



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational
needs and disabilities



Innovation

Inspection Report 2015-2016

Al Mawakeb School - Br

Curriculum: US- California

Overall rating: Good

Read more about the school



www.khda.gov.ae

“Don't look
behind to
see who is
following you,
but look forward
to be ahead”



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

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School information

General information



Location	Al Barsha
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	1998
Website	www.almawakeb.sch.ae
Telephone	04-3478288
Address	Al Barsha - Dubai U.A.E PO Box 35001
Principal	Naziha Nasr
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	13 to 17 March 2016

Students



Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	3-17
Grades or year groups	Kindergarten 1 to Grade 12
Number of students on roll	2,709
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	671
Number of students with SEND	38
Largest nationality group of students	Arab

Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	151
Largest nationality group of teachers	Lebanese
Number of teaching assistants	4
Teacher-student ratio	1:18
Number of guidance counselors	1
Teacher turnover	38%

Curriculum



Educational permit / License	US
Main curriculum	US / MOE
External tests and examinations	SAT I, PSAT, TOEFL, IBT ACER
Accreditation	NEASC candidate
National Agenda benchmark tests	IBT

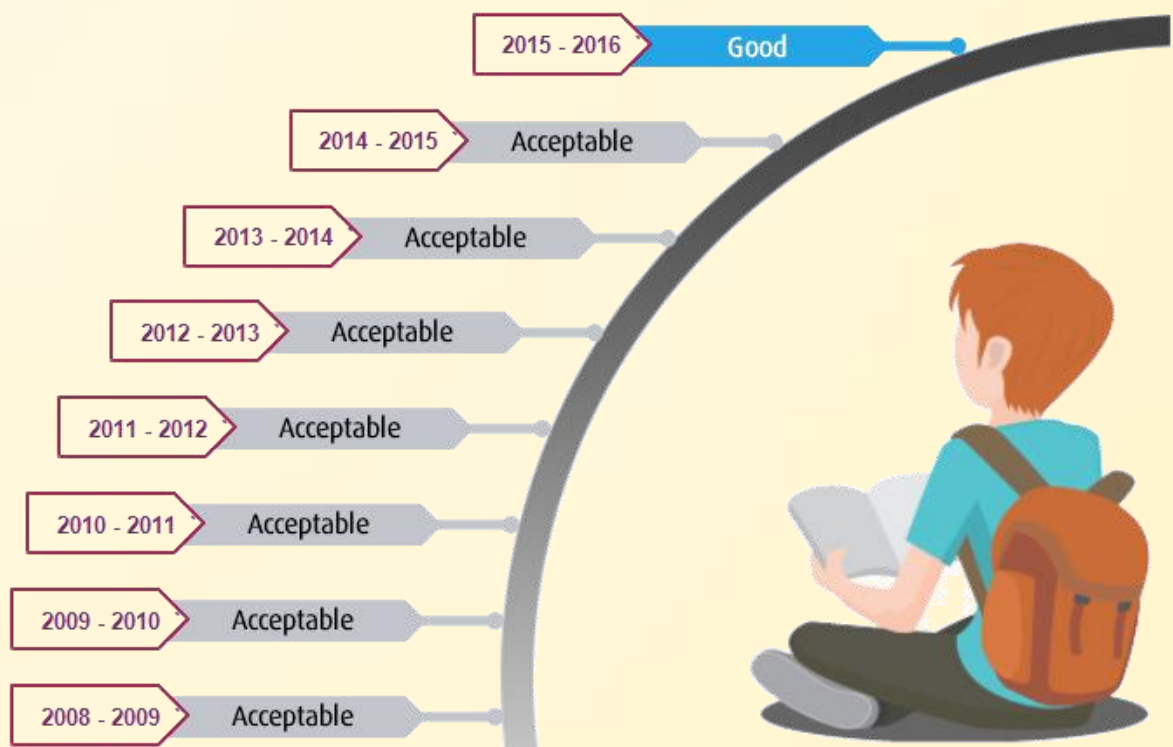


Summary for parents and the community

Al Mawakeb School - Br was inspected by DSIB from 13 to 17 March 2016. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **good**.

In order to judge the overall quality of education provided by the school, inspectors considered six key standards of performance. Inspectors looked at children's attainment and progress in key subjects, their learning skills and their personal and social development. They judged how effective teaching and the assessment of learning were across the school. Inspectors considered how well the school's curriculum, including activities inside and outside classrooms, met the educational needs of all children. They judged how well the school protected and supported children. In addition inspectors judged the effectiveness of leadership and governance, including management, staffing, facilities and resources.

The inspection judgments were drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observing children learning in lessons, looking at their work, talking with children, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and reviewing the parents', teachers' and senior students' surveys.





How well did the school perform overall?

Overall, The Al Mawakeb School- Branch provided a **good** quality of education for its students.

- Students' progress improved to good in the elementary, middle and high school in Arabic as a first language, Arabic as an additional language, mathematics, and science. The quality of students' learning skills improved to good in all phases of the school, with happy, engaged students who were ready to learn new ideas.
- Personal and social development skills were good or very good for all students. Their understanding of the values of Islam in the local culture, and their sense of personal responsibility were particularly strong.
- Teaching improved in the elementary and middle schools this year, resulting in good teaching across all phases. There were some improvements to assessment although data analysis was not yet used as a tool to support teaching and learning.
- The school improved its alignment with the US curriculum, California state standards. The KG benefitted from a range of choices for independent learning.
- Health and safety improved to very good across all phases, and students were secure in a safe and well-protected environment.
- There were improvements to the overall leadership and governance of the school, mid-level leaders played an important role, there were improvements to the self-analysis of strengths and development needs, and together these factors contributed to improving school performance and the raising of the overall school rating to good.



What did the school do well?

- The very positive atmosphere of learning, supported by the very strong personal development of students, which together fostered well-informed individuals keen on learning.
- The development of an awareness of healthy lifestyles, which included a physical education program involving students in every grade.
- Regular promotion of UAE characteristics, features, values and recognition of state leaders. KG children showed very high levels of respect when the national anthem was sung, they knew the words and acknowledged the flag.
- The success of leaders at all levels in driving forward improvements in the school, including rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning.



What does the school need to do next?

- Improve teaching strategies to ensure that all lessons take a full account of the needs of each student.
- Implement the required changes in the high school to match the structure of a US high school, thereby bringing it in line with the requirements of the school's authorized/licensed curriculum, and providing curricular options and career readiness choices to older students.
- Give particular attention to the development of literacy, with special emphasis on reading comprehension and extended writing throughout the school, particularly in English and in Arabic courses.
- Strengthen the provision available to students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), through better identification of need, in order to best meet their learning needs and true capacity. Include those students that are gifted and talented.



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

- Many students with SEND made adequate or good progress in their classroom work. Scheduled support was helpful to students as they worked to stay in line with the learning of other students at their grade level.
- The SEND staff updated parents on the progress of their child, through formal reports at the end of each term.
- Communication was reported by parents as occurring around their child's individual education plan (IEP) and whenever the need arose.
- Parents of students with SEND, were offered involvement in the mainstream activities and volunteer committees of the school.
- The SEND counselors provided support and guidance to parents on daily issues and on the child's long-term instructional plan.

National Agenda Parameter



In 2014, H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of UAE, and Ruler of Dubai, launched the UAE National Agenda 2021, with education being a prime focus. The National Agenda includes two major objectives developed with the intent of placing the UAE among the most successful countries that provide world-class education. By 2021, it is expected that the UAE will feature in the top twenty countries in the 'Program for International Student Assessment' (PISA) test and in the top fifteen countries in the 'Trends in Mathematics and Science Studies' (TIMSS) test.

In response to this, each participating school was issued a report on their students' performance in these international assessments and in addition, they were provided with clear targets for improving their performance. This academic year, KHDA introduced the National Agenda Parameter, which is a method for measuring and monitoring schools' progress towards achieving their individual National Agenda targets through the use of external benchmarking assessments.

Main points:

- The school did not fully meet the registration requirements of the National Agenda Parameter.
- The attainment data was not sufficient to make a full judgement on the progress towards meeting National Agenda targets.
- Most stakeholders showed a real awareness of the National Agenda. Governors were extremely supportive and understood the vision in helping drive forward school improvement. The students were well informed in relation to the UAE vision and how it impacted upon them through benchmarking tests. Parents were less aware, although the school website was very informative about the requirements of the National Agenda.
- Work on the use of data analysis had already begun and in the case of mathematics and English this work was beginning to have a visible impact. From the mathematics IBT data the school identified topics that needed more depth. Curriculum and teaching modification had improved, resulting in these now being strengths of the school.
- Professional development on critical thinking was beginning to have an impact. It was a feature of both the planning and the schools' internal assessments. Critical thinking tasks were seen in lessons, and students commented that they were having to reflect more on their work.
- The use of learning technologies in lessons, to encourage research, was limited. However, the online portal was used effectively to encourage learning at home and gave students the opportunity to engage in dialogue with their teachers. Teachers used the software, linked to the mathematics US textbook scheme, to vary their delivery within class and provide challenge and higher order thinking tasks.

Innovation in education

The *UAE Vision 2021* sets out the National Agenda 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'. It provides a basis for evaluating public and private schools in order to deliver a world-class education for all children in the UAE.

Innovation is driven by a commitment to excellence and continuous improvement. It is based on curiosity, the willingness to take risks, to experiment and to test assumptions as well as questioning and challenging the status quo. Being innovative is about looking beyond what we currently do well, identifying the great ideas of tomorrow and putting them into practice.







Promoting a culture of innovation:

- School leaders were committed to promoting a culture of innovation through the newly formed innovation committee comprised of parents, students, teachers, and leaders. The school's capacity to promote innovation took the form of weekly professional development opportunities for teachers to develop project-based learning initiatives and innovation strategies. Use of spaces and learning technology were beginning to impact on the development of innovation skills. The curriculum design included opportunities for students to select projects, develop leadership skills, and make connections through real world applications.

Overall school performance

Good ↑

1. Students' achievement

		KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Islamic education 	Attainment	Not applicable	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good	Good	Good
Arabic as a first language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good	Good ↑	Good ↑
Arabic as an additional language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Good	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good ↑	Acceptable	Acceptable
English 	Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
	Progress	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Mathematics 	Attainment	Good	Good ↑	Good ↑	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Good ↑	Good	Good
Science 	Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Good ↑	Good
	Progress	Good	Acceptable	Good ↑	Good

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Good	Good ↑	Good	Good

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

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

3. Teaching and assessment

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

4. Curriculum

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

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑
Care and support	Good	Good	Good	Good

6. Leadership and management

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



Main inspection report

The Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) is responsible for inspecting and reporting on the standards reached by students and the quality of education provided in Dubai's private schools.

Judgements are made on a six-point scale



Using this scale, the *Main inspection report* contains the judgements about the different aspects, phases and subjects that form the work of the school.

It provides the reasons for the answers to the questions in the *Summary for parents and the community*:

- How well did the school perform overall?
- What did the school do well?
- What does the school need to do next?

1. Students' achievement

KG

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

- Children spoke confidently in English, asked questions and shared their ideas. They listened well and checked whether they understood what was being said to them, supporting their good progress. Children read their writing aloud, using phonetically plausible sentences including pronouns. They labeled their pictures well. Children formed letters and wrote numerals accurately. They listened attentively to stories and were able to sequence and predict, due to regular practice and exposure to a range of books. Their literacy skills were developing well.
- Mathematics achievement was good as they learned both concepts and skills. KG2 children counted accurately using one-to-one correspondence. They understood that the total number of objects remained the same no matter how these objects were grouped. Children checked their own understanding by recounting, and solved simple problems using different methods. Children were developing their skills in the use of mathematical symbols of operation or comparison, and used tally marks correctly. Older children used rulers to measure accurately in inches. They described two-dimensional shapes and used these in their craft work to create collage pictures.
- Children made good progress in the science topics they studied, such as the environment, health, and types of transport. Children in KG2 understood how objects move, and linked their understanding to safety on the road. They enjoyed exploring large vehicles first hand. The children observed the growth of living things, and from their initial studies in each year group were aware of how humans and animals grow, develop and change over time. They linked this understanding to what they observed in families. Close observational work was a feature of scientific enquiry, and children used their literacy skills well to identify and record their findings on diagrams and simple drawings.

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students were working at levels above the curriculum standards. Students had a good understanding of Islamic laws, such as the Pillars of Islam, Ablution and Salaat. Most students' recitation skills and application of Tajweed rules were appropriate for their age. For example, in grade 5, students called during the lesson Ifta service in the General Authority of Islamic Affairs and Endowments to ask questions, and in grade 1 students were able to talk about the Sheikh Zayed mosque. All groups of students were secure in their knowledge, skills and understanding about Islamic etiquettes, morals and values such as helping.
- In Arabic as a first language a majority of students made good progress and attained above the MOE curriculum expectations. Students' responded well to questions in class, demonstrating a good understanding of spoken Arabic. All students were developing their spoken, formal Arabic well. They expressed their ideas about what they learned or watched in presentations. They were able to hold a dialogue with peers, using long sentences. A majority of students were able to read and then summarize passages, verbally and in writing. The quality of assessed and class work also indicated that students made good progress.
- In Arabic as an additional Language, the majority of students worked at levels above the curriculum standards. In lessons and recent work, the majority of the students exceeded the learning objectives. Students understood teachers' daily instructions. They were able to express opinions using a wide range of vocabulary, talk about themselves in short sentences, and respond to greetings. The majority of students could read short familiar texts with few mistakes, and identify the main points. Progress in writing was slower because students were not provided with enough opportunities to write at length for different purposes. All groups of students made progress over time.
- In English, most of the students improved their comprehension through reading and discussion in class. They made connections between similar stories, and analysed the ideas they read. Most students were able to summarize information in prescribed texts, identify key details, and generate questions. The aptitudes of students varied, but most worked within the age related expectations of the Common Core standards. External assessment results did not provide a complete picture of attainment, as only grade 5 students sat them. However, the results indicated that students' attainment was below international benchmarks. Most students' progress was in line with the learning objectives in lessons. However, in class, high achievers were not provided with enough challenge and low achievers were not given the support they required.

- In mathematics, the majority of students' attainment and progress were now good. International Benchmark Test (IBT) results in Grade 5 were significantly above averages. In lessons, students were learning very well and made the best progress when they were challenged to think for themselves and apply their learning to solving problems related to the real world. For example in a grade 4 lesson on reasoning, students were required to think critically about how they would use their understanding of decimals and fractions to calculate the use of space in Barsha Park. Students' attainment, over time, reflected an upward trend.
- The attainment of most students' in science was in line with curriculum standards as confirmed in external and internal test results. Most students demonstrated age appropriate knowledge, skills, and understanding. They confidently used scientific terminology to explain scientific principles. For example, they could explain how Doppler radar works, and how light interacted with matter. Opportunities for students to extend their scientific thinking were not consistently provided. The attainment and progress of most students has remained more or less the same over the previous three years.

Middle

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

- In Islamic education, most students attained in line with the Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum standards. In lessons, the majority of students made better than expected progress as measured against learning objectives. They had appropriate levels of understanding, knowledge and skills of Islamic concepts such as the Day of Judgement. They could infer from Hadeeth, the rulings and guidelines. Students' recitation skills were within age appropriate levels. Students were not all skilled in linking their lessons to the Holy Qur'an and Hadeeth. Overall they made good progress.
- Most students attained levels in line with MoE curriculum expectations during Arabic as a first language classes. Most students listened well and gave answers that showed they understood what they heard. All students spoke formal Arabic and could express ideas on what they learned or watched during class presentations. They held discussions and engaged in dialogue among themselves. Most students understood the main ideas of the passages they read, and summarized them orally or in writing. Students wrote freely on different topics. In class, and in their assessments, the majority of students made progress above curriculum expectations.

- In Arabic as an additional language, most students' attainment was in line with the expectations of the curriculum. Students' listened well and understood their teacher's directions. They understood the topics in lessons and provided accurate responses, for example, Grade 7 students described a particular room in a house and grade 6 students described a video they had watched. All students could copy clearly although dictation and free writing were more challenging. Progress overall was acceptable with listening and reading skills stronger than speaking and writing.
- In English, student' attainment and progress were acceptable. They used a variety of texts to discuss literary terms, identify author's techniques, and engage in discussions. Some texts, however, lacked the complexity defined by the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Students discussed questions and made connections to their lives. Although most lessons focused on discussion, students also used their listening and speaking skills to inform their writing. The quality of students' writing for assignments varied. Most groups of students made similar progress, although students with SEND did not progress as quickly as other learners. In external benchmark tests, most students' attainment was below the expected standard, with limited progress between Grade 6 to 8.
- In mathematics, IBT test results showed that students performed well above the mean in comparison to other schools, particularly by the end of the phase. In both lessons and in their written work, students showed that their understanding of the skills, and their application of mathematical concepts was progressing well. In a Grade 8 lesson, the majority of the students were able to understand equations of perpendicular and parallel lines and were able to apply formulas to ascertain whether lines were actually parallel. Most students enjoyed being challenged and made the best progress in these lessons. Over time, the students' trend in attainment was improving.
- Internal and external test results in science showed that a majority of students' attainment was above expected curriculum standards. Students made good progress in knowledge, skills, and understanding, measured against the learning objectives in lessons. For example, students demonstrated they understood the relation between energy and work, and could calculate force and distance. In classes, a majority of students could answer critical thinking questions and analyze data and made better progress when they were involved in practical work. During experiments they were able to make connections with the wider world.

High

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

- In Islamic education, most students were working at levels that were in line with the curriculum expectations. Students made better than expected progress in gaining knowledge, skills and understanding about Islamic laws, concepts and principles as measured against the learning objectives in lessons. Students could explain how to apply what they had learned to their own lives. They had secure memorization skills, however applying Tajweed rules while reciting was not well developed. Deriving judgements from sources such as the verses of the Holy Qur'an and Hadeeth and enhancing cross-curricular links were limited. Data showed that girls made better progress than boys. When given the opportunity, students had developed research skills and were able to express their ideas clearly.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students' attainment and progress in classes was in line with the expectations of the MoE curriculum. In listening, most students gave answers that showed good understanding. All students spoke formal Arabic when expressing ideas about what they had learned or when making presentations. Most students understood the passages they read and could give clear and accurate responses. Free writing skills were very well developed. A majority of students made good progress in lessons.
- In Arabic as an additional language, students' attainment was acceptable. Most students could adequately carry on conversations with peers in Arabic. They could describe a familiar setting, such as a clothes shop, but reading skills were developing more slowly. Writing was stronger when students were copying but some grammar mistakes took place when writing from dictation. Most students met the learning objectives in classes. The internal data suggested better progress than was evident in classes and student work.
- In English, the majority of students made good attainment and progress. They demonstrated knowledge, skills, and understanding that were well aligned to the literacy features of the CCSS for their grade levels. For example, students prepared for a class discussion by reading independently, taking notes on key ideas, and formulating questions. In discussion they referenced the annotated text to discuss how literature was influenced by historic events. Some students struggled to access the full curriculum, but were able to build vocabulary and skills to effectively read and write in line with the standards. Students used context clues to determine word meanings when reading. Though gifted and talented students were better served within the high school, the progress of students with SEND remained limited.
- In Mathematics, most students attained in line with expectations and curriculum standards. External examination results were varied. The results of the sample taking PSAT was higher than for the sample of students taking SAT I. In lessons, students demonstrated their knowledge and understanding of the topics learned. Grade 11 students were able to apply logarithmic functions to interest on a monetary deposit, linking their learning to real life. Progress in lessons was good, as students achieved the stated objective within the lesson. There were no significant differences between the performances of different groups of students. Over time, attainment was broadly in line with international standards although students struggled with the external examinations.

- A majority of students attained above curriculum standards in physics, biology, and chemistry as reflected in internal and external test data. In all grades, students demonstrated secure knowledge and understanding as measured against the learning objectives in the lessons. For example, students calculated the electric potential difference and determined the magnitude of a uniform electric field. They had developed good scientific skills and were able to hypothesize, predict and analyze accurately. Over the three previous years, the school maintained high standards of attainment for the majority of students.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Good	Good ↑	Good	Good

- In the KG, students were genuinely interested in learning and enjoyed challenge. They increasingly took responsibility for their own learning and engaged well with others. Opportunities to use learning technologies were sometimes limited. However, the interactive work linked to the mathematics scheme enabled children to work them productively and in an independent manner.
- Students in the elementary school learned independently, and with their peer group. Students justified their ideas and communicated their reasoning to the rest of the class, explaining how they arrived at their answer or opinion. This promoted critical thinking. Students worked well together, followed up ideas from peers, and were supportive. Most students expressed themselves clearly, presenting coherent points and arguments for further discussion.
- The application of their learning to the real world was a strength in the middle school. Students understood that class work was of real value in terms of its application, for example, when they learned geometrical functions involving triangles enabling heights and inclinations to be calculated. Students' skill in the use of learning technologies was secure.
- The online learning portal supported learning skills in the high school. It enabled students to have active communication with their teachers, to access the textbooks online and in English, to have access to work portfolios and literary texts. Students increasingly displayed critical thinking skills. As an example, a Grade 4 mathematics class wrote their own problems based on the information provided.

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Personal development	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- Personal and social development was very good. Students had very positive attitudes to their work and each other, accepted constructive feedback very readily and were very confident and self-assured. Their sense of self-worth had a very positive influence on attitudes and by the time students were in the oldest grades they were mature beyond their years.
- Behavior was very good. Students would self-regulate their responses and were highly respectful of others, for example during debates when others expressed different points of view. The students had a very high degree of tolerance of others and behavioral issues were very rare and dealt with very quickly. These aspects all created a feeling of security, harmony and cooperation within the school.

- Relationships were very positive, cordial and affirming. Students were very aware and proud of the diversity of their school community. They were self-effacing, very sensitive to and considerate of the needs of others and demonstrated very good empathy towards their peers.
- Healthy living was well-promoted and the children in KG had generally healthy snacks. Older students showed that they took notice of the advice they were given, often choosing healthy options. They were energetic and active in the various activities offered within the school.
- Attendance was very good at 97% and punctuality was not usually an issue. Students attended school very regularly because they enjoyed their lessons and had a genuine desire and thirst for learning.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Very good ↑	Good	Good	Very good ↑

- Almost all students demonstrated a good understanding of Islamic values to the UAE and its society. In assembly and around school, students' behavior clearly demonstrated that the values of Islam were known to students and that they understood their importance to the UAE.
- Students had a wide knowledge of UAE heritage and traditions. They described camel and horse races, different types of clothing for women and men, and types of traditional food. Students participated in National Day and understood the meaning of Eid al Fitr, Eid al Adha and the UAE habits during Ramadan.
- Most students knew about their home culture. They gave examples of famous places in Egypt, knew the significance of the tree of Arz for Lebanese, and the Al Iman mosque for Syrians and other Muslims. Students' knowledge about international cultures outside the region was less developed.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good	Good	Very good ↑

- Students demonstrated an understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the school community. They were involved in several volunteering and charitable activities, including supporting a charity drive for Yemen, and a fundraising book sale. Older students willingly participated in activities that had a positive impact on the wider community, such as participating in 'Walk for Education' and visiting the old age home.
- Students demonstrated a positive work ethic. They were eager to take the initiative and develop their own projects. They participated in different school clubs. The student council held different charitable events, such as a bake sale, art sale, and a carnival to raise donations for worthy causes. Moreover, older students had the opportunity to develop their leadership skills and responsibilities within the school.
- Students appreciated the importance of cleanliness and the environment. They participated in different environmental activities such as 'Eco system in a bottle', saving electricity and water days, and a can collection campaign.

3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good

- Teachers used their strong subject knowledge with confidence and creativity. Across all phases, educators had a keen awareness of how students learn. Teachers developed understandings, employed inquiry, and designed learning tasks to meet the needs of all learners.
- Lesson plans were consistently crafted to ensure learning time was maximized and students' needs were appropriately met. Lessons included effective instruction, guided practice, and independent learning time. Additionally all lesson plans identified support for students with SEND, listed appropriate resources and employed creative technology to improve opportunities for learning.
- Teachers set the tone for a positive learning environment driven by curiosity and collaboration. Teachers and students interacted through whole-class discussion, one-on-one support, small group work, and ongoing inquiry. Most lessons included formative assessments and teachers used results to address misconceptions and foster deeper understandings.
- Teachers employed a wide range of strategies to meet the needs of all learners. Students were grouped according to attainment levels and tracked via a color-coded system that identified their mastery of specific skills. These groupings were flexible and students were able to move within a spectrum of supports that included learning models, guided notes, and leveled texts.
- Educators created an environment that invited students to reflect on and take responsibility for their own learning. Teachers designed learning tasks that encouraged problem-solving, multi-step processing, and innovation. Lessons sometimes included research, especially within the high school. However, some teachers did not facilitate research, which limited students' access to outside information.
- Teachers of Arabic had strong subject knowledge and qualifications. Teachers used different strategies in teaching that gave students at all levels access to learning. In the better lessons, teachers planned well and used technology resources. Teachers interacted with students by asking both open and close-ended questions and facilitating small group work. However, critical thinking skills and independent learning were limited in all phases.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good ↑	Good

- Assessment data, both formative and summative, were used to modify the teaching of the curriculum, particularly where adaptations were needed for groups of students. This year, teachers more consistently used this information in lesson planning.
- An organized approach to internal assessment ensured that students were tested twice a year, with summative examinations well-linked to the school's chosen state curriculum standards. Additional information was established by formative assessments including rubrics for projects and peer assessment in some year groups. Assessment policies were very clear and detailed, ensuring consistency of analysis on student progress across all staff.

- All students in Grades 5 to 9 sat external benchmark tests in IBT (ACER), which supplemented internal tests in English, science and mathematics. A sample of high school students took SAT1 and PSAT assessments, which showed the level of their readiness for university. Benchmark tests were not provided for Elementary Grades 1 to 4, and there were no external assessments for Arabic or Islamic education.
- School leaders and teachers analyzed assessment data and used it effectively to address particular instructional needs. Assessment data analysis was also used in evaluating teacher effectiveness, and in planning modifications during the curriculum review at the end of the year.
- Most teachers knew the strengths and weaknesses of individual students and provided well-focused challenge and support. Feedback to students by some teachers was very useful and helped students see next steps in learning. Student self-assessment was evident in a few classes but not yet widespread.

4. Curriculum

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

- The curriculum had a clear rationale, was reasonably broad and balanced, and generally aligned to California and Common Core State Standards (CCSS). While the Kindergarten curriculum was well-balanced, the upper phases did not yet address the full breadth and depth of the standards. There was not enough provision in place for those students who did not take Islamic education.
- The curriculum was planned and sequenced to adequately build on students' learning. Vertical and horizontal curriculum maps and scope and sequence documents were designed to meet the needs of most students. The high school course requirements did not follow the standard progression and credit system.
- Students had limited curricular options, which created a prescriptive approach to course selection. Advanced placement classes were not offered. There were insufficient subject choices available to students in the high school, to address their interests and create individual pathways to future studies and career options. During school hours and as extra-curricular activities, students had additional learning opportunities including music, art, sports, and clubs.
- Lesson planning included some cross-curricular links, especially in the early years' program. However, there were lost opportunities to promote coherence and connection within the curriculum. Most lesson plans included time for independent practice, although some lessons did not give adequate time or priority to these practices. Research was evident at the upper levels of the high school, but was not consistently planned throughout all phases.
- The school had systems in place to review its curriculum. All phases and departments demonstrated a systemic approach to curriculum review and revision based on a variety of data points. While most areas of the curriculum were adjusted to address the academic and personal development of students, these efforts were not yet embedded.
- Plans were in place to integrate UAE social studies into the curriculum in a manner that was compliant with MOE requirements. The plans included teaching the subject separately and integrating it with other subjects

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum adaptation	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good ↑

- Most classroom teachers provided good support by making the required modifications to lessons and by offering regular individual assistance to students. Some teachers used color-coded role sheets to assess the level of support required. Academic subject support was provided after school for Grades 4 through 12. The 'Help Lab' was offered daily in core subjects and resource rooms provided tutoring sessions for students with SEND.
- The curriculum encouraged activities that sparked the individual interest of students, providing opportunities for research and creative, project-based work. A wide variety of extra-curricular after-school activities provided opportunities for students to engage in explorations of environmental issues, social concerns, and inter-school sport competitions, among others.
- Learning about the society and values of the UAE was a priority for the school, with speakers, cultural field trips, and projects linked to the school's curriculum. Students learned about sustainability and water/power usage when the Dubai Electricity and Water Authority visited the school. They had learned measurements and model making when creating a mini Dubai model of the city, all experiences were carried out throughout the year.
- In Islamic education, teachers encouraged students to develop knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the UAE culture. For example, in Grade 5, students called the Ifta service in the General Authority of Islamic Affairs and Endowments to get answers to their questions. In Grade 12, students discussed UAE initiatives in preserving olive trees.

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- The school had rigorous procedures on how to safeguard the school community. Child protection and other safety policies were well known. Students felt secure and were confident to report any concerns. School policies and procedures were communicated widely to staff, parents, and students. At the beginning of the year, a campaign against bullying including cyber bullying was carried out across the school for all students.
- Effective policies were reviewed regularly and all staff received updates. Staff were fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in ensuring health and safety. The facility manager carried out regular, thorough checks on premises to ensure safety and security. Students were properly supervised on school grounds and on school transport. The school met all legal and regulatory requirements, including emergency evacuation drills and fire drills.
- The premises and facilities provided a safe and secure physical environment to meet the needs of all students. It was mostly accessible for students with special educational needs and disabilities. All entry gates were monitored at all times by security. Cameras were installed throughout the school along with additional security. The school was clean and well maintained.

- The school regarded the promotion of healthy living as an important part of its program. The curriculum content of some classes included references to healthy lifestyles such as aspects of diet and exercise. Students were aware of the problems of obesity. Appropriate measures were taken to provide reasonable protection from the sun, including large canvas shading over playgrounds and ready access to fresh drinking water.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Care and support	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Positive relationships among staff and students created a calm and supportive atmosphere for most on campus. Students were very polite in their interactions with staff and with adults in general.
- The school attained a very good level of attendance and punctuality overall. A strong attendance management system along with a campus that was engaging to students, provided a welcoming and nurturing atmosphere for everyone.
- An increased level of support for students with SEND had been built into the school's systems within the previous two years. Students were identified for services at entry to the school, or by referral from the teaching staff as they progressed through the school year. A program had not been established to identify students who were gifted and or talented.
- The school had established an extensive schedule of withdrawal sessions for students with support staff in each academic subject area. Support in classes was provided across the school for students with SEND.
- Individual counseling was provided for students linked to discipline, lateness, progress and grading in academic areas as well as in areas of emotional concern. The career counselor provided guidance to students through large hosted events and through individual counseling sessions. Workshops were held to inform students and their parents of the various college and career options open to them within the UAE and internationally.

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

The overall effectiveness of provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities

Acceptable

- The SEND administrative team had built an extensive daily schedule of withdrawal from classes and within class support. This was provided by nine support teachers and SEND staff. This had yet to have consistent impact on the progress made by students with SEND
- SEND staff made use of a range of indicators to appropriately identify the needs of students with SEND upon entry and within the school. However, the system required further refinement to ensure that all students with SEND were identified and had access to the interventions and individual plans needed to thrive in their learning environment.
- Parents were invited to IEP meetings and to confer with counselors and classroom teachers on a regular basis. Some parents felt the need for more support and would have benefited from workshops about their child's instructional issues and to learn of strategies and approaches to use within the home.

- In class lesson modification and support was included in most lesson plans but delivery on a daily basis was inconsistent. It depended on the skills and care extended by the individual classroom teacher.
- SEND counselors were attentive to the progress and personal issues of SEND students, especially as they moved into the upper high school grades. However, some students with severe and complex needs required alternative class options, particularly in the high school, when courses became more complex and beyond the academic reach of these students.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Good ↑

- School leaders were committed and passionate about the school, its improvement and effectiveness. They displayed competence and professionalism as they worked to improve the quality of teaching, make changes to fully implement the school's licensed curriculum and fully address the action plans for development. School leaders were well-informed of priorities, and school goals in implementing the national priorities.
- Since fully implementing the requirements of the US Curriculum, school leaders have responded promptly to implement professional development to enable teachers to gain skills related to the curriculum, and improve assessment feedback. Leaders showed secure knowledge of the types of teaching approaches required, and identified stronger teachers with these skills to mentors others.
- School morale was positive. Communication was facilitated by the structure of leadership, which ensured students had a section leader acting on their behalf who knew them well. The school held each department/section accountable for its role in carrying out the action plans as well as for student performance. Communication with students and parents by school leaders was open, inclusive and effective.
- Leaders at all levels worked collaboratively with clear knowledge of success criteria, and time to reflect on effectiveness. New initiatives, some of which were suggested by students, were easily put in place. Leaders identified and addressed potential barriers to improvement. Innovative ideas were sometimes tried, such as the 'Talking Stations' which gave older students opportunities to volunteer, and gave all participants a chance to articulate their thinking.
- Over the previous year, leaders had improved the school's performance in many areas. The consistency offered by the full implementation of the school's licensed curriculum created a sustainable and constant focus which leaders did well to maintain and extend.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Good ↑

- The school knew its strengths and areas for improvement well, and articulated key priorities while defining specific lines of action towards development. External and international tests, the priorities of the National Agenda, and the identified areas for improvement from the last inspection report were systematically used as primary sources for school reflection and action planning, supplemented by a sound knowledge of the school and its students.

- There was good, systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching, with focused goals and clearly stated links to the curriculum and to professional development. This approach was efficient and effective.
- School improvement and action plans were thoughtfully built on reflective and pragmatic evaluation of the school's current strengths. The school was aware of areas of need and addressed these in several different ways, including at the departmental level, followed by regular progress reports. The school's work to embed the National Agenda priorities through improved teaching strategies, consistent curriculum and extra-curricular activities were having positive impact.
- There was significant progress towards implementing most recommendations from the previous inspection report, through systematic action plans, effectively monitored, adapted and promoted by senior leaders.

Partnerships with parents and the community

Good

- Communication with parents was open, consistent, and took different forms. There was no formal parent teacher association, but the views of parents were informally sought for most improvement ventures within the school, and surveys were used from time to time. Parents were active in school events and activities.
- Parent representatives were very positive about channels of two-way communication between home and school. They felt they could come in at any time, and welcomed the online portal with their children's work.
- Reporting to parents on student's progress had sufficient detail, although in some cases more specific information would have been preferred. The school had some difficulty attracting all parents to attend student progress meetings, and not all parents were aware of National Agenda priorities, which the school was promoting.
- The school built more links with the community each year, and there were opportunities for students to interact with peers in other schools, which were very exciting to students. Students spoke meaningfully of charitable events in which they took part, and were aware of important causes which they sometimes helped address. However, this aspect was in the early stage of development.

Governance

Good ↑

- Parents and other representative stakeholders were not formally involved in the governing board, although parents' ideas were carefully included in planning. The representative of the board of governors visited the school often to gather students' and teachers' ideas and opinions.
- The governing board ensured the school leaders were accountable for students' performance, as well as for carrying out the national priorities for the UAE. They held school senior leaders particularly accountable for the personal and social development of students, along with their academic performance.
- The needs of the school for resourcing were largely addressed by the representative of the governing board, who undertook the task of teacher recruitment abroad. There were timely responses for additional resources when new school initiatives were introduced. The governing board saw its role as one of supporting the educational processes and the senior leadership team. Overall, they had a positive influence on the school.




Management, staffing, facilities and resources

Good

- Almost all aspects of the day to day life of the school were well organized, and contributed to a positive learning environment for all students and teachers. Procedures were clear to all stakeholders, and were effective.
- Deployment of staff and timetabling were efficient. Teachers held academic qualifications for the subject they were teaching although fewer than half of the teachers had teaching certifications. Specialist staff were not all qualified for their position, although they had received training. There was a systematic and well-designed program for the continuous professional development of teachers, with positive results for improving the quality of teaching.
- The school premises were large, and provided space and facilities for a wide range of learning activities. The facilities included a grass play area and excellent laboratories. Identified areas of need, such as increased spaces with wifi access, were planned for in short term plans. Smartboards were used well by both teachers and students. The environment was positive for learning.
- Resources were plentiful and available, both within classes and outside. Learning technology for student use was not widespread at every age level. The school intended to address this by implementing the plans to improve the school infrastructure.

The views of the parents, teachers and students

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

Responses to the surveys		
Responses received	Number	
 Parents*	2015-2016	335
	2014-2015	274
 Teachers	113	
 Students	209	

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

- A greater proportion of parents took part in the survey this year. Parents were generally pleased with the school, and the improvements they had seen.
- Several parents were concerned with the quality of the curriculum in Arabic classes, thinking it could be extended and enriched. Similarly, there was some concerns about the quality of English teaching.
- Parents were supporters of volunteering activities, intercultural awareness and opportunities for students to be proud of their own cultures.
- The older students responding to the survey expressed overall satisfaction. They expressed a wish for teachers to spend more time on explanation and use different approaches to ensure everyone understood in their own way, including better use of technology.
- Some students felt their voices were not heard by teachers.
- Many students felt they had gained in understanding about the UAE and other cultures this year, and felt that all were treated equally. There were some students who were concerned with the behavior of other students including bullying.
- A very good proportion of teachers responded this year. They were positive about changes to the curriculum, and saw opportunities for the school to become even better.
- Like parents, several teachers saw the benefit of increasing volunteer opportunities for students, and cultural awareness activities.
- There were a few concerns that students were not involved enough in interschool activities or visits to other schools, which would broaden their experience and perceptions.
- Several teachers, like parents, saw the need for all teachers to have more training on techniques to help students with SEND.

If you have a concern or wish to comment on any aspect of this report, you should contact inspection@khda.gov.ae