



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational  
needs and disabilities



Innovation

## Inspection Report 2015-2016

Dubai National School

Curriculum: US

Overall rating: Good

Read more about the school



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“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	1988
Website	www.dnsalbarsha.com
Telephone	04-3474555
Address	Shk Zayed Road - Al Barsha Area - Behind Mall of the Emirates; PO BOX 24060
Principal	Suad Abu-Harb
Language of instruction	English, Arabic
Inspection dates	15 to 18 February 2016

### Students



Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	4-18
Grades or year groups	Kindergarten 1 to Grade 12
Number of students on roll	2,893
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	1,855
Number of students with SEND	44
Largest nationality group of students	Arab

### Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	239
Largest nationality group of teachers	Syrian
Number of teaching assistants	34
Teacher-student ratio	1/12
Number of guidance counsellors	7
Teacher turnover	16%

### Curriculum



Educational permit / Licence	US
Main curriculum	US
External tests and examinations	SAT, TOEFL iBT
Accreditation	NEASC
National Agenda benchmark tests	IOWA, MAP

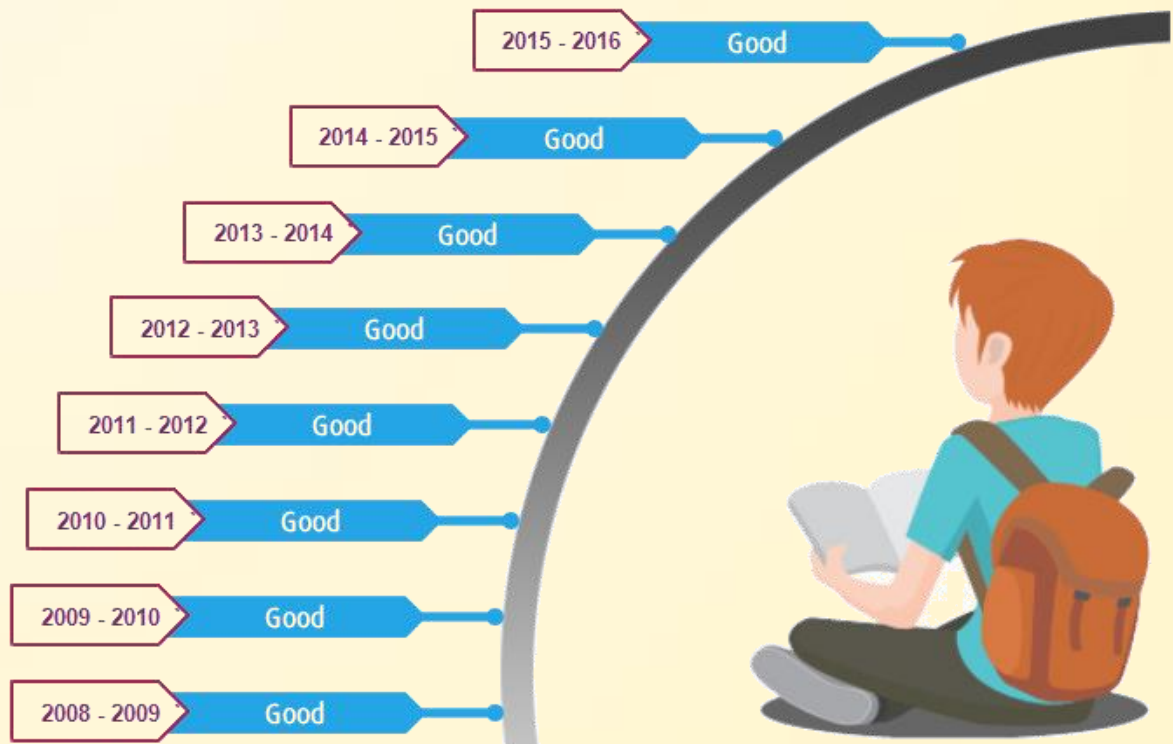


## Summary for parents and the community

**Dubai National School** was inspected by DSIB from 15 to 18 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, **Dubai National School – Al Barsha**, provided a **good** quality of education for its students.

- Children made a good start and achieved at least good outcomes in the kindergarten (KG) in all subjects. This continued throughout the school where students achieved well in Islamic education, Arabic, English and science, and often in mathematics. Students' learning skills were good throughout the school. Students worked diligently and with good social interactions and communication to support their learning.
- Students' personal and social development throughout the school was strong. Students demonstrated good attitudes towards each other and their teachers. They had well developed understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures. Some students' innovation skills in the middle and high school phases were outstanding. They demonstrated an excellent appreciation of the role and importance of innovation when formulating business ideas.
- Teaching was good. It was more effective in the girls' section. Teachers had good subject knowledge and applied this to help students learn. Strategies did not routinely meet the needs of students, particularly those with special educational needs (SEND), and the most able. Opportunities for students' critical thinking and independent learning were not embedded. The use of assessment information was underdeveloped.
- The design of the curriculum was good, and more elective choices had recently been introduced into the high school phase. Cross-curricular links were effective, as were additional curricular choices to support students' understanding and awareness of enterprise, business, innovation and entrepreneurship. Less effective was the modification of the curriculum to meet students' individual needs in lessons which resulted in some students making only acceptable progress.
- Health and safety provisions, including child protection arrangements, had improved. The curriculum effectively promoted healthy and safe lifestyles. The care and support offered to students was generally effective in helping them move between the different phases and in helping them make career and higher education choices. Less effective were arrangements to support students with SEND as well as the most able students.
- Leaders throughout the school were effective in ensuring the school continued to function and perform well. They were accurate in their school self-evaluation and in identifying areas for improvement. However, they were not focused on accelerating students' progress in lessons. Some groups of students had not achieved as well as they could over time. Governance arrangements continued to be broadly effective and supportive of school leaders.



### What did the school do well?

- The school owners provided a welcoming, safe, secure and attractive environment for students to learn and develop.
- Children made a good start in their learning in all subjects, and in their personal and social development in the KG phase. They continued to achieve well academically in English and science across the rest of the school.
- The curriculum was enhanced with a range of extra programs which allowed students to learn, grow and develop into confident learners and leaders, particularly in their knowledge and understanding of enterprise and entrepreneurship.
- Students demonstrated very strong personal and social development throughout the school, and relationships between students and staff were cordial.
- Leaders at all levels were committed and dedicated to continually improving the school to improve students' academic and personal development outcomes.



### What does the school need to do next?

- Raise teachers' expectations of what all groups of students can achieve in their day to day learning, particularly in mathematics in the middle and high school phases, by:
  - ensuring teachers plan lessons which provide a wide range of appropriately challenging, stimulating, and critical thinking activities in relation to students' individual abilities, starting points and skills
  - routinely providing students with opportunities to work collaboratively, and co-operatively and to lead their own independent learning
  - providing access to a wider range of learning technologies to support students research, inquiry and investigation skills.
- Improve the effectiveness of the curriculum by better adapting it to meet the needs of all students, including boys, SEND, the gifted and talented, and particularly in the elementary and middle phases, so that it is more challenging, imaginative, and inspiring.
- Improve the quality of assessment in the elementary, middle and high schools phases by:
  - ensuring teachers routinely analyse the vast amount of assessment data they have available to plan better lessons and improve the delivery of the curriculum to meet the needs of all groups of students
  - ensuring subject leaders monitor students' progress in their day to day learning, as well as over time, and in relation to key assessment points.
- Ensure subject and phase leaders, and supervisors, routinely monitor and are held accountable for an improving students' progress and attainment.



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

- Students with SEND made acceptable progress. This was because the support offered to them in class based learning was less effective than when they were withdrawn.
- SEND staff reported to parents on their children's progress and achievement at individual termly meetings.
- Parents and staff were appreciative of the open communications they had regarding students' individual needs and their progress. Parents welcomed the opportunities to meet with school staff at any time. The school was responsive to parent's questions and concerns.
- Parents were not extensively involved in the development of their children's Individual Educational Plans (IEP's) and this reduced the level of support
- The SEND team provided good support and guidance to students and parents on a regular basis.

### 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 met the registration requirements of the National Agenda Parameter.
- Progress towards meeting the National Agenda targets was as expected.
- Governors, owners and the principal, promoted awareness and understanding of the National Agenda targets among most of its stakeholders.
- The curriculum was adequately aligned to TIMSS requirements for most grade levels in both content and skills. Planning for inclusion of PISA style questions was in progress. The development of students' analytical, prediction and interpretation of information skills was inhibited. Opportunity for the development of these skills was yet not embedded into the curriculum in all subjects and phases.
- Development of critical thinking formed part of teachers' strategies. However, it was not introduced consistently by all teachers across all phases and subjects.
- Students used a variety of resources and learning technologies to develop their research skills. However, opportunities for their development were inconsistent across all phases and subjects.

## 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:

- Leaders, governors and the school owner were aware of the National Innovation agenda for schools, and were fully committed to exploring how this would improve the quality of education they provided. In developing staff awareness of innovation. The school had appointed an innovation leader to begin to explore how to build capacity amongst staff and students. This encouraged teachers to explore being innovative in their learning, teaching and leadership. The governing board had received some professional learning to explore the potential of promoting a culture of innovation. The curriculum provided opportunities for students to engage in many innovation thinking and learning activities, such as the 'Road to Success'. This curriculum program from Grades 1 to 8 focused on developing students' enterprise, innovation and entrepreneurship skills. High school students had a very good awareness of the importance of innovation, and showcased this in their many business and enterprise projects and ideas. The school technology infrastructure, both physical and on-line, had not been reviewed to consider opportunities for promoting a culture of innovation.

Overall school performance

Good

1. Students' achievement

		KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Islamic education</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Not applicable	Good	Good	Good
	<b>Progress</b>	Not applicable	Good	Good	Good
<b>Arabic as a first language</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Not applicable	Good	Good	Good
	<b>Progress</b>	Not applicable	Good	Good	Good
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Not applicable	Good	Good	Good
	<b>Progress</b>	Not applicable	Good	Good	Good
<b>English</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good
	<b>Progress</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good
<b>Mathematics</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
	<b>Progress</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good
<b>Science</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good
	<b>Progress</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Learning skills</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good

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

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

## 3. Teaching and assessment

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

## 4. Curriculum

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

- In English, most children demonstrated mastery levels in their development of knowledge and understanding in language development and emergent literacy. They were proficient in their literacy skills in line with the Massachusetts Common Core Curriculum Standards (CCSS) for KG. They were able to communicate effectively with their teachers and peers. They were able to write their names and spell words phonetically when writing for meaning and purpose. They showed good book knowledge and were able to sequence and retell stories. Some children were reading simple words and sentences.
- In mathematics, the majority of the children demonstrated a good understanding of mathematical concepts and skills that were in line with the CCSS. The children made good progress in relation to their assessed starting points and as measured against lesson learning objectives. Their numeracy skills development, including counting, sorting, measuring and patterning were progressing well. Mathematics operations were above expected attainment levels. They could represent addition and subtraction problems using drawings as well as using other strategies including mental mathematics.
- In science, most of the children made good progress in their understanding of the world. They improved their understanding of the weather and healthy living. However, the lack of good questioning hindered their ability to use inquiry and investigative skills.

### Elementary

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students were achieving above the Ministry of Education (MOE) curriculum standards. The majority of students made better than expected progress as measured against learning objectives. This had been maintained over the previous three years. Students memorized short Surahs such as Surat Al Qaria and Surat Al Lail and their recitation skills were age appropriate. Students had a good appreciation of Islamic morals and values and a strong understanding of Islamic Laws such as the Pillars of Islam and Ablution. Across the elementary phase older students made the strongest progress. Teachers of younger students had a limited knowledge of student's individual needs and did not use effective strategies to meet the individual needs of students and to provide appropriate level of challenge and support to enhance their progress.
- In Arabic as a first language, the majority of students attained levels that were beyond curriculum expectations. Their understanding of oral and aural Arabic and their competencies in reading were high. They could communicate their understanding, thinking and reflections well in writing; they made very few errors. They read poetic texts and rhymes well and acted them out fluently and with confidence. Students mastered a wide range of vocabulary, synonyms and antonyms and used them in context in their speaking and their writing. Most students were ready for more extended and independent writing and use of the language beyond familiar contexts.
- In Arabic as an additional language, the majority of students attained levels that were above the expected curriculum standards. Students' skills of listening and reading were better than those of speaking and writing. Girls showed slightly better attainment levels than boys specifically in writing. Students made good progress in understanding the meaning of new words and using them in simple sentences. The majority of students also made good progress in presenting their work orally, but with limited fluency. Most students made good progress in lessons, but the most able students were not always challenged sufficiently, which limited their progress.
- In English, students' attainment and progress were good, especially in speaking and listening. However, students reading and writing were developing more slowly. This lack of progress was reflected in recent MAP scores. Students transitioning to the next phase often lacked the appropriate writing and reading comprehension skills. Lesson observations and workbook scrutiny showed students made better than expected progress against lesson learning outcomes. Girls made slightly better progress than boys.
- In mathematics, the majority of students developed numerical skills above the expected level. They counted, applied order of operations and confidently used long division with decimals. Students were developing their abilities to apply their skills to real life. The introduction of testing in mathematics and science studies (TIMSS) related booklets had had a positive impact on students' progress in problem solving. Progress in mathematics was strongest at the beginning and at the end of the elementary phase; students in Grade 4 made moderate progress.

- Students' attainment and progress in science were good. Students consistently used hands-on group activities to actively acquire understanding of scientific concepts. In Grade 4, for example, students were able to actively differentiate between a sea breeze and a land breeze and identify the conditions that produce each. Students' internal assessment data supported good levels of attainment and progress, while their external assessment data was more variable. In lessons, students made good progress especially when the lessons were interesting and meaningful and had strong links to students' daily lives.

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students worked at levels that were above the national curriculum expectations. They made better than expected progress in relation to appropriate learning objectives in lessons and recent work. The school had maintained these levels of attainment and rate of student progress over the previous three years. Students showed good application of Tajweed rules in Qur'an recitation. They also had a good awareness of the meanings of prescribed Hadeeth and could give a brief summary about the narrators of the Hadeeth. Progress for boys was not as strong as that of girls.
- In Arabic as a first language, a majority of students attained above expected national curriculum levels. Their listening, speaking and presentation skills were well developed. They also demonstrated good reading comprehension skills, and some were able to use newly acquired vocabulary in unfamiliar contexts. Students' attainment in writing was above expectations. Better than expected progress was evident in lessons and over time. A majority of students made very good connections between the topics they studied and their personal, social and cultural contexts.
- In Arabic as an additional language, in the absence of external measures, attainment was broadly above that normally expected. Consistent exposure to instructions in standard Arabic ensured above expected oral comprehension skills. Students used a good range of familiar vocabulary which helped to express their ideas and present their work confidently. Students were able to read familiar text and understand it. However, writing skills were less developed due to the limited exposure to different writing styles and the lack of opportunities to practice this skill. The attainment of girls was slightly higher than that of boys. Although, most students made good progress in lessons in relation to learning objectives, the most able students were not challenged enough.
- In English, students' attainment was good in lessons. Students were often able to demonstrate skills and understanding in developing new concepts, especially when using complex vocabulary. Their ability to respond orally in presentations was sound. Students' comprehension, was not as strong. Most written work showed limited use of extended vocabularies and a number of spelling and punctuation errors. Overall, student writing lacked the expected level of accuracy with restricted progress overall.

- In mathematics, a majority of students attained in line with curriculum expectations. The most able students could apply their knowledge to problem solving effectively. They used linear programming when investigating the cost of traveling to different countries, or identifying the most economical solution for shopping. Students made good progress in developing basic algebra skills. Progress in developing and applying their skills in geometry and their understanding of fractions was in line with expectation.
- In science, students demonstrated good attainment and progress. Students' consistent use of hands-on activities supported the acquisition of new knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts. In Grade 7, students actively illustrated that the tectonic plates of the planet earth fit together like a puzzle. Students' assessment data over the past three years supported good levels of attainment and progress. In lessons, students made good progress especially when they were given opportunities to design experiments.

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

- In Islamic education, students' attainment in lessons and recent work, when measured against the school's curriculum standards, showed that a majority were above curriculum standards. 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 infer from the Holy Qur'an the Islamic morals and values and they could explain how to apply what they had learned to their own lives. Overall, girls made better progress than boys.
- In Arabic as a first language, attainment was above curriculum expectations for a majority of students and particularly so for girls'. Students were able to express their understanding fluently. Their reading comprehension skills were developed, and they could effectively use acquired knowledge of a range of rhetorical figures to analyze poetry. Students demonstrated a good command of writing to elaborate their ideas. In lessons and over time a majority of students successfully developed their oracy skills. They developed logical arguments and explained their understanding of poetry and complex grammatical structures. However, there was little evidence of the reflection of such progress on the quality of their writing.
- In Arabic as an additional language, the majority of students had good knowledge, skills and understanding of the language. They could communicate their ideas clearly and participate in class discussions and presentations of their research. The majority of students made good progress developing their listening and speaking skills. However, they made slower progress in developing their writing skills. The attainment of girls was slightly stronger than that of boys, though both groups made good progress in developing their vocabulary. Overall, students' progress was above curriculum expectations in relation to their starting points.

- In English, students' attainment was good in lessons, as well as student progress, as teaching was slightly better. Progress results from the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) tests indicated that students performed poorly. Overall students' progress was good in lessons, and for the different groups of students, including the gifted and talented, boys and SEND. While writing was slightly more developed at this level, extended writing was not evident in some lessons. A majority of students in those successful lessons were able to identify a variety of complex vocabulary, work independently, present research-based presentation, and often take the lead on classroom lessons.
- In mathematics, majority of students attained in line with curriculum expectations in algebra and basic calculus. Older students could confidently analyze graphs of functions, solve problems and apply their knowledge to real life situation. They made some progress in using graphical display calculators to enhance their understanding of mathematical concepts. Their ability to analyze information and to use independent research skills were developing.
- In the high school, students' attainment and progress in science were both good. Students consistently acquired understanding of new concepts in physics, chemistry, and biology through group work and collaboration. In Grade 12, for example, students were able to work together to build parallel and series electrical circuits of certain characteristics. Students' internal assessment data reflected good attainment while the external data showed mixed levels of attainment and progress. Students' progress in the lessons was good overall, but it was sometimes hindered in the lessons in which they were not sufficiently challenged by the learning objectives.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Students enjoyed their learning. In Arabic, English, and science, students taught flipped classes effectively. In mathematics and Arabic, students, especially the boys, lost focus, whenever the teaching was ineffective. In KG, children were able to make their own choice about which working center they engaged in.
- In group work, students collaborated well and supported one another. They consistently knew their roles in their groups and understood how teams work. They enjoyed role-playing and showed confidence in presenting their work to their classmates. In KG, children collaborated effectively with some guidance from their teacher or their teacher's assistant.
- Across most subjects, students were able to make good connections to the real world. In a science lesson on the excretory system, students connected their learning to the amount of water they drank each day. Students consistently built their learning on prior knowledge and understanding and were able to demonstrate connections between subjects such as between science and Islamic education and between Arabic and Islamic education.
- Students used learning technologies to conduct basic research to finding definitions of terms or answers to straight-forward questions. In the better lessons, students were given opportunities to think critically and solve problems. Students rarely learned independently. Their teachers often controlled the hands-on activities or excessively intervened in guiding students in their learning.

