



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational
needs and disabilities



Innovation

Inspection Report 2015-2016

Pristine Private School

Curriculum: UK

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

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| School information | 2 |
| Summary for parents and the community | 3 |
| Main inspection report | 10 |
| 1. Students' achievement | 11 |
| 2. Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills | 15 |
| 3. Teaching and assessment | 17 |
| 4. Curriculum | 18 |
| 5. The protection, care, guidance and support of students | 19 |
| Provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) | 20 |
| 6. Leadership and management | 21 |
| The views of the parents, teachers and students | 23 |

School information

General information



| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Location | Al Nahda |
| Type of school | Private |
| Opening year of school | 1992 |
| Website | www.pristineschool.com |
| Telephone | 04-2674299 |
| Address | Al Nahda - 2 Area, P.O.Box 60830, Dubai, UAE |
| Principal | Shagufa Kidwai |
| Language of instruction | English |
| Inspection dates | 22 to 25 February 2016 |

Students



| | |
|--|----------------|
| Gender of students | Boys and girls |
| Age range | 3-18 |
| Grades or year groups | FS1 - 13 |
| Number of students on roll | 1537 |
| Number of children in pre-kindergarten | n/a |
| Number of Emirati students | 5 |
| Number of students with SEND | 40 |
| Largest nationality group of students | Pakistani |

Teachers / Support staff



| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Number of teachers | 128 |
| Largest nationality group of teachers | Pakistani |
| Number of teaching assistants | 24 |
| Teacher-student ratio | 1:11 |
| Number of guidance counsellors | 3 |
| Teacher turnover | 21% |

Curriculum



| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Educational permit / Licence | UK |
| Main curriculum | UK |
| External tests and examinations | IGCSE, AS and A level, GL, IBT, CAT4. |
| Accreditation | n/a |
| National Agenda benchmark tests | GL, IBT |

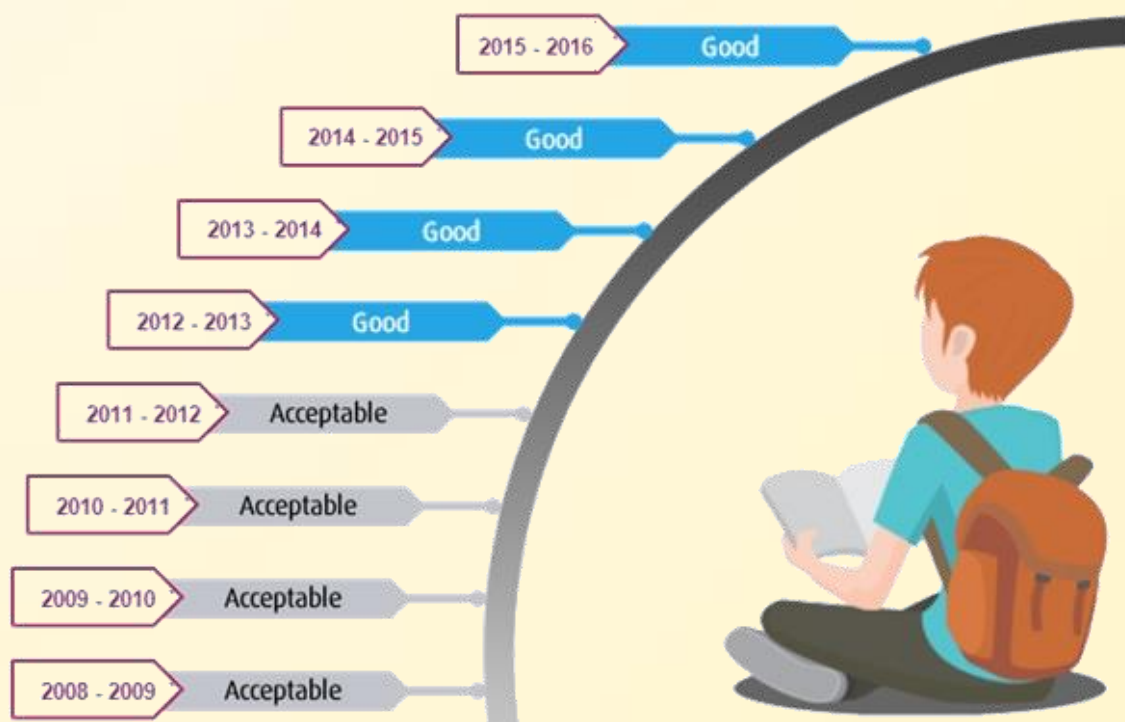


Summary for parents and the community

Pristine Private School was inspected by DSIB from 22 to 25 February 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 judgements were drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observing children learning in lessons, looking at their work, talking with children, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and reviewing the parents', teachers' and senior students' surveys.





How well did the school perform overall?

Overall, the Pristine School provided a **good** quality of education for its students.

- Students' attainment and progress had improved in some key subjects. However, in Arabic as an additional language in the primary phase, students' written skills were weak. Students' learning skills had improved in the Foundation Stage (FS) where children learnt through exploration and games. In the other phases, students of different abilities did not always have opportunities to reflect or collaborate.
- Students' across all phases had outstanding personal development and social responsibility.
- Teaching was very good in the FS and good in other phases. School leaders knew students well and collected a great deal of data from internal and external tests. However, this data was not always used effectively by teachers to support improvements in students' progress in lessons.
- The curriculum had been reviewed and adjusted to match the latest curriculum changes in England. However, teachers did not always pay full attention to the needs of the least able students or the gifted and talented students. They did not modify the programmes of study to fully met different groups of students' needs.
- School systems and processes for keeping students safe were strong. The newly appointed principal responded promptly to all identified health and safety issues. The school was a caring and supportive learning environment that provided adequate provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Schools leaders had a clear vision and communicated this effectively to all staff and stakeholders. However, the leadership structure lacked designated leaders to oversee significant areas of the school life such as teaching, assessment or curriculum. Leaders knew the key strengths and areas of development, but did not always use students' assessment information consistently and accurately. Parents contributed to the life of their children in school. Parents were not represented the board of governors and two compliance issues were noted during this inspection. However, the governing board were deploying additional learning resources for all students. The management of resources and facilities had improved.



What did the school do well?

- The quality of teaching in FS that ensured the children made very good progress in most subjects.
- The outstanding attitudes, behaviour, and awareness of Islamic values, UAE culture and social responsibility demonstrated by students in all phases.
- The quality of teaching in science that provided students with challenging and engaging learning opportunities.



What does the school need to do next?

- Raise attainment and progress in Arabic by:
 - providing ample opportunities to develop students' writing , and listening skills
 - ensuring teachers consistently plan lessons which enable students of all abilities to make at least good progress.
- Ensure all students with SEND have individual education plans (IEP) which clearly identify their needs, and teachers modify their lessons to support students' progress.
- Consolidate self-evaluation processes by:
 - ensuring the school is fully compliant with MoE curriculum and teaching requirements
 - reviewing the key roles and responsibilities of senior leaders to include teaching, curriculum and assessment for the whole school
 - using assessment information to set high, realistic targets and modify planning and teaching according to identified needs
 - improving the rigour of the monitoring of teaching.



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

- The progress of students with SEND was acceptable across all phases. Clear goals and learning targets to meet specific needs were not always provided in the classroom setting which had a negative impact on students' progress.
- The reporting process to provide parents with precise and exact information on the social, emotional and academic progress of their children, lacked rigour and consistency.
- The school worked closely with parents to promote better home-school communication and sought to improve the flow of information on all matters pertaining to their children. This practice was most evident in the FS and valued highly by parents.
- Parental involvement was mostly evident during the enrolment and early identification process. However, the preparation and implementation of individual education plans (IEP's) was not given sufficient priority to meet the needs of all children or support their parents in the education journey with their children.
- Counselling and other staff offered support and guidance in a professional and confidential manner, and parents knew they could trust school personnel when they needed advice or guidance.

National Agenda Parameter



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

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

Main points:

- The school 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.
- The school had attempted to promote awareness of the National Agenda and its targets to its stakeholders with varying degrees of success. Not all students participated in GL or IBT testing. Some departmental leaders were insufficiently secure in their understanding. Students' knowledge of the skills required for success was limited. Governors were unaware of the NA targets, and how well the school had performed in external tests.
- Overall, the curriculum provided some opportunities for students to acquire the skills of investigation and inquiry in order to make evaluative judgments, but only in science were these skills sufficiently well developed.
- In science, there were numerous opportunities for students to further develop their skills of critical thinking, and this was more in evidence at secondary and post-16 level mathematics and English than in the lower phases. Older students demonstrated some of the necessary skills of critical thinking and problem solving that international assessments tests required. Whilst this was sporadic in English and mathematics, there was a much greater consistency in science.
- Students gathered a range of information from different sources including information and communication technology (ICT). However, in the secondary phase the availability of ICT devices was limited and depended on students bringing their own internet-enabled device. This hindered the development of a number of students' research and investigative skills, because they were unable to follow their own lines of enquiry. There were too few opportunities for students to extract information for themselves from a wider range of information.

