




Universal American
School - Branch

 Curriculum: US/IB

Overall Rating:

Good



"We are keen to prepare the new generation that is ready to be creative and innovative to help us achieve our ambitions for even greater prosperity"

Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum



Contents

School information.....	3
The DSIB inspection process.....	4
Summary of inspection findings 2016-2017	6
Main inspection report	12
1. Students' achievement.....	12
2. Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills.....	17
3. Teaching and assessment	18
4. Curriculum	19
5. The protection, care, guidance and support of students.....	21
Inclusion	22
6. Leadership and management	23
The views of parents, teachers and senior students	26



School information



General information

Location	Ras Al Khor
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2005
Website	www.uasdubai.ae
Telephone	00971-4-2325222
Address	Dubai Festival City, P.O Box 79133
Principal	Mr. Andrew Torris
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	6 to 9 March 2017

Teachers / Support staff

Number of teachers	157
Largest nationality group of teachers	USA
Number of teaching assistants	26
Teacher-student ratio	1:10
Number of guidance counsellors	9
Teacher turnover	24%

Students

Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	4-18
Grades or year groups	KG 1-Grade 12
Number of students on roll	1426
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	48
Number of Emirati students	97
Number of students with SEND	63
Largest nationality group of students	USA

Curriculum

Educational permit / Licence	US
Main curriculum	US/IB
External tests and examinations	SAT, PSAT, MAP, CAT4
Accreditation	MSA, IB, CIS, IBDP, IBPYP
National Agenda benchmark tests	MAP, PISA



The DSIB inspection process



In order to judge the overall quality of education provided by schools, inspectors consider the six standards of performance that form the basis of the UAE School Inspection Framework (the framework). They look at children's attainment and progress in key subjects, their learning skills and their personal and social development. They judge how effective teaching and the assessment of learning are across the school. Inspectors consider how well the school's curriculum, including activities inside and outside classrooms, meet the educational needs of all students. They judge how well schools protect and support children. In addition, inspectors judge the effectiveness of leadership, which incorporates governance, management, staffing and facilities.

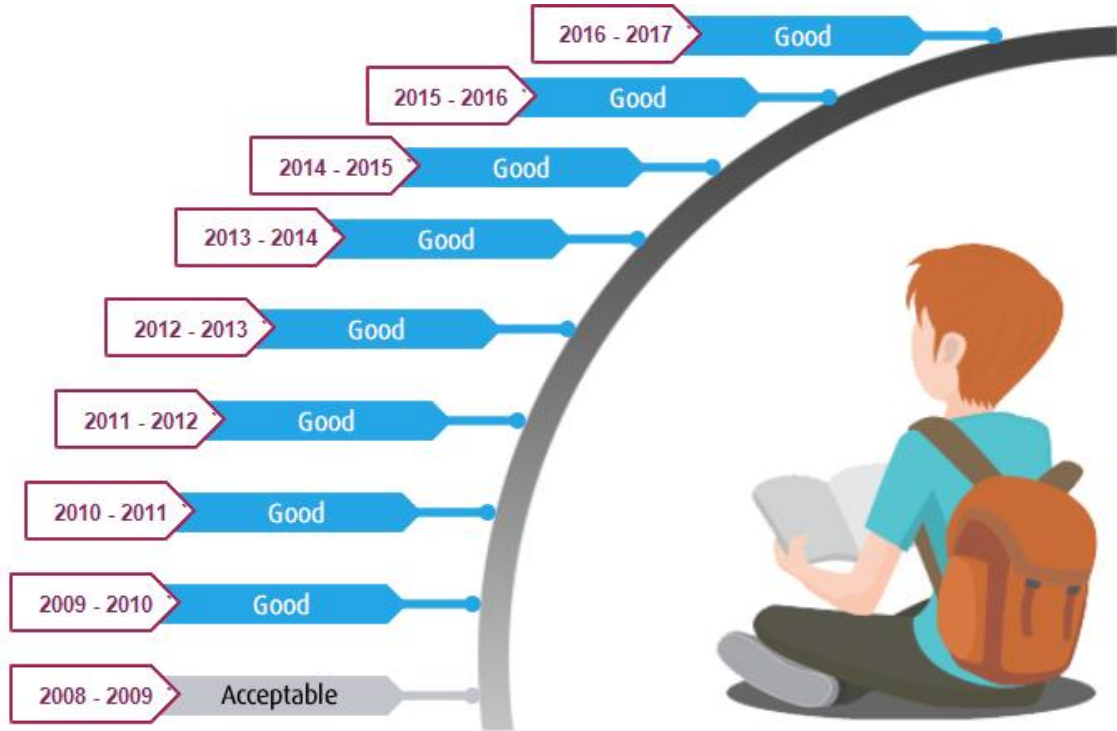
Inspection judgements are drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observation of students' learning in lessons, review of their work, discussions with students, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and review of surveys completed by parents, teachers and students.

Judgements are made on a six-point scale

DSIB inspection teams make judgements about different aspects, phases and subjects that form the work of the school, using the scale below, which is consistent with the framework.

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

Inspection journey for Universal American School - Branch



- The school opened in 2005. This year, it has 1426 students ,age four to 18 years old, 47 fewer than last year. The principal has been at the school for two years. 39 (26%) of the 157 teachers, are new to the school this year.
- The school has been evaluated as consistently good since 2010. Strengths in recent years include the achievement of KG children, students' personal development, the inclusive partnership with parents, the impressive learning environment and the quality of care, guidance and support for students.
- Recommendations for improvement in recent years have focused on: the attainment and progress in Islamic education and Arabic; the standard of reading, the quality of teachers' questioning, the validity of assessment data and its effective use by teachers, effective reviewing of the curriculum and the need to use external data to support the school's self-evaluation processes.

Summary of inspection findings 2016-2017



Universal American School - Branch was inspected by DSIB from 6 to 9 March 2017. The overall quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The section below summarises the inspection findings for each of the six performance indicators described in the framework.

- Attainment and progress are consistently very good in the KG, and good or better in almost all subjects. Progress in Islamic education has improved to good in the Elementary and whilst Arabic as a first language is generally good, attainment in the High School remains acceptable. Students' learning skills are generally strong across all phases, especially in the KG where they are outstanding.
- Students' personal and social development, their understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures, are outstanding in almost all respects with the exception being the inappropriate use of social media in the Middle School.
- High quality teaching is a feature of the school. It is consistently very good in the KG and Elementary phases but more variable elsewhere in the school. However, as a result of greater understanding of the use of data, most teachers' have a stronger understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their students enabling them to plan more appropriately for their needs.
- The curriculum is a strong feature of the KG and Elementary sections of the school where it provides an excellent balance of skills and understanding, and is adapted to meet the needs of all children. Elsewhere in the school it is being developed further, in line with the Common Core Standards, and identifying clear outcomes for students.
- The arrangements for protecting and safeguarding students are outstanding. The quality of care, guidance and support is very good in the KG phase and good elsewhere.
- School leadership, governance and self-evaluation procedures are very good. These, together with the outstanding partnership with parents, and high quality facilities and resources, are having a positive impact on students' achievements.

What the school does best

- The high achievement in Arabic as an additional language in the elementary phase; the very good progress in English in all phases, in mathematics in the KG and Elementary, and in science in the KG, Elementary and Middle schools.
- Students' personal development, their awareness of the UAE heritage and values, and their contribution to the environment and local and wider communities.
- The attention given to students' safety and support for their emotional well-being.
- School leaders' and governors' vision for inclusion and their commitment to the national agenda priorities.
- The school's very effective systems for self-evaluation and the accuracy of its judgements.

Recommendations

- Improve the rate of progress for all groups of students to at least good in all subjects in the Middle and High schools.
- Ensure the sharing of outstanding practice to secure greater consistency in the quality of teaching and the use of assessment for effective learning.
- Integrate the requirements of AERO (CCPS) and the MOE in Arabic into the curriculum for High school.

National Agenda Parameter



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

In response to this, each participating school was issued a report on their students' performance in these international assessments and, in addition, they were provided with clear targets for improving their performance. In 2015, KHDA launched the National Agenda Parameter, which is a method for measuring and monitoring schools' progress towards achieving their individual National Agenda targets through the use of external benchmarking assessments.

The following section focuses on the impact of the National Agenda Parameter in meeting their targets:

- The achievements of students in most middle school grades are meeting expectations in English and math and science when measured against the National Agenda Parameter MAP assessment. Achievements are not as strong in other phases.
- The school meets the registration requirements for the National Agenda Parameter.
- The school's analysis of the MAP and CAT4 of 2016, is closely linked to the school's National Agenda action plