The Westminster 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

Contents

General information

Location	Al Qusais
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	1988
Website	www.gemsws-ghusais.com
Telephone	04-2988333
Address	Al Qusais, PO 27016Dubai, U A E
Principal	Kingston Gilbert Xavier
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	13 to 16 February 2017

Students

Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	4-18
Grades or year groups	FS2-Year 13
Number of students on roll	5170
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	147
Number of students with SEND	234
Largest nationality group of students	Pakistani

Teachers / Support staff

Number of teachers	281
Largest nationality group of teachers	Indian
Number of teaching assistants	18
Teacher-student ratio	1:18
Number of guidance counsellors	2
Teacher turnover	12%

Curriculum

Educational permit / Licence	UK
Main curriculum	UK
External tests and examinations	GL
Accreditation	None
National Agenda benchmark tests	GL

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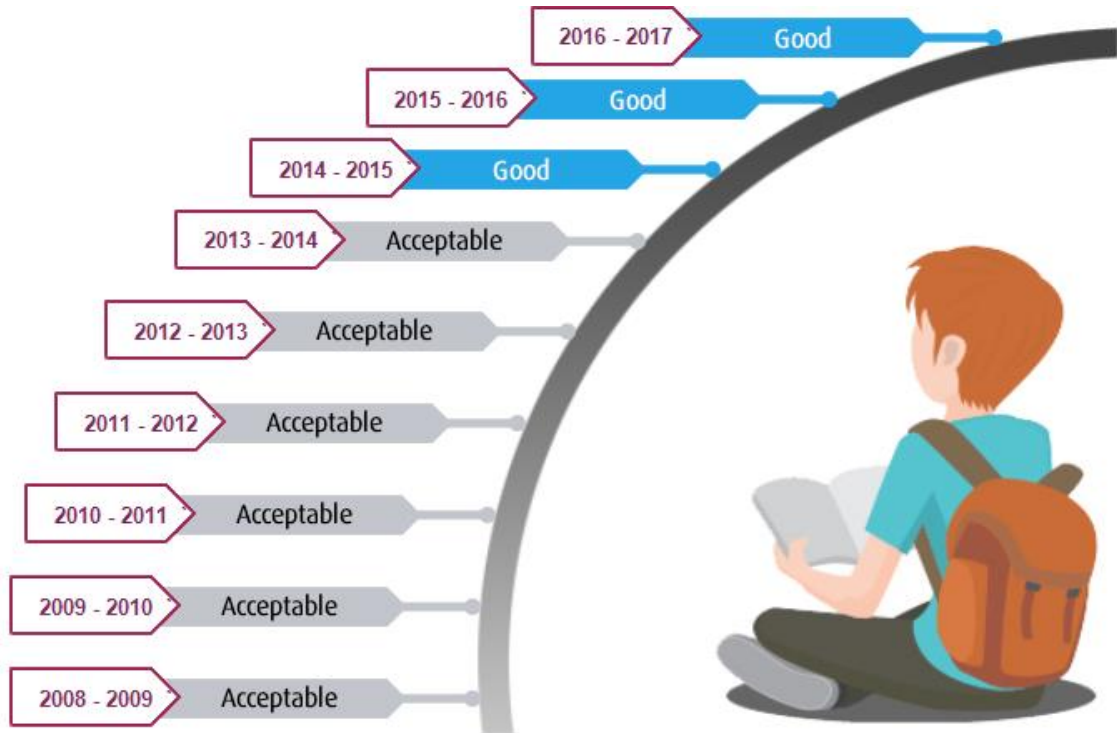
Inspection judgements are drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observation of students' learning in lessons, review of their work, discussions with students, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and review of surveys completed by parents, teachers and students.

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.

Outstanding	Quality of performance substantially exceeds the expectation of the UAE
Very good	Quality of performance exceeds the expectation of the UAE
Good	Quality of performance meets the expectation of the UAE (This is the expected level for every school in the UAE)
Acceptable	Quality of performance meets the minimum level of quality required in the UAE (This is the minimum level for every school in the UAE)
Weak	Quality of performance is below the expectation of the UAE
Very weak	Quality of performance is significantly below the expectation of the UAE

Inspection journey for The Westminster School

Year	Rating
2016 - 2017	Good
2015 - 2016	Good
2014 - 2015	Good
2013 - 2014	Acceptable
2012 - 2013	Acceptable
2011 - 2012	Acceptable
2010 - 2011	Acceptable
2009 - 2010	Acceptable
2008 - 2009	Acceptable

- The school opened in 1995. The current principal has been in post for four years. The school roll has varied slightly over the past three years, and is currently just over 5100. However, since the last inspection, the school enrolled more than 900 new students. Staff turnover, at around 12 per cent is half what it was at the time of the last inspection.

- Strengths acknowledged during previous inspections include school leadership, students' personal responsibility, and teachers' preparation of students for external examination. Innovation and creativity especially located in the school's artistic sphere were also recognised.

- Recommendations from the previous two inspections reported similar issues to this report's recommendations. These highlighted improvement to students' outcomes in Islamic education and Arabic both as a first and a second language.

Summary of inspection findings 2016-2017

The Westminster School was inspected by DSIB from 12 to 16 February 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.

- Students' attainment and progress in Islamic education are now good. Progress has improved in Arabic as a first language in both the primary and secondary phases. Attainment in Arabic as a second language is weak although progress is acceptable. In the Foundation Stage (FS), attainment and progress are at least good. Progress in English is very good across the school. Attainment and progress in English in the secondary phase have declined from outstanding to very good, as have attainment in mathematics and science in the post-16 phase. Senior students' learning skills are very good. In the other phases they are good.

- Students' personal responsibility is outstanding across the school. Their understanding of Islamic values, and social responsibility are outstanding beyond the FS where it is very good. Students of all ages benefit from a very wide range of innovative leadership opportunities. By their senior years, students become highly confident, articulate, perceptive and worthy ambassadors for social responsibility and tolerance.

- The quality of teaching and teachers' use of assessment are at least good across the school. Varied and motivating teaching approaches, commendably aimed at developing students' skills as self-confident learners, are best developed in the post-16 phase. In other phases teachers' developing assessment practice does not sufficiently capture students' attainment and progress in every lesson.

- The broad and balanced curriculum offered by the school continues to evolve, with additional subjects introduced since the previous inspection. Several promising new initiatives are not yet fully established. Curriculum adaptations meet the needs of learners very effectively, including the gifted and talented and students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). They offer a wide range of innovative, imaginative, and stimulating learning experiences.

- The school's very good arrangements for health and safety have focused on improving emergency evacuation procedures. Very good care and support provides comprehensive advice and guidance at important points in students' education. Very effective arrangements for students in the post-16 phase support them in preparing for next steps beyond their school career.

- School leadership very effectively promotes a bold vision of student-centred learning and personal development. Leaders at all levels are well-focused on continuously improving students' attainment and progress. The school comprehensively engages parents as active partners in their children's education and parents reciprocate with active support for the school's objectives. Governance has supported the school's staff complement well but needs to solve continuing accommodation issues.

What the school does best

- Leaders at all levels share, and ably support, the school's compelling vision for 21st century learning that is clearly set out and led by the principal and the vice-principal. Students are also empowered to lead a wide and varied range of initiatives, often musical, artistic and innovative.

- Students' outstanding personal responsibility, both individually and collectively, contribute very significantly to the communal ethos of the school. This is demonstrated in their excellent understanding of Islamic values, and their social responsibility and innovation.

- Very good arrangements for health, safety, care and support, ensure a safe and secure environment and high quality advice and guidance for students in all phases.

Recommendations

- School leaders and teachers should improve students' attainment in Arabic as an additional language by ensuring that teachers employ strategies appropriate to the learning of an additional language.

- Teachers should improve the quality of teaching by designing learning outcomes and checking students' progress towards meeting clear success criteria in every lesson.

- School leaders should evaluate more accurately the overall effectiveness of teaching by focusing sharply on the quality of student outcomes seen in lessons, and taking full account of all available data on student performance over time.

- The governing body should urgently and imaginatively solve the continuing issue of large class sizes in small classrooms that presently constrain the effective application of well-planned approaches to interactive learning and teaching.

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 the school's targets:

- The school does not fully meet the registration requirements for the National Agenda Parameter

- Students' attainment based on the National Agenda Parameter benchmarks is below expectations in English, mathematics and science.

- Data analysis is extensive and comprehensive. For example, CAT4 results are used to predict likely outcomes in IGCSE examinations over time. This acts as a baseline for progress and attainment measurement and evaluation. The school's challenge is to merge these results with existing internal assessments. Efforts are being made to ensure consistency in interpreting and applying the results as an overall guide to student improvement.

- Key subject leaders have identified gaps in content and cognitive skills and are working well to integrate these into normal lessons. This leads to successful adjustments to the curriculum over time and enables students to be more prepared for the tests in future.

- More open questioning, improved facilitative teaching styles, better differentiation for challenge are all regular features in lessons. Improved research, discussion and presentation skills assist students to become self-directed learners who can relate their learning in a variety of real life applications. Information communication and technology (ICT) skills are improving through a combination of school and home learning.

Overall, the schools improvement towards achieving its National Agenda targets meets expectations.

The UAE Vision 2021 sets the aspiration for the UAE to be among the most innovative nations in the world. The National Innovation Strategy sets the context for 'innovation' and 'innovative leadership' and provides a basis for evaluating schools in order to deliver a world-class education for all children in the UAE.

Promoting a culture of innovation:

- Students across the phases use information technology very effectively for learning and research. Individuals develop their own applications, one of which is used by the school. Curriculum adaptation supports students' critical and innovative thinking very effectively during the SMART period. Ambitious partnerships with multinational and international institutions promote critical and creative thinking especially in the field of interactive web-based broadcasting. Musical and artistic creativity is a vital focus of the curriculum. Leadership empowers all parts of the school community to contribute to innovative thinking. This is demonstrated in school assemblies that feature creative presentations and invite parental and student input. 'Guest speakers' include children from the FS at primary assemblies.

Overall school performance

Good

1 Students' achievement

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

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

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

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

3. Teaching and assessment

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

4. Curriculum

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

6. Leadership and management

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

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

- The majority of children attain levels that are above curriculum standards against the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Most listen carefully to teachers' instructions and questions, and respond with understanding. They know the letters of the alphabet and how to blend them to read and write words. They use this skill to read simple picture books. They are less practised in writing short sentences. Children make very good progress from their starting points as learners of English as an additional language, and succeed against their learning goals in lessons.

- The majority of children attain levels that are above the curriculum standards in mathematics. Children count and match numbers confidently within ten, and add single digit numbers. Most have a sound knowledge of 2D shapes. A few make 3D pyramids to link with their topic. They are less skilled in estimating and measuring objects. Children make good progress from their starting points in FS and achieve success against lesson objectives.

- In science, the majority of children attain above the expected levels in understanding of the world against FS curriculum standards. They can identify different plants and what they need to grow. They classify wild and domesticated animals and understand their different habitats. Their scientific skills of investigation and trying out ideas independently are less well developed. They progress well in their understanding of living things. In lessons, they achieve success against the expected objectives.

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students attain above curriculum standards. Internal data reflects students' good level of knowledge and understanding. In lessons and in their recent work, students demonstrate advanced knowledge of Islamic concepts and values. They make a wide range of connections to their daily lives. The majority of students make better than expected progress over time and can discuss the Pillars of Islam and how they influence their attitudes. Recitation of the Holy Qur'an is developed well; students can memorise and explain the verses in depth.

- In Arabic as a first language, the majority of students attain levels that are above curriculum expectations in all subject skills. They demonstrate clear understanding through their accurate responses in speaking and writing. Students spell accurately, write independently and creatively, and understand complex texts beyond the curriculum. Students make very good progress. By Year 6, they use sophisticated vocabulary to explain facts and express opinions, for example in their study of pollution. In such contexts, students can also propose solutions to problems they have identified.

- In Arabic as an additional language, less than three quarters of students attain levels that are in line with curriculum standards. In lessons and in their recent work, students demonstrate basic levels of Arabic knowledge where poor vocabulary and weak conversation skills are evident across the phase. Most students make the expected progress from their starting points and over time, evident in lessons and in relation to learning objectives.

- In English, the large majority of students make better than expected progress and the majority reach levels that are above curriculum standards. Rapid progress in spoken language aids very good progress in reading and writing from their baseline assessments. Students use their knowledge of letters and sounds to support independent reading. By Year 4, students compose their own text using supportive templates. They respond well to the 'Reading Challenge' because they like the books on offer. Progress in literacy skills becomes more rapid as students move through the school.

- Attainment in mathematics as measured by internal assessments is uniformly stronger than that derived from externally benchmarked GL progress tests. The knowledge and understanding of the majority of students is beyond expectations when compared to curriculum standards. In lessons, the majority of students across the phase make better than expected progress. Students display very good mental mathematics at the beginning of many lessons. Application of their generally secure knowledge and understanding is developing well, especially when students see the relevance of theory to practice in their everyday lives.

- Attainment in science is good. As students move up through the primary phase, they develop well their understanding of scientific phenomena. For example, Year 6 students clearly grasp how the design of eco-friendly homes relies on a thorough understanding of the physical properties of the materials used for specific purposes. Students' attainment through the primary phase, and the progress they have made by the end, is good. Their ability to find things out for themselves improves as they move through the phase. Attainment and progress are similar for different groups of students.

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students attain levels that are above curriculum standards. Internal data confirms the good levels of knowledge and skills attained by students. In lessons and in their recent work, students demonstrate advanced understanding about Islam and its impact on their daily lives. The majority of students make better than expected progress over time, exploring and explaining concepts, and reaching well-considered conclusions. They can discussing complex issues in some depth. Citation from Hadeeth and recitation of the Holy Qur'an are well developed.

- In Arabic as a first language, most students attain levels in line with curriculum expectations. They use a range of vocabulary in speaking. They read accurately and summarise contemporary texts such as newsprint. They demonstrate an appropriate understanding in spoken and written presentations to peers. Their knowledge and understanding of grammar is in line with curriculum expectations, but their level of free composition is good. In literary study, most students make good progress in understanding poetic themes, for example in the verse of the poet Al Mutanbi. Older students successfully link learning in Arabic to real life applications.

