Staff are diligent in completing safety checks on all services, including fire equipment and laboratory provision. Detailed records are maintained in all areas of health and safety.
- The excellent learning environment includes spacious internal and external areas, a large auditorium, sports and arts facilities. They are used very well to develop students' learning and support students with SEND, as well as to ensure the pastoral care of all students. The building is easily accessible for students with limited mobility. Classrooms and corridors, particularly in the FS, are colourful and used effectively to display a wide range of students' work.

- Healthy living is very successfully promoted across the school. The importance of good health and how to achieve this is a strong feature in the school clinics, through physical education lessons and includes significant input from the school counsellor. The healthy food policy of the canteen encourages students to make healthy food choices.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Care and support	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good

- Positive staff and student relationships contribute to the caring, inclusive ethos of the school. There is a highly effective pastoral system managed by the school counsellor that promotes positive behaviour. The welfare team plays an important role in students' well-being. They know the students very well and are aware of their emotional and intellectual needs. Students know who they can go to for support and guidance.
- The school works closely with students and parents to promote regular attendance and punctuality. The designated attendance officer monitors daily registers and ongoing trends. Good attendance and punctuality is rewarded through assemblies and celebrations and action is taken to deal with persistent absence and lateness.
- The identification of students with SEND is a whole school priority. The inclusion team uses a wide range of assessment tools to accurately identify learning needs and teachers have a very good understanding of most areas of need. The 'Lead Learner' coordinator effectively promotes the identification and learning opportunities for those students who are gifted and talented.
- As a result of accurate identification, students with SEND and those who have gifts and talents receive support which, in the best lessons, is closely matched to their needs. This is regularly reviewed to ensure students are actively engaged in learning. Individual learning plans are designed to help students overcome their barriers to learning and develop independence. However, targets are too vague.
- School staff ensure that comprehensive support and guidance is available to all students. There are highly effective pastoral systems in place that ensure every student has the opportunity to receive assistance from the school counsellor if needed. Careers fairs are organised for the older students and they are provided with a range of very good advice and information about future pathways.

## Inclusion

### Provision and outcomes for students with SEND

Good

- Governors and leaders promote a highly inclusive ethos that is underpinned by the school's core values. The Leader of Inclusion and his team are caring and passionate about providing effective support for students with SEND. The special educational needs policy is robust and detailed and clearly sets out the responsibilities of all stakeholders.
- The school uses a wide range of assessment tools to ensure accurate identification of students with SEND. The students' needs are regularly reviewed and interventions are put in place. Almost all staff have an understanding of the different areas of need. They implement strategies and utilise resources effectively to support most students.
- Parents of students with SEND are pleased with almost all aspects of provision for their children. In addition to the regular communication systems and personalised meetings with teachers, the school has an effective open-door policy so that parents can easily contact the school to be updated on the progress and well-being of their children.
- The school prepares individual learning plans for students with SEND. Learning support assistants create resources to match the needs of individual students, and support staff provide targeted intervention according to need in the classroom. Individual learning plans contain a long-term target for students to become more independent learners. However, targets are not sufficiently specific to enable students to make small and measurable steps of progress in the short term.
- Monitoring systems are used to track the progress and attainment of individual students and also to identify trends across cohorts. The school gathers information that shows almost all students make good progress over time. Consequently, students with SEND have a positive attitude to learning and develop increasing confidence and independence.

## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Good

- The principal has a clear and ambitious vision for the school. He is a talented leader who is committed to, and passionate about, providing the very best for all students regardless of ability. His leadership team consists of a balance of experienced leaders and others who are still developing their leadership skills. They are all committed to ensuring students achieve as well as they can. They very effectively promote students' personal development and well-being.
- School leaders have a thorough knowledge of the National Curriculum in England and are aware of the additional challenge of promoting the Emirati culture and Islamic values, which they do very well. They are innovative in their approach and ensure the curriculum evolves to reflect the increasing number and diversity of students.