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

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

- Students were mostly self-reliant, with positive attitudes from KG, through to high school. The friendly and respectful attitudes of senior boys were especially notable among the students on campus.
- Most students demonstrated responsible, inquisitive behavior in classrooms with a focus on instruction. Teachers often created constructive and engaging classroom environments that encouraged positive relationships with adults.
- A calm and friendly culture was maintained on campus at almost all levels, with students openly assisting and supporting others when needed. Relationships among staff and students were particularly respectful and supportive in almost all instances.
- A theme of healthy eating and making safe lifestyle choices was embedded in the campus climate and was part of the science curriculum. Students learned to control their food choices, use proper hygiene, stay healthy, and observe safety precautions, themes which were embedded in many of the classroom activities and projects from KG to Grade 12.
- The school's attendance was reported as outstanding with clear and strict procedures in place to ensure strong attendance figures each school term.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Across all phases, students demonstrated a remarkable appreciation of the importance of Islamic values in the UAE society. They could provide examples of how these values influence daily lives such as tolerance and kindness. They were able to discuss the influence of Islam on their daily life in the UAE. Students participated in Islamic celebrations and events such as Hajj.
- Students showed appreciation and respect of the UAE heritage. They were able to describe the daily life of people in Dubai. They also demonstrated an understanding and appreciation to the multi-cultural society they lived in. Students enthusiastically celebrated national events such as the National Day, Flag Day and Martyrs Day.
- Students demonstrated knowledge and understanding of world cultures and the variety and range of cultures to be found in the UAE. They expanded their awareness of other cultures through overseas trips organized for boys in the middle and high schools, participated in international athletic events and encouraging students in KG to participate in letter writing and project exchange programs with schools in the United Kingdom.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Social responsibility and innovation skills</b>	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Student-led organizations and clubs had a positive impact on the school and the local community. For example, senior students freely led activities and workshops for other students to learn about their extra skills and abilities in computer programming.
- Student's excellent work ethic was demonstrated by their efforts in developing innovative ideas for class projects and government initiatives.
- Students contributed to a whole school recycling program and helped in conservation efforts. This commitment to environmental conservation was evident throughout all phases of the school.

### 3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Teaching for effective learning</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Teachers' knowledge of their subjects and of how students learned best was generally secure.
- Teachers planned lessons to enable students to achieve at better than expected levels. Planning was most effective when teachers purposefully created opportunities to cater for the wide range of ability levels. These had clear links to the students' individual starting points and to curriculum standards.
- In many subjects quality questioning promoted thought and engaged students in meaningful discussions. Deep and open-ended questions were strong features in some lessons. However, this was not the case in all lessons, particularly when questions did not provide sufficient challenge.
- In many lessons teachers used a range of strategies to ensure students' engagement and interest. But not all lessons were differentiated to meet the needs of all groups of students, and the most able students were not challenged enough. Teaching to develop critical thinking, problem-solving and independent learning skills remained inconsistent in most subjects, across the whole school.
- Teachers of Arabic as a first language had secure subject knowledge. In many good lessons, time and resources were well-managed. Many teachers engaged students in meaningful discussion through open-ended questions, well-structured tasks and strategies that promoted active learning. Promotion of hands-on and independent learning skills was still developing in spite of the good practices in many lessons. Teaching boys remained only adequate, particularly in the middle and high phases.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most teachers had good subject knowledge and showed an understanding of how students learn language. Teachers planned purposeful lessons, managed time and used resources appropriately. Dialogue engaged students in meaningful discussions and reflections. Teachers sometimes developed students' critical thinking and independent learning skills. However, these skills, problem-solving and innovation were not developed enough.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Assessment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- The school carried out regular assessments of students' progress and attainment. Assessments were linked to curriculum expectations. New initiatives such as the use of school developed software were introduced to improve the process of recording and validating the assessment data. Assessments were consistently moderated across each department and phase.
- The school used the MAP and the IOWA test of basic skills for benchmarking and diagnostic purposes. However, the use of MAP assessment was inconsistent across the phases.
- Assessment data was recorded. However, the accuracy of its interpretation and the consistency of tracking required further development across all phases. The school did not yet benchmark its internal assessment data against that gained from international sources.
- Most teachers in KG used assessment data to plan lessons and identify appropriate differentiation strategies. However, in the other phases, the use of assessment to inform teaching and ensure an appropriate level of challenge was inconsistent; not all students had their learning needs met.
- Most teachers had a reasonable knowledge of students' strength and weaknesses. In better lessons, students received constructive oral feedback or written comments on how to improve. There were examples of good practices of ongoing assessment in the KG across all subjects. However, the quality of marking, target setting and follow-up was inconsistent across all other phases.

#### 4. Curriculum

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

- The school aligned its curriculum, especially in English and mathematics to the Common core standards (CCS) of Massachusetts, and to New Generation science scheme (NGSS) in all phases of science. The school had made strong efforts to plan effective lessons through discussions and sharing between teachers best practices. School leaders had encouraged professional growth for successful curriculum implementation, with consistent attempts on developing student content knowledge and learning skills. Careful curriculum design to meet the needs of most students had improved in the KG and high school phases.
- There had been a robust attempt to develop a thematic approach to the curriculum to help students make connections in their learning, and to help develop their writing skills. Limited time allocated to developing children's writing in the KG had meant there were gaps in students' writing in the elementary school, and standards in boys writing was lower than expected.
- In all phases, the curriculum has been carefully planned to build on students' knowledge, especially during important transitions between phases. This was especially true in Arabic as a first language where planning more effectively met the needs of most students. However this was not consistent across all subject areas. Some lessons lacked intellectual challenge as teachers' expectations were too low.

- The curriculum was broad and balanced. It included a wide range of high school electives and extra-curricular choices, such as global perspectives, business writing, forensic science, and web design. All high school parents were informed of course choices through regular meetings with school leaders. There were regular on-line learning opportunities such as Innovative School Systems (ISS). Although, these were encouraging and expansive, classrooms lacked the necessary range of learning technologies to help students develop their research skills.
- There were annual department reviews, though these were limited in scope. They did not consider how well the curriculum was meeting the needs of groups of students, or how well assessment information was being used to modify the curriculum.
- The school's social studies curriculum was clear and balanced, aligned to the Emirate and national visions, inclusive of a variety of approaches. Both a Jordanian and UNICEF social studies program had been adopted that enhanced the school's curriculum. The school uses both a thematic and stand- alone approach when developing lessons. These links helped fostered student independence that was challenging and often provoked further inquiry and research.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum adaptation	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

- Links with Emirati culture were embedded across the school. This was especially evident in Arabic languages, Islamic education, and social studies lessons. Lessons had also referenced and highlighted environment issues and what that means to Dubai. On National day, students reached out to the community. In the high school students put on a play at the local community police station about the meaning and importance of National day.
- Based on students' performance in external examinations, the school had started to modify curricular content to ensure that there were no gaps in students' content knowledge. However, the curriculum was not sufficiently modified to meet the needs of all groups of students, such as boys, students with SEND or the most-able. In Arabic as a first language, programs had been planned to include challenge to meet the needs of most students. In other lessons, teachers did not plan to meet different individual needs but they used task activities and questioning to check students' knowledge. However, these tasks were not challenging or supported students' needs in order to enhance their progress.
- A strong feature of the school had been the involvement of students in activities outside of the school. An innovative project where senior students replace teachers for two days to teach, assess, and plan learning was particularly effective. Another successful program was the 'Road to Success' program, where students developed business, enterprise and entrepreneurship skills.
- The school provided a significant amount of time to the teaching of Arabic as a first language in the KG phase.

### 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 quality of care and support for students was a priority for the school. The child protection policy was well known by all staff, students and families and was included as part of new teacher orientation. The students and staff understood the bullying and cyber bullying policies and the consequences of each. A child protection officer had been appointed to support the families and staff in keeping students safe.
- Student safety and hygiene were planned and purposeful. The arrangements to ensure health, safety and security were comprehensive and well organized. All visitors were required to sign in and out and wear a visitor badge. Bus arrival and dismissal and parent drop-off and pick-up were well supervised and orderly.
- The indoor and outdoor areas of the school were all well maintained and checked daily. The quality of maintenance and record keeping was detailed and current. Medical and incident reports were accurate and up-to-date, as were student vaccinations.
- The suitability of the premises and facilities for staff and students was a very high order. The indoor and outdoor areas had ample spaces for learning. The outdoor play and physical education areas were protected from direct sunlight and all equipment was regularly checked for safety. There was a ramp to the second floor for use by those who were not able to use the stairs.
- Provision for and promotion of healthy living was a strong feature of the school. Students understood the importance of healthy food choices as was evidenced by the choices they made for snack and lunch time. The canteen provided healthy choices. The physical education curriculum supported the components of healthy living and student well-being in the school.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Care and support	Very good ↓	Good	Good	Good

- Positive relationships among staff and students created a calm and positive atmosphere for all on campus. Students were very polite and friendly in their interactions with staff, and with adults in general.
- The school reached an outstanding level of attendance in 2015. This was maintained through a strong attendance policy and management system along with a campus that was engaging to students.
- The school maintained a three tier system of identifying students with SEND, alert to the program adjustments and support needed to function and succeed in the mainstream classroom. The current list of students with SEND was proportionately low at just over 3% of the school's population, indicating a strong need to reach out to ensure all students who might be struggling within the academic environment of the school, are identified and provided support as needed. A new program was implemented during September 2015 to provide learning enrichment and program options for recently identified gifted and talented students. This was underdeveloped.

- Additional staff members were recruited in September to further build the SEND team that managed the identification and instruction of these students while also providing guidance and teacher training for classroom teachers. Modifications to learning were needed, but not evident in many classes observed.
- Counseling support for students who had encountered personal and emotional issues was provided as needed in individual and group settings throughout the school year. College and career counselors provided a wealth of guidance to students in Grade 12 to help them explore their options and identify their priorities for their early post-high school years. Classes, workshops, and individual sessions, assisted students in identifying the best path to take as they made plans for future careers within Dubai and in other parts of the globe.

### 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 school leadership for special education worked diligently, and took action to build stronger programs of services and support for SEND students. They continued to develop the quality of their program for students with SEND. Individual planning required further development and refinement to ensure it included all components needed for a successful learning plan.
- The school made use of a range of indicators to identify the needs of students with SEND upon entry and within the school. However, students were often not identified unless their parents initiated a request for help from specialist staff within the school. Further program refinement was required to ensure that all students identified with SEND, had access to the interventions and individual educational plans they needed to be successful.
- The school needed to collaborate more closely with parents as they worked to create a good learning environment for students.
- Professional development focused upon the use of successful teaching strategies had provided for specialist and classroom teachers. Consistent and ongoing coaching and monitoring of classroom teachers was required to ensure that the new strategies were effectively implemented within the delivery of lessons for students with SEND.
- Most students with SEND made acceptable progress in their learning. The caring and inclusive ethos across the school ensured that the personal development of all students, including those with SEND, was a strong feature. Assessment data was not yet used fully or effectively to guide the planning and delivery of individual programs for all students with SEND. This limited the challenge, relevance and meaning of learning for some students with SEND.

## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Good

- The principal, supported by the governing board, had set a clear vision for excellence. Collectively they showed ambition to create an inclusive and outstanding place of learning for all. School leaders at all levels were committed to the UAE National and Emirati priorities. The school was beginning to respond to the national agenda parameters for improving students' performance in international assessments.
- Most leaders across the school had a secure knowledge of the curriculum and how best to deliver this to enable students to achieve good levels of achievement. They had collectively, and individually, contributed to creating a positive learning culture that set high expectations for all to achieve their very best academically and personally.
- School leaders and managers in all phases of the school were professional in their conduct and communications with each other and with parents and the wider community. Leadership of the school was distributed to individuals and teams. Teams were supported, developed and held to account for the outcomes achieved by students, the schools leadership team. Morale was positive across the school, and staff were fully committed and worked hard to continue to improve the school.
- Senior leaders demonstrated good capacity for continued improvements in the school. There had been improved levels of staffing in the elementary school, curriculum enhancements, improved teaching facilities and resources, improvements in health and safety, as well as the significant investment senior leaders placed in developing all staff. The school leaders were effective in addressing any barriers to continually improving the school, but not all were focused on the right priorities for accelerating students' progress in day to day learning.
- Senior leaders were dedicated and committed, and were well supported by middle leaders. Collectively, they had continued to improve key aspects of the school provision such as the curriculum, teaching resources, staffing, and facilities. Less successful was their attempt to ensure all groups of students, particularly those with SEND, were supported well in their day to day lessons in order to make the good progress that they were clearly capable of.

### School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Good

- Systems and processes for the schools self-evaluation were systematic and led to broadly accurate views of the school's key successes and improvement priorities. Most staff were involved in the self-evaluation process, and the governing board had delegated and distributed responsibility to subject and phase leaders for contributing to these processes. As a result, most leaders had an accurate view of the key areas for improvement, and their individual priorities for contributing to this.
- Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning was systematic and routine, and teachers' performance was regularly reviewed in relation to the standards expected by the governing board. However, the quality of teaching was not sufficiently evaluated in relation to the progress of individual and groups of students, in lessons.
- School improvement plans were detailed and monitored for their effectiveness, but not sufficiently well linked to bringing about improvements in students' academic achievements. They lacked precision and clarity. Success criteria and milestones were imprecise. This prevented school leaders and managers from knowing if their impact on raising students' attainment and progress was successful.

- Over time, school leaders had worked hard to continue to improve the education provision, as well as enhance and improve the quality of the learning environment, curriculum and learning experiences. However, they had not yet been fully successful in fully addressing the recommendations found in the previous DSIB inspection report. Students with SEND were not effectively monitored in their day to day learning, resulting in them making only acceptable progress.

#### Partnerships with parents and the community

Good

- The school involved parents in the learning of their children by giving them online access to their children's achievement scores. They could closely monitor their children's progress. Parents felt they were partners in the learning of their children. They felt that their views were consistently considered on issues that had a direct impact on their children's learning.
- The schools communication system to parents was open and two-way. It allowed parents, including those who had children with SEND, to work with the school to ensure their children developed on an academic and personal and social level.
- Parents were satisfied with the online access they had to their children's academic and non-academic information. The online portal provided them with sufficient details about their children's achievement scores and behavior, but not enough information about the next steps they needed to follow to improve their learning.
- The school built a range of partnerships with the local and wider communities that had a positive impact on students' learning experiences. Students participated in food drives for the orphanages in Dubai, worked with the Emirati Red Crescent, volunteered to work with the Emirates Environment Group, and participated in international competitions such the Mathematics Olympiad and Think Science.

#### Governance




Good

- The governing board included representation from most stakeholders, including parents, and took account of the view of parents, students, and staff in order to gain information about how well the school was performing as well as about how to further improve the school.
- The governing board was kept informed when reviewing the school's performance and standards, and they routinely met with school leaders and managers to review students' achievements as well as the success and impact of strategies for improving key areas of the school.
- The governing board and owners were instrumental in setting the direction for improving the school, and were fully committed to the UAE National Agenda. They continued to be focused on ensuring students' academic achievement remained a priority. They provided positive and helpful support to school leaders and managers, and ensured appropriate staffing, resources, and facilities were provided to continue to provide a good quality of education.

Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school continued to be managed and function very well on a day to day basis. This impacted positively on students' enjoyment when they were at school, as well as their overall achievement. School procedures and routines were highly effective.</li> <li>• The school was well staffed in order to align with the vision and mission of the school. Most staff were adequately qualified, and most staff were engaged in professional learning and development to enhance either their teaching or leadership skills which supported the school's improvement priorities. Staff were deployed effectively to promote and support students' wellbeing as well as their personal and social development.</li> <li>• The school grounds and premises were attractive and well maintained and managed. Most learning spaces, including technology facilities, were of a good standard to promote good learning and development. A number of libraries, as well as specialist teaching and learning spaces had been created to promote cross-curricula learning activities.</li> <li>• Classroom resources and across the school were of a good standard, particularly in the KG and in the lower elementary phase. These were particularly attractive spaces in which to learn, grow and develop. Teaching facilities were of a good quality, and included a range of interactive learning technologies to support teaching. There were fewer learning technology resources made available for students to independently access. This restricted students opportunities to independently research, to inquire and to problem solve.</li> </ul>	

## 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	
<b>Parents*</b> 	2015-2016	218
	2014-2015	381
<b>Teachers</b> 	242	
<b>Students</b> 	404	

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

- Most parents agreed that their children were making good progress in Arabic as an additional language or in Arabic as a first language. Almost all parents believed their children made good progress in Islamic education, and were also making good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Most parents believed their children were developing a good range of learning skills and good self-awareness and awareness of other cultures and that the school provided them with an appropriate range of resources including technology to support their learning.
- Most parents indicated that assessment, including marking of work by teachers, helped their children to improve.
- The large majority of parents indicated that their children were offered a good range of subjects and extra-curricular activities and that the school prepared them well for the next stage of life/learning and provided careers education.
- Most parents believed their children were safe in school, and a large majority of them believed the school dealt well with bullying. However, some parents did not agree with this.
- Most parents indicated that the school was led well and leaders listened to them and acted on their views. Parents' comments showed that a few of them were not satisfied with the Arabic language curriculum, the English language curriculum and the way these subjects were taught. Students made similar comments.
- The majority of students indicated that homework helped them in their learning. A large majority of students indicated that they had opportunities to learn about the Emirati heritage and traditions.
- The large majority of students thought that most of their teachers were skilled and well-qualified.
- The majority of students indicated that they used an appropriate range of resources including technology.

- The large majority of students considered that their teachers' comments, assessments and marking helped them to improve.
- Only a large minority of students were satisfied with the extra-curricular activities that their school had to offer. A few students made comments about the boring teaching styles and the weak English and teaching skills of some of their teachers. They also indicated that the use of technology was lacking in their school.
- Almost all teachers believed the school dealt well with bullying and that it was led well.
- Most teachers indicated that they were involved in the curriculum review process, and almost all indicated that they were involved in the school self-evaluation process.
- Almost all teachers indicated that they received feedback on the quality of their work from their manager.

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