- In Arabic as an additional language, less than three quarters of students attain levels that are in line with curriculum standards. Their writing and speaking skills are underdeveloped. In lessons and in their recent work, students demonstrate basic understanding of Arabic sentence structure. Most students make expected progress over time, as indicated by the internal data. This is also evident in lessons in relation to learning objectives and against their starting points.

- In external examinations a large majority of students attain above curriculum standards. Internal assessment data consistently indicates very good progress in all skills. Students' expressive language is well-developed in active classroom discussion, although pronunciation and intonation are not always accurate. Students read widely and independently in motivating learning contexts. For example, Year 10 students demonstrate well-developed independent analysis of a Shakespearean play that they set in the future. Challenging homework supports very good progress in extended writing and purposeful examination practice.

- Despite a dip in attainment in the most recent IGCSE mathematics examinations, attainment as measured by internal assessment is much stronger. This is also evident in lessons where the majority of students make better than expected progress and reach levels of attainment that are above curriculum standards. Students understand complex mathematical concepts and can apply them to the real world. For example, they use algebraic equations to calculate and present the increase in profit of a business.

- In science, attainment and progress against curriculum standards are very good across the phase. The very good IGCSE results in physics, chemistry and biology in recent years, declined slightly in 2016. Attainment and progress in lessons and in students' work are very good. Students carry out practical activities with precise instructions from their teachers. Students in Year 7 know the chemical properties of acids and alkalis, while Year 11 students are able to establish the direction of a magnetic field around a current carrying conductor.

🧑‍🏫 Post-16		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Good ⬆	Good ⬆
Arabic as a first language	Good	Good
Arabic as an additional language	Not applicable	Not applicable
English	Very good	Very good
Mathematics	Very good ⬇	Outstanding
Science	Very good ⬇	Outstanding

- In Islamic education, the majority of students attain above curriculum standards. In lessons and in their recent work, students demonstrate advanced knowledge and understanding about Islam and how it influences daily life. They can design, pose questions, formulate hypotheses, prepare and deliver presentations about the role of Islam in their future lives. However, when researching, students rely too much on citing the wording of the original source with limited paraphrase to illustrate their understanding. The large majority of students make better than expected progress over time. Memorisation and recitation of the Holy Qur'an are well developed.

- In Arabic as a first language, the majority of students make better than expected progress and attain levels that are above curriculum standards. Students continue to read widely a range of contemporary texts. Their independent writing is good. They use their wide vocabulary appropriately in discussing a range of age-appropriate topics. Students' use of grammar is in line with curriculum expectations. They discuss and analyse literary texts such as the poetry of Bader Shaker Alsaeeab. These discussions explore both surface content and deeper themes and are frequently based on students' independent research and critical thinking.

- In English, internal and external assessment information shows that a large majority of students make better than expected progress and reach higher levels of attainment than expected. Post-16 students speak with flair when presenting their viewpoints. Students' high quality debate entails many contributing their views by responsibly-used social media. In writing, improving standards owe much to students' use of sophisticated vocabulary. Students read and respond appropriately both in discussion and in writing, to a wide variety of non-fiction and literary texts.

- In mathematics, despite a dip in performance in external examinations, the school is still in line with world trends and averages. Progress in lessons is better than expected for most students. Students have a very good understanding of complex mathematical concepts. This is especially evident when they see connections between the practical application of theory to other subjects and industry, for example to plot demographic trends in economics.

- In science, most students attain levels above international standards in AS and A-level. These results have been very good overall during the previous three years. Students' recent work shows that most make better than expected progress. Challenging activities promote students' rapid acquisition of knowledge, and their conceptual understanding owes much to what is presented to them. They apply this knowledge and understanding very effectively. Year 12 chemistry students, for example, ably and accurately predict the effect of changing various factors on the rates of particular reactions.

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

- Overall, students are skilled independent learners. However, for students in the early years of the primary phase these skills are less well developed. In upper secondary and post-16 classes, students improve their own work through assessing their progress against external examination levels. They are able to accept and give critical evaluations.

- Students collaborate effectively in most classes and to a common purpose. In the secondary and post-16 phases, they are able to communicate effectively with one another and to large audiences such as the daily assemblies. The students work hard together and persevere with tasks in class and in preparing impressive responses to interesting homework tasks.

- Students make appropriate connections in their learning to the world around them and adapt well to a wide range of learning contexts. For example, primary students linked their knowledge of science, geography, religion and language during an assembly, focussing on the adaptation of animals to their particular habitats.

- In most lessons, students are capable problem-solvers who research information from a variety of resources. Older students especially build very well on previously-acquired learning skills to learn increasingly independently. In most classes students investigated facts well with some being able to corroborate and evaluate the information they gather, very often using computer technologies in class and for homework.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Personal development	Outstanding ⬆	Outstanding ⬆	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students demonstrate a strong sense of independence, very positive attitudes and consistently very high levels of responsibility towards their own learning. Students are not afraid to take risks and take great advantage of teachers' feedback to make prompt modifications to improve their own learning. In particular contexts, students provide their own feedback to school leaders about improving the school.

- Students' attitudes to learning result in positive behaviour across the school, especially in the upper years where older students demonstrate excellent behaviour and leadership skills. Their participation in Student and Learning Bay Councils, and Model UN, promotes mature insightful attitudes and caring behaviour. Students of all ages progressively develop outstanding civic responsibility in many different contexts.

- Students often take the lead in showing tolerance, sensitivity and self-discipline. They demonstrate care and compassion for each other, as part of a wider school community. Almost all students feel well supported by adults. As a result, they are proactive in supporting other students in class, with older students often 'buddying' younger ones, demonstrating a strong sense of community.

- Students willingly participate in physical and sporting activities, and demonstrate a strong commitment to a wide range of healthy exercises and activities such as yoga. They pay serious attention to healthy eating which is also encouraged around the school. Students speak very knowledgably about what they do, and need to do, to enjoy a healthy lifestyle.

- Attendance levels are very good. Students enjoy coming to school and know that very high levels of attendance and good punctuality contribute to their overall personal and academic achievement.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Very good ⬆	Outstanding ⬆	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students demonstrate an excellent understanding of the values of Islam and they fully understand how Islamic values influence UAE society. This is very well-developed through very high-quality participation in an imaginative and wide range of cultural activities and projects including Holy Qur'an recitation activities, lectures about the UAE, and many investigation projects.

- Students are very knowledgeable and fully respectful of the UAE culture. For example, they reflect on, and discuss, the Sheikh's vision for Dubai and the UAE in many lessons.

- The UAE vision and culture features prominently in daily life and lessons throughout the school. Students enthusiastically understand their role, position and contribution to UAE society. Students as young as Year 3 demonstrate very mature and insightful understanding of key concepts such as tolerance and diversity. Almost all students demonstrate increasingly detailed understanding across all phases of the school.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Very good ⬆	Outstanding ⬆	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students increasingly develop their leadership skills and take the initiative in support of local and national communities. Older students take an active part in organising a wide range of charity events, for example, collecting stationery for less fortunate people, and organising bake and garage sales. They also contribute very responsibly to the improvement of the school through a network of student committees.

- Cooperation is very much part of the daily routine of most students. They have positive attitudes to work and when they face difficulties, they know where to seek support. They are increasingly self-reliant and aware of a range of independent approaches. They participate in many innovative projects such the eco conference, Green Gratitude and Paragon of Pioneers.

- Students show an insightful understanding of environmental sustainability. They seek many ways to develop their school's environment. They imaginatively initiate and persistently sustain their projects such as WEG/EEG programmes initiated by the Environment Club. They also participate in the Green Hope of UAE recycling workshop, successfully adapting and applying the project in their own school.

3. Teaching and assessment

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

- Throughout the school, teachers have a sound knowledge of their subject and understanding of how students learn. Most use a wide range of teaching approaches to engage students in purposeful learning. They encourage students to be independent and more active in their learning. This is a particular feature of teaching in FS, in science lessons and in the post-16 phase.

- Teachers' planning follows a consistent format across the school. Shared lesson objectives encourage students to reflect on their learning, although there is not always sufficient time allowed at the end of lessons to do so. Plans include activities to meet students' different needs. However, they lack clear success criteria. As a result, students' individual progress and achievements cannot always be assessed effectively.

- Teachers have very positive and supportive relationships with students. Most use questioning effectively to extend students' thinking skills. This is particularly effective in science lessons and in the post-16 phase. Teachers encourage students to make clear links to other subjects, and promote discussions about their project work across science, technology, engineering, mathematics and art (STEAM). In a few lessons, questioning techniques are underdeveloped.

- Teachers have a broad understanding of how to adapt their teaching to meet individual needs. They use this knowledge well to match activities to students' styles of learning. This is evident in children's experiences in FS, and when teachers facilitate senior students' self-initiated learning. Teachers have high expectations for each student, including those who are gifted and talented or who have SEND.

- Most teachers challenge students to think more critically and ask questions. They ensure technologies are used to enhance research and enquiry skills, and support innovative ideas such as designing eco-friendly houses. FS children are well supported by specialist teaching to develop their skills in using computer devices, but have insufficient opportunities for independent problem-solving.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Assessment	Good	Good	Good	Good

- A range of internal assessments appropriate to the curricula provide valid measures of students' progress and attainment. FS teachers carry out a baseline assessment at the start of each year and then assess against a list of 'I can' statements according to four levels of competence. Elsewhere, teachers use a range of observations, ongoing assessments and periodic tests to monitor students' progress.

- The school benchmarks its students' outcomes against appropriate external, and international standards. Cognitive ability tests are used increasingly effectively as an indicator of students' potential. GL progress tests provide a good base from which to determine progress. External examinations include IGCSE and A levels.

- Data are recorded and analysed in some depth to evaluate the performance of different groups of students including students with SEND, Emirati students, boys and girls. In the FS, the curriculum framework is used effectively to track progress from entry to exit points.

- Assessment data are used well to improve teaching styles and to adapt the curriculum. The impact of this is not fully effective in improving learning skills and progress. In some lessons, teachers are not confident in assessing progress because the expectations are not clearly defined,

- Most teachers provide constructive feedback to students on their strengths and areas for development. Subject trackers and rubrics are used to highlight progress over time and to identify next steps for improved learning. A good blend of teacher, self- and peer-assessment supports continuity and progress over time.

4. Curriculum

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

- The school offers the National Curriculum of England in all phases with adaptation to the context of the school and students' backgrounds. It meets the requirements of the Ministry of Education (MoE) regulations relating to Arabic and Islamic education. Statutory requirements are met. All key subjects are given the appropriate teaching time. The range of learning experiences students receive develops key skills and interests.

- Improvements in the FS curriculum ensure children have the necessary skills for the expectations of the primary phase curriculum. Pathways between each of the school's other phases are well managed to maximise students' progress and, ultimately, to ensure they are prepared for life after school.

- In the FS and primary lessons, students have some choice within class tasks. Secondary students select IGCSE subjects that reflect their interests and career ambitions. Post-16 students have an increasing range of A-level subjects. A unique life skills curriculum supports a wider range of opportunities for some students to acquire leadership skills and support others within the community.

- Teachers plan meaningful links between subjects for all students. FS children make connections between science and geography by learning about animals in different climates. The skills development programme in Year 10 provides opportunities to apply art, mathematics and commerce knowledge to interior design. Use and application of digital technology significantly enhances students' ability to work independently within project-based learning.

- Parents, teachers and students' views inform regular curriculum reviews. Changes are meaningful and contribute to students' learning. The new Reading Challenge, monitored by the librarian, promotes interest in reading. Most subjects integrate UAE priorities and stimulate students' ambition for their future. Special events complement and expand the timetable to heighten students' awareness of their academic and personal development.

- The UAE social studies curriculum is taught in English. In FS to Year 6 it is part of the thematic curriculum. In Years 7 to 8 it is taught as a discrete subject. By Year 9 UAE social studies is skilfully integrated into the IGCSE Travel and Tourism course. The coverage mapped out in the school curriculum document systematically builds knowledge and skills. Effective shared leadership plans meaningful experiences for students to enquire and collaborate on independent project work. Teachers assess students' work regularly. The learning environment, with its rich, artistic displays, reflects what students know and need to learn about the UAE and Emirati lifestyle.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum adaptation	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good

- Teachers and school leaders very successfully modify the curriculum to meet the learning needs of almost all groups of students. Most lesson plans specify modifications for different groups, including students with SEND. However, such modifications do not consistently clarify learning targets. Learning strategies to meet specific needs include opportunities to use digital devices for research and shared learning with other students.

- Teachers successfully embed a wide range of imaginative, challenging and motivating learning opportunities for students. Examples include the school's involvement in the 'TED talks' and the 'Classroom Beyond Borders'. Students interact with other students and well-known personalities across the globe through Skype sessions. They also operate a live radio station that broadcasts to the school in the mornings.

- Emirati culture and exposure to UAE's values permeate many aspects of the curriculum. Students in all school phases demonstrate deep understanding of UAE culture and society. Secondary students in particular ably link core Islamic values to events in their own lives. UAE culture is celebrated very well in the students' artwork and is highly visible throughout the school.

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

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

- The school has rigorous procedures for safeguarding students, with staff, students and parents fully aware of the child protection policy. The school is very effective in dealing with any incidents of bullying.

- A very safe, secure and hygienic environment is provided. The arrival and departure of students by buses and parent transport are very well organised. Students are carefully supervised at all times. The school pays very good attention to continuous refinement of its systems, for example, in the FS, CCTV and finger guards on doors have been installed.

- Systems and procedures for recording and addressing health and safety incidents are carefully managed. Facilities are well maintained and records carefully kept. Well-staffed medical clinics deal effectively with minor accidents and any emergencies that occur. Detailed medical records enable qualified personnel to monitor students' health and well-being. Medical equipment and medicines are safely updated and stored securely.

- The premises and facilities provide a safe and inclusive physical environment which meet the needs of the school community in many respects. However, classrooms are often too small for the numbers of students and furniture is removed, on occasion, to provide larger learning areas. For students with SEND improvements include ramps, an evacuation chair for emergencies, a personalised evacuation plan, and better access in washroom areas.

- The school's promotion of safe and healthy living is systematically built into almost all aspects of school life. The school canteen provides healthy foods. Staff monitor students' packed lunches regularly to encourage and reward healthy eating. The school very effectively promotes sport for all students, with physical activities and competitions for both boys and girls.

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

- Very positive relationships exist between staff and students in all sections of the school. Students are respectful to each other, teachers and other adults. Very effective, age-appropriate behaviour management systems have been introduced into all classes. High quality professional support is provided by the school counsellor for students and their families who may be experiencing personal or emotional difficulties in their lives.

- The school very successfully promotes students' and parents' understanding of the importance of high levels of attendance and regular punctuality. Instances of unexplained absence are immediately communicated to parents and thoroughly checked. As a result of the school's practice, students maintain very good attendance and punctuality.

- Effective assessment procedures identify students with special educational needs. The strengthening of the SEND team through the designation of twelve new SEND leaders throughout the school increasingly augments support for students presenting with SEND. The SEND department has developed a very helpful identification checklist to recognise students who are gifted and talented.

- The school provides a good level of support for students who have been identified as gifted and talented or with SEND. Effective assessment procedures upon entry and throughout the school, enable early intervention for most students. The quality of the support available enables most students to make consistent social, personal and academic progress.

- The school counsellor, implements a very effective collaborative programme with teachers to support students' well-being throughout the school. This programme provides well-focused age-appropriate lessons that support students' personal and emotional development well. A new programme helps students deal with academic stress in the senior section of the school. The school counsellor provides high quality support for students making career choices.

Inclusion

Provision and outcomes for students with SEND	Good

- School leaders including the SEND Co-ordinator provide clear direction to the work of the extended SEND team. Leaders' planning has a positive impact on the quality of provision in the school and maintains the school's commitment to inclusion. There is not yet the operational capacity to deliver focused SEND initiatives throughout the school.

- The SEND team successfully use a wide range of systems and assessment tools to identify students with special needs. The school responds to the information gathered from these assessments and specialist tests through the implementation of appropriate individual learning plans and individual education plans. Assessment procedures are also in place to evaluate students' language abilities in the early years.

- The school works closely with parents of students with SEND. Effective home-school relations are developed through consistent reporting procedures by the class teachers, the SEND leaders and the specialist SEND staff. Parents feel well advised of their children's needs and how these are met. Parents are consulted during individual learning planning and provide feedback on their children's progress at home.

- Most teachers' planning is appropriately modified but is not always consistently implemented in lessons. Learning targets are not always appropriate and therefore it is difficult for the teacher to accurately assess students' learning outcomes. Curriculum interventions are generally appropriate. However, staff do not yet implement an intensive language development programme for the children with greatest needs.

- For the majority of students with SEND, there is evidence available in school data and the students' work samples, that they are making good progress and moving closer to age-related, curriculum expectations.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership	Very good

- The principal, ably supported by the vice principal, very effectively enlists the whole school community's continuing support for his compelling vision of motivating modern learning. Embedded respect for UAE values and priorities shows clearly in everyday behaviour, as well as in the school's planning to support innovative thinking. The school is highly inclusive.

- Leaders at all levels understand the main components of effective teaching and learning. Across the phases, they systematically guide teachers to focus on how students learn best. This is ably demonstrated in some lessons implementing 'flipped learning' and other highly motivational activities. Such leadership maintains the school's very purposeful learning environment and results in students' outstanding personal development.

- Leaders across the school work very purposefully together with students and their parents. School leaders continually develop student leadership roles in addition to their careful allocation of responsibilities among staff. This results in a strongly shared sense of purpose as all parties contribute to school improvement.

- School leaders, including student leaders, are regularly innovative in their planning to improve the school. They are equally focused on the development needs of the school and the national priorities such as fostering tolerance of diversity in society.

- They continue to ensure the school complies with statutory requirements. Actions taken have improved aspects of students' outcomes in key subjects, notably in Islamic education and progress in Arabic as a first language. Leaders' continued focus on students' personal development has led to outstanding levels of personal responsibility, social awareness and innovative thinking.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good

- Well-established processes for school self-evaluation involve staff at all levels, beginning with subject departmental judgements about the quality of students' attainment and progress. The school knows its strengths and areas for improvement well. However, the analyses of performance data do not sufficiently account for differences between, for example, international bench-marking and external examinations.

- Senior and middle leaders, and increasingly teachers themselves, regularly observe lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. Resultant findings are painstakingly analysed and accurately indicate the strengths of what teachers and students do in lessons. There is not yet a similarly rigorous focus on the quality of students' outcomes lesson-by-lesson, to identify critically important areas to improve.

- School plans address relevant priorities. They are well-constructed, with clear indications of actions to be taken, timescales, accountability and success criteria. Regular reviews assess progress with improvement priorities, and thus maintain the pace of change. However, such reports focus more on the extent of actions taken rather than closely evaluate outcomes for students.

- Several aspects of the work of the school show clear improvement since the last inspection. Outcomes for students in Islamic education and aspects of student progress are now better. Health and safety provision has benefited particularly from revised approaches to emergency evacuation. Arrangements to promote smoother transition from FS to the primary phase are now in place.

Partnerships with parents and the community	Very good

- Parents are very fully engaged as partners, not just in their children's education but in contributing to the processes of school improvement through observing lessons. Well-planned arrangements enable the school to hear and respond to parents' views through the class parental representation. Parents contribute significantly to information sessions about careers and other advice to students.

- Communications with parents are prompt and informative, particularly in the case of notification of unexplained student absence. The school's many-faceted outreach to parents keeps them well-informed about curricular changes and developments in teaching and learning. The school has responded to individual concerns with care and solicitude.

- Parents are very well informed, through detailed reports, about their children's progress. The school's reporting procedures support very effectively parents' understanding of the school's developing assessment approaches such as the use of rubrics. Additionally, the school keeps parents well-informed about other measures of student outcomes such as standardised tests.

- Students and parents eloquently testify to the many ways the school fosters partnerships at the local, national and international level. Students thrive on varied opportunities to interact with peers from other schools on innovative activities. Well-developed relationships with multinational IT companies, as well as philanthropic communication broadcasters, exemplify the school's ambitious determination to offer horizon-widening experiences to its students.

Governance	Acceptable

- The governing body is progressively involving greater parental representation through its Local Advisory Board. This developing context supplements governance surveys of parental views, to which it encourages school response through the 'You Said / We Did' bulletin. As a result, governors are aware of parents' request for further information, for example about assessment, curriculum development and students' learning experiences.

- Corporate arrangements to monitor the school's performance include the analysis of data on students' outcomes. The governing body sets leaders performance targets to secure improvement. Such arrangements do not yet take sufficient account of all sources of data on students' performance to arrive at accurate baselines by which to measure further improvement.

- Governance acts appropriately to support the school's response to previous inspection recommendations. As a result, important aspects of health and safety provision have improved. However, measures taken to resolve overcrowding have focused on a gradual, rather than an urgent solution. As a result, continuing accommodation shortcomings still seriously constrain students' learning experiences, impeding the school's commendable drive to extend motivating learning.

Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable

- This large school runs smoothly on a daily basis. Complex end-of-day dismissal routines, necessitated by space constraints are well understood by students, parents and staff. Overall, effective and efficient routines include timetabling of additional opportunities for students to learn in new and motivating ways.

- The school is suitably staffed, with additional SEND staff appointed since the last inspection. All staff are qualified teachers, and increasingly benefit from professional training based on the school's analysis of teachers' development needs. However, teachers of additional languages, including Arabic, do not yet benefit from bespoke training on teaching methods to meet the needs of additional language learners.

- Specialist facilities include the school's broadcast studio, and a well-organised learning resource centre. Recent improvements have provided more recreation space. Nonetheless, the continuing presence of large numbers of students in small classrooms seriously restricts scope for the fully effective adoption of the modern teaching and learning approaches. Classes in many areas of the school remain uncomfortably full.

- The school's information technology infrastructure very reliably supports widespread facilitation of students' use of their own devices in lessons. Across the school, students use this frequently and responsibly. They also benefit from school equipment, such as cameras, to make short films. There is a lack of resources to support children's active learning in the FS.

The views of parents, teachers and senior students

The views of parents, teachers and senior students

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

Responses to the surveys		
Responses received	Number	
Parents*	2016-2017	1523
	2015-2016	732
Teachers	222	
Students	356	

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

- Almost all parents who responded are satisfied with the quality of education provided. They agree that their children are safe at school, on school transport and online, that the school is well-led, and that school leaders are approachable.

- More than a few do not think that teachers know their children's strengths and weaknesses, or that marking helps their children improve. The same proportion do not think students are well-behaved and respectful to teachers, that students get along well and that bullying is rare.

- The large majority of students, who responded to the survey, are positive about most aspects of school life. They agree the learning environment helps them feel close to others, happy at school, and feel they are treated fairly.

- Most students feel safe in school and feel independent and positive about their ability to succeed with effort. Most feel the school wants the best for them, listens to their views, and encourages and supports their personal development. A large majority find teachers helpful; but a minority say that school leaders do not listen and respond to their views.

- Most teachers completed the survey and almost all responses were positive.

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