- Relationships are warm and communication is professional. Leadership roles are clear and responsibilities effectively delegated. Performance management ensures teachers and leaders are held to account for their work and are appropriately supported in proportion to need. Consequently, teachers are growing in confidence and morale is high.
- Leaders generally have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are increasingly aware of students' achievements and the challenges they face, not least of all, with regard to the rapid growth in the numbers joining the school and the limited English language skills of a significant number of those students.
- The priority given to students' personal development and well-being is evident across the school. Academic progress in all subjects is never less than acceptable and in the large majority of subjects and phases it is good or better. The school is compliant with statutory and regulatory requirements.

### School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Acceptable

- The school has a wealth of information from various sources about how well it is doing. Staff and parent surveys are used to provide useful information on some areas for improvement. Assessment data gives a mixed picture of students' academic achievements. It is not consistent in identifying students' attainment levels or tracking their progress over time.
- School leaders rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning provides a mainly accurate picture of its effectiveness. However, in some subjects, such as Islamic education and Arabic, insufficient account is taken of the progress students make in lessons.
- School improvement plans identify most of the key priorities for improvement, with particular reference to National Agenda targets and innovation. Insufficient attention is given to assessment information when organising class groups. Consequently, teachers do not always meet the needs of all students.
- School leaders and governors manage change well. In most respects, the quality of the school's work is good or better despite the significant increase in the number of students and teachers in the short time since it opened.

### Partnerships with parents and the community

Good

- The school successfully engages parents in a positive partnership in the best interests of their children. They support children's reading through the 'Reading Coach' programme. Parents are consulted regularly and their views and suggestions are taken into account. Parents of children with SEND, very much appreciate being involved in the support of their children.
- Channels of communication are clear. The recently established Parents' Council has been instrumental in enhancing liaison between home and school and increasingly offers suggestions for improvement.
- Reports to parents on students' progress are regular and informative. Parents appreciate the various additional ways in which they are informed about their children's work, for example through the online learning journals.

- The school has effective partnerships with a range of external organisations. It is an integral part of the local community, for example, it hosts residents' meetings and local groups have access to the school's facilities. Links with the Singularity University and Project Zero, as well as its place within the GEMS organisation, contribute to enhancing students' learning experiences and achievements.

<b>Governance</b>	<b>Good</b>
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- School governance consists of the local governing board, made up of various stakeholders, including GEMS representatives and the Parents' Council. The Parents' Council is increasingly effective and is well-placed to be even more influential in determining the direction of the school.
- Members of the governing board regularly visit the school and have a developing knowledge and understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. They set targets for school leaders and hold them to account for their work.
- The governing board is committed to providing the best possible resources and facilities to enhance learning for all students. The high staffing levels are having a positive impact on the overall performance of the school.

<b>Management, staffing, facilities and resources</b>	<b>Very good</b>
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- The day-to-day management of the school is very well organised in most respects. The daily routines and timings are well established and adhered to. Occasionally, some time for learning is lost by students' tardiness when returning to lessons after break.
- The high staffing levels enable specialists to work alongside form teachers in years 5 to 8 to enhance their subject knowledge. Most teachers benefit from a bespoke professional development programme and the support of more experienced colleagues.
- The premises include extensive specialist facilities and ample space for the anticipated growth in student numbers. All learning areas are of high quality and facilitate access for all. They are spacious and bright and have vibrant displays to inspire and motivate students.
- Resources are plentiful. They are matched to students' age and stage of development and very effectively promote teaching and learning. However, students with English language learning needs do not have sufficient targeted support in the middle and upper phases of the school.

## 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	
<p>Parents*</p>	2016-17	388
	2015-16	0
<p>Teachers</p>	80	
<p>Students</p>	105	

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

- Most parents who responded are satisfied with most aspects of the school's work.
- A few parents do not think their children's special educational needs are accurately identified and feel they are not sufficiently involved or informed about their children's education. However, parents interviewed during inspection expressed their satisfaction.
- Almost all teachers who responded are positive about the school's performance. They are satisfied with the opportunities for professional development.
- Students who responded are generally satisfied about what the school provides and the quality of education. However, a large minority of students say they are not involved in decisions about classroom rules and activities.

## 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)