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:

- The schools coordinators had a good understanding of innovation as the national priority. A broad range of professional development opportunities were provided to build teachers' capacity for integrating innovation skills in their classroom environments. The learning spaces, primarily at the FS, supported the development of innovation skill acquisition. The curriculum design included opportunities for students to develop their innovation skills through project-based learning activities and partnerships with educational organisations.

Overall school performance

Good

1. Students' achievement


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

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

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

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


3. Teaching and assessment

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



4. Curriculum

| | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary | Post-16 |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|---------|-----------|---------|
| Curriculum design and implementation | Outstanding | Good | Good | Good |
| Curriculum adaptation | Good | Good | Good | 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  | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| 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 | Acceptable  |
| 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

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 | Very good  |
| Science | Good | Very good  |

- Children entered the school with age appropriate communication skills. Over time, most children made rapid progress in English relative to the curriculum, and by FS2 attainment was good. Their speaking and listening skills developed well. Children could retell stories and contributed well to discussions. External tests showed that most children had strong reading skills and had very good comprehension skills. Their writing had improved rapidly. The most able children wrote coherent paragraphs of linked sentences, with secure punctuation and spelling. All children wrote for a range of audiences with increasing independence. The progress of children with SEND was slower than that of others because teachers planning did not always take full account of their needs.
- Children developed good knowledge, skills and understanding in mathematics. Most children could name and describe the characteristics of 2D and 3D shapes, and designed and made increasingly complex patterns with confidence. They showed a good understanding of time and used appropriate vocabulary. Most drew and interpreted graphs competently to find answers to simple questions. They solved simple word problems well. Progress over time and in relation to the purpose of the lesson was very good. Children had access to well-chosen practical resources, which supported their learning.
- Children's skills, knowledge and understanding were good in science. In lessons and over time, children made very good progress from their starting points. Children could explain concepts such as melting. Scientific skills, such as measuring length and volume, were well-developed. Children made predictions, based on their experience, and compared their predictions to their findings. Many recorded their findings well. There were some very good examples of observational drawings, but in a minority of lessons, children needed more guidance to develop their observational skills. During free flow activities and in lessons discovery and investigational skills were well developed.

| Primary | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Subjects | Attainment | Progress |
| Islamic education | Good | Good |
| Arabic as a first language | Acceptable | Good |
| Arabic as an additional language | Acceptable ↓ | Acceptable ↓ |
| English | Good | Good |
| Mathematics | Good | Good |
| Science | Good | Very good ↑ |

- In Islamic education, the majority of students had achieved above expected levels. The majority of students memorised and recited the morning Doua, and a short Surah from the Holy Qur'an using Tajweed rules. They knew and understood the importance of Waduo to perform Salah. Most students were making good progress in relation to their starting points, including their understanding of the meaning of Hadeeth. Boys and girls made similar levels of progress in lessons.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students attained at a level that was in line with curriculum standards. They were able to begin a conversation using appropriate and accurate language. However, their writing skills were still developing. Students were confident using standard Arabic in context, but they lacked an appropriately broad vocabulary. Creative writing was a weak area. The majority of students made better than expected progress during lessons.
- In Arabic as an additional language, students' attainment was acceptable. They were able to understand a range of familiar written phrases but their pronunciation was weak. Most lacked confidence in speaking because of weak listening skills. Their speaking skills were restricted to recalling memorised text, and to talking about themselves and their families using short basic sentences. Their writing skills were limited. Students were restricted to copying from their textbooks or from the board. In lessons, most students were making expected progress in their language skills.
- In English, the majority of students' attainment as measured against national and international standards was good. Speaking, listening and reading skills were stronger than writing skills. By the end of primary, students made good progress in applying acquired grammatical features into their written work, using compound sentences and spelling irregular verbs with confidence. Independent writing was developing well. Presentation skills and handwriting required improvement. Reading for pleasure was a positive feature, but the skills of inference and deduction were still evolving. Frequent opportunities for discussion enabled students to make very good progress over time in speaking and listening.
- In mathematics, students' achievements were good and the majority attained at levels that were above the minimum expected curriculum standards by the end of the phase. Students gained skills in an extensive range of mathematical concepts. Their work was systematically organised and presented to a high standard. Students took pride in and an enjoyment for their mathematical learning. Most students could find angles in irregular shapes and could apply their understanding to real world examples including iconic buildings in the UAE. Learning tasks met the needs of students with SEND.
- In science, the majority of students attained at levels above curriculum standards. However, their attainment was variable across the phase. Year 1 students, learned the principles of trial and error in scientific enquiry, when designing pet houses. Year 2 students, acquired research and analytical skills and scientific vocabulary. Year 3 students, engaged in experiments with magnets and parachutes. In the upper primary classes, students investigated combustion in Australian bush fires. They quickly grasped the significance of removing fuel to extinguish combustion, when they could not remove oxygen. Students' progress was very good overall.

Secondary

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

- In Islamic education, the school used internal assessments with an appropriate level of challenge to measure students' attainment. Most students knew and understood the different Sunnah prayers and the importance of Salah and Zakat. Most students sustained their level of attainment over the last three years. The majority of students made good progress in relation to their starting point. In lessons, the majority of students progressed in learning new topics and linked the meanings of the Quran to life applications. In lessons, there was no difference in the progress of boys and girls.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students were able to recite stories and poetry, but they did not use an appropriate range of expression. Their writing was weak due to limited opportunities to reflect and develop ideas. Their use of grammar and figurative language was appropriate. Most students made acceptable progress in lessons. However, students' critical thinking and problem solving were less effective due to the lack of opportunities. Most students made acceptable progress in understanding poetry, literature and explaining some of the hidden meanings connected to specific contexts.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students attained levels that were in line with curriculum standards. The majority of students made better than expected progress, although there were variations in their levels. Most students had appropriate basic listening and reading skills. Students' abilities to write coherent paragraphs were developing. However, students' creative writing skills were weak. The excessive use of colloquial language inhibited the development of students' speaking skills. Most students were able to respond to visual stimuli during their lessons. Most students made good progress in understanding conversations that were teacher directed. Girls' had better writing skills than boys.
- In English, students' attainment was very good and above the IGCSE international average. They made very good progress in all aspects of the subject. Students' were able to read and summarise the main points, both verbally and in writing, of an increasing range of demanding texts. Although, drafting and editorial skills were still evolving, students were able to develop logical arguments in their writing and cite evidence to support a point of view. By the end of Year 11, students had well-developed skills of literacy analysis and most were able to write with grammatical accuracy. Students' oral skills were particularly well developed and in discussion, they articulated their thoughts clearly and with confidence.
- In mathematics, students' attainment and progress were above expectations. All students had registered for the external IGCSE examination; their results exceeded the expected curriculum standards, although there was variability. They made consistently good progress in all year groups. Students used mathematics to make sense of the world around them in meaningful ways. For example, students in Year 9 were skilled in data handling and produced graphs and charts to interpret the increasing numbers of international tourists visiting Dubai from 2010 to 2015.

- In science, most students attained at levels well above curriculum standards. This was reflected on the schools very good IGCSE examination results in biology and physics, but also in the knowledge, understanding and skills displayed during lessons. By Year 8, students were able to manage their own experiments to establish how light changed direction when passing through glass or water. By Year 9, students had highly developed skills in research and critical thinking, and analysing errors in their method. They could relate their discoveries to real world situations. Year 10 students related their knowledge of liver function to real world issues of addiction and substance abuse.

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

- In Islamic education, most students attained a level that was in line with curriculum standards. Most students could recite Surat Al Monafeqoon using Tajweed rules, and knew and understood the characteristics of Mounafeqeen. Attainment over the last three years for most students was in line with expectations. The majority of the different groups of students made good progress from their starting points. In lessons, students could make links between their learning and real life applications.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students' work was broadly in line with curriculum standards. They demonstrated acceptable levels of knowledge, understanding and speaking. However, overall, students writing skills were less well developed. This was because teachers had low expectations. Students were unable to apply their theoretical knowledge to the practical analysis of texts. Most students made expected progress in lessons. However, girls made better progress than boys. A few students worked above expected levels, especially when reading poetry with expression.
- Attainment was good for the few students who studied English. Results over the last two years were above the international average. Students had well-developed skills of reflection and analysis. In class, they articulated their views confidently and could extract information from a variety of challenging texts. They were able to compare and contrast the work of different authors and used persuasive analyses to support a reasoned point of view. Most could analyse text with increasing skill to support opinion about the writer's purpose and intended meaning. They understood how variations in texts could shape and change. Students used assessment criteria effectively to make good progress in their writing.
- The most able mathematicians at the school studied at AS and A Level. The high level of challenge in learning tasks ensured that students made very good progress. Analysis of results over time revealed improved outcomes in mathematics at AS and A level. Students applied their mathematical skills and understanding to real world applications. Students used calculus to determine the optimum volume of airbags in vehicles and understood how to use calculus to determine the Head Injury Criterion (HIC) used in the classifications related to vehicle road safety.
- In science, students' attainment was better in lessons than as indicated in the previous year's external examination results. Chemistry students were able to conduct an independent experiment using titration to identify an unknown solution. In their practical work,

students were able to apply the principles of a fair test. Students studying biology understood the crucial implications of the widespread use of antibiotics.

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

- Most students were enthusiastic and engaged in their learning, especially in the FS. Occasionally students were not clear about their strengths and areas for development, which reduced opportunities to take responsibility for improving their learning. This was especially so in Arabic.
- Students collaborated well when involved in class or group work. Almost all contributed ideas and explanations, especially during well-focused and purposeful discussions.
- In a number of lessons, especially in English and Islamic education, students made meaningful connections between their learning and real life, such as praying and giving Zakat in Islamic education. This aspect was weaker in a number of curricular areas when it was restricted to the end of lessons, rather than embedded throughout the lesson.
- The development of innovation, enterprise and critical thinking was strong in many science lessons, with students solving real-life problems confidently and well. However, in most other curricula students were still at the early stage of developing critical thinking skills during their lessons. Most students used information technology well to support their learning.

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

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

- Almost all students were enthusiastic in their attitudes to their work. They took significant responsibility for their learning whenever they could. Students were confident and articulate when addressing staff, visitors and their peers. They responded positively to constructive feedback. Often older students added a response to teachers' advice in their books and made a commitment to improve their work.
- Students had a very mature attitude towards managing differences and felt safe from bullying while at school. In addition, the student council was influential and appointed a number of trained student mentors to raise awareness of others' needs and to provide social and emotional support when required.
- The student council had also created several roles to manage a range of school clubs. These celebrated the different needs of a diverse school community. Students' empathy towards each other was evident than when working collaboratively in the classroom. Frequently, the more able students helped others.
- Students had a strong awareness of the positive values of healthy living. Children in FS could describe a range of healthy foods. Primary phase students were active participants in their morning modern dance sessions. They shared their thoughts and beliefs about making healthy choices with others.
- Students' attendance and punctuality were good. Students' had positive attitudes towards their learning. They respected each other and their teachers.

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

- Students had an excellent awareness of the importance of Islam to contemporary UAE society. Children in FS knew about mosques, the Holy Qur'an and the five praying times. Year 4 students, described the mosque as a place of peace. Senior students acknowledged the Islamic dress codes and spoke of the importance of respecting Islamic values.
- Students respected the heritage of UAE. Children in FS could name some of the main features of the UAE such as the seven Emirates, the currency, national emblems, landmarks and key personnel. Year 4 students, could confidently talk about the history of pearl diving and current rural life of camel farming. Older students spoke of the unique infrastructure of Dubai, its peaceful and safe environment and the opportunities to share a broad range of cultural activities, with students of many different nationalities.
- Children in FS enjoyed playing in the cultural corner and many participated in international days. Primary phase students' valued opportunities to learn about each other's cultures. Some Year 8 students contrasted their life in their home countries with their life in Dubai. All students participated in a range of in-school national and international days and festivals.

| | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary | Post-16 |
|--|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Social responsibility and innovation skills | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |

- The school council was a key driver in enhancing opportunities for students to influence the community within the school and beyond. They initiated a range of clubs, which led to community action. The Creative and Performing Arts Club talent show, raised a substantial sum for Dubai Cares. Students supported a neighbouring special needs centre, labour camps and a school in Sri Lanka.
- Senior students suggested that success in school and work required confidence, courage and critical thinking. Most students displayed these characteristics in classrooms and around the school. In FS, children developed their entrepreneurship skills. They sold flags and other homemade items for charity. Innovative learning, led to one student to develop an Arabic mobile application that provided information about the UAE.
- The schools environment club monitored the school environment, and supported its recycling initiative by providing decomposition bins. Duty students switched off lights on leaving rooms, while senior students spoke of Dubai's very large carbon footprint.

3. Teaching and assessment

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

- In almost all subjects, teachers' knowledge of their subject was strong. Lessons across all phases were generally well matched to the ages and stages of students' learning. This was a particular strength in the FS and in science, where students' needs were well met. However, teachers' knowledge about how students learn was weaker in some areas of English and in Arabic lessons.
- Lesson planning was generally good but inconsistent. In a few areas, good planning did not translate into effective teaching in classes. In the FS, and in Islamic education, learning environments were skilfully planned, resources were well utilised and lessons fully engaged the students' interests.
- Throughout the school, teachers engaged students in meaningful discussion and dialogue through skilful questioning and opportunities for collaborative work. Occasionally questioning was not sufficiently probing in order to develop students' critical thinking skills.
- Teaching strategies to meet the needs of all students varied; they were particularly strong in science, mathematics, Islamic education and in all FS classes. Occasionally, teaching strategies did not meet the needs of the most able students.
- The development of students' critical thinking was variable across the school, except in science where critical thinking, problem solving and independent learning were key features of almost every lesson.
- In Arabic as a first language, teachers in the primary phase enriched the learning environment by using effective visuals to strengthen understanding. However, in the secondary phase, teachers used a more didactic approach giving students few opportunities for interaction. Teachers prepared lessons well, but most lessons lacked sufficient variety of teaching and learning approaches, which met the needs of all students. In Arabic as an additional language, teachers were generally well prepared. However, in some lessons, there was limited use of technology and students working collaboratively.

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

- The school had well-established internal assessment procedures across all phases. Phase and subject leaders had access to this information, enabling them to track students' progress. Teachers' formative and summative assessments of students' work also took account of students' self-assessment of their work. Marking and feedback identified what students knew and could do, and in some subjects prompted the next steps in learning.
- A number of external tests enabled the school to measure most students' attainment in English, mathematics and science against national and international standards. In FS, the school assessed children diagnostically as they started school, and thereafter used external assessments to track children's progress in reading.
- The school tracked all students' progress over time in English, mathematics and science. Most teachers analysed assessment information and used it to compare students' progress in relation to previous assessments. However, this was not the case for all subjects.

- The school used assessment information to group students appropriately. Teachers in some subjects used the information to plan learning activities, which met the needs of different groups of students, including those with SEND. However, not all teachers applied this approach consistently.
- Teachers generally had a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of individual students, from internal assessments supported by the results from external benchmarking tests. This ensured that academic coordinators and teachers had reliable and valid information about most students' abilities across a range of subjects.

4. Curriculum

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

- The school followed the recently revised National Curriculum (England) for most subjects and the Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum for Islamic education and Arabic languages. Both had clear rationales aimed at nurturing caring, confident and competent learners. FS children were learning increasingly through play, discovery and problem solving. However, the school was not compliant with the MoE timetable requirements for Arabic as a first language in Years 1 to 3 classes and in Years 10 to 12 classes
- Transition arrangements had improved and almost all subjects ensured well-planned progression between phases. Primary and secondary phases had enhanced transition through a common themed approach, which ensured progression and continuity of learning.
- The school had introduced a choice of languages in the primary phase. In addition, the school now offered a wider range of IGCSE and vocational choices. At the advanced level, students had less flexibility. Subject combinations were limited to science or commerce. Students were unable to study subjects, which fulfilled their talents their interests or their aspirations.
- The school had effectively planned cross-curricular links and incorporated them into themed and project-based learning in the FS and the primary phases. In the secondary phase, cross-curricular links were enhancing students' knowledge and skills. The school now viewed knowledge as a continuum instead of discrete subjects and topics. However, links were less apparent in the Arabic languages.
- Regular curriculum review improved its effectiveness and appropriateness. The school had attempted to address the recommendation for wider option choices in the secondary school. Through its review, leaders had brought in additional subjects with more to follow next year. The school had extended its range of enrichment programmes to address the requirements of the National Agenda.
- In social studies, the curriculum was based on the MoE curriculum standards, and it was enriched with aspects based on current affairs, the progress and growth of the UAE union, focusing on respective Emirates. The curriculum was reviewed annually and schemes of work provided opportunities for challenge, support and cross curricular links.

| | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary | Post-16 |
|-----------------------|------------------|---------|-----------|---------|
| Curriculum adaptation | Good | Good | Good | Good |

- In the best lessons, teachers modified the curriculum to provide suitable tasks for the diverse groups of learners to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. Overall, however, there was a lack of suitable modifications for students with SEND and insufficient challenge for students who were gifted and talented. As a result, these groups of students made less than expected progress.
- A range of activities encouraged students' entrepreneurial and innovation skills, and enhanced the curriculum. Project and thematic-based learning resulted in some innovative and creative outcomes. Educational visits, competitive sporting activities and school clubs resulted in positive impact on students, personal development as well as improving and expanding their knowledge and skills.
- A well-planned social studies curriculum promoted and enriched students' understanding and appreciation of UAE culture and values. Children in FS visited the Heritage Centre, while older students learned about the history and the government of Dubai.

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 ↓ | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |

- A range of policies and procedures to ensure students' welfare and safety had been communicated to all staff and parents. These were embedded in the school's day-to-day activities, and included processes for child protection, internet safety, and strategies to respond to bullying.
- The school carried out rigorous safety checks on all staff members. Overall, students were extremely safe in school. However, a review of its evacuation procedures for FS children was required.
- The school premises and buildings were generally hygienic and clean. All school contracts for maintaining the school building and equipment were up-to-date. The clinic held current medical records for all students, and rigorously logged all accidents or medical incidents. All specialist rooms including the school library, the art room and the ICT and science laboratories, provided good learning environments for all students. However, the school premises and buildings did not provide appropriate access for students with mobility problems, particularly to the first floor.
- Students fully understood the importance of having a healthy life. They ate healthy food and exercised regularly. The school provided facilities such as playground areas and a swimming pool to encourage a healthy lifestyle.

| | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary | Post-16 |
|------------------|------------------|---------|-----------|---------|
| Care and support | Good | Good | Good | Good |

- Very high levels of trust and mutual respect characterised the daily interactions between almost all teachers and students. Good behaviour was an expectation of all students and school behaviour policies were implemented in a positive and supportive manner. Parents supported the school in its efforts to build confident relationships between their children and teachers.
- The systems and arrangements for managing attendance and punctuality were reasonably effective. The school had established firm expectations of students. Promoting the importance, value and impact of improved attendance and punctuality on better learning outcomes, for the whole school community had not yet occurred.
- The school had an effective system for the identification of students with SEND. The school used a range of literacy and numeracy tests to identify children on entry to the school. Generally, this resulted in relevant interventions in a range of classes. The school's more able, gifted and talented students were not provided with enriched learning experiences.
- Learning support staff provided one-to-one interventions for students with SEND. The school referred students that required intensive therapy or behaviour modifications to an outside agency for assessment and advice. Visiting therapists observed students' needs, and provided feedback to parents and teachers on a range of appropriate support to meet specific needs.
- The majority of students in the upper phases had dedicated career-counselling lessons. Students researched workplace skills and qualifications, critical thinking, subject specific skills and university placements. Planning career paths and providing guidance for students with SEND required greater focus, planning and higher levels of parental support.

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

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

- School leaders were committed to an inclusive ethos and promoted a culture of care and understanding for students with SEND.
- The school SEND identification policy was appropriate, but not always successfully implemented to identify students with more profound social, emotional and learning needs. On entry to the school at the FS, children's literacy and numeracy levels were tested and diagnosed. Support for individual children, was based on the outcome of these results. However, a review, by the school, of the validity of such testing was required.
- The school worked well with parents and used a "liaison book" to send information home, which promoted a positive home-school communication link. Parents attended the school to support the development of an individual education and behaviour plan.
- The modification of the curriculum to meet the learning needs of a diverse range of students was inconsistent. It was poorly planned, demonstrated low expectations, and limited the independence and progress of most students. Classroom practice was not consistent across the phases and students were uncertain of their next steps in learning.

- The progress of students with SEND was acceptable overall in the key subjects. Often there was no individual education plan (IEP) to act as a reference point, nor was there a reliable measure of progress over time.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Good

- The principal and her phase supervisors shared a clear vision for their school to 'nurture committed, compassionate individuals who positively enhance the lives of others'. All leaders were committed to the UAE priorities and to becoming an inclusive school.
- Most leaders in the school demonstrated a secure knowledge of the school's curriculum. They established a positive learning community where teachers shared ideas and supported one another.
- Leaders at all levels communicated well and met regularly. However, the senior leadership structure did not include key roles and responsibilities for the overview of teaching and the curriculum, which had resulted in inconsistencies in the different phases of the school.
- Staff had a clear sense of the requirements for the schools next steps for improvement. Some departments, however, lacked rigour, in addressing them.
- A few aspects of the school had improved since the last inspection. However, some compliance issues were noted and addressed during the inspection. They included curriculum compliance issues in Arabic as a first language and health and safety issues in the FS.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Good

- The school used a wide range of assessment information in its self-evaluation processes. However, the methods for analysing this data varied between departments and phases. International benchmark test results were analysed, but these results did not apply to all students as only a small number took the tests.
- Lesson observations were frequent, and performance management systems were fully embedded. Teachers had set targets, but they were often too broad or not systematically linked to students' learning outcomes.
- Comprehensive action plans outlined key strengths and areas requiring improvement. Leaders used SMART targets to implement strategies for improvement but the plans did not include clear evidence of their impact or how the school used the monitoring to plan ways forward.
- The school had made some progress in addressing some key areas of the school, including some aspects of the last year's inspection recommendations. However, issues linked to the health and safety in FS and curriculum compliance in Arabic had become apparent since the previous inspection.

Partnerships with parents and the community

Good

- Many parents participated in-school activities such as coffee mornings, workshops and parents' readers. This allowed the parents to play a key role in their children's life in school. The school sought their views through questionnaires.
- The school website was very informative. School leaders organised regular meetings with parents to ensure they were up-to-date with their children's progress and the various school initiatives.
- Report meetings were frequent and the school sought the views of parents attending. Overall, feedback was very positive and parents found the meetings informative. However, the school's detailed report cards did not always indicate next steps in learning.
- The school links with the local community were growing. External interventions focused on specific phases of education within the school. The school recognised the need to expand this beyond sponsoring events and, for example, explore interventions linked to careers and more work placements.

Governance

Acceptable ↓

- The governing board did not include representation from the majority of stakeholders. However, the owners sought the views of parents and students.
- The governing board held school leaders to account through a regular reporting system. Information shared with the board by the school focused on students' achievement and their well-being.
- The governors deployed some good quality resources to address the various priorities within school. However, they were not always vigilant about the curriculum arrangements. Secondary phase students' research and investigation skills were limited due to insufficient ICT resources.




Management, staffing, facilities and resources

Good ↑

- Senior leaders managed the day-to-day operations of the school effectively and efficiently. They established routines and procedures and made them known to all staff and students. They ensured that all sections of the school ran smoothly and timetabled appropriate breaks between learning sessions.
- The school had a thorough system for the recruitment of teachers. Staff turnover was low. Professional development programmes, were delivered by school staff, and were linked to the school's needs. The distribution of the senior leadership team was by phase, this had a negative impact on leaders' effectiveness, as did their lack of training.
- The school made good use of its limited accommodation. There were sufficient class spaces and resources in classrooms. Three different ICT laboratories provided good learning opportunities for all students.
- The school had a good range of resources and facilities. It included libraries in the primary, secondary and post-16 phases. The libraries were appropriately stocked and books were regularly utilised by students when they read for pleasure or for research. The schools swimming pool and playground areas supported the development of healthy lifestyles. ICT resources for secondary students were insufficient.

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 | 271 |
| | 2014-2015 | 194 |
| Teachers  | 104 | |
| Students  | 63 | |

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

- More parents completed their survey this year compared to last year. Most teachers completed their survey. Only 63 senior students contributed their views.
- Overall, all three groups agreed that the school continued to provide a good education.
- Concerns were raised by both parents and student groups, about the high turnover of teachers in some subjects, which affected student progress over time. There were also concerns raised about the facilities, particularly for sport, which were limited.
- Arabic appeared as a subject where students were least motivated.
- A few parents reported their views were not always listened to and a more active 'parents' body would be appreciated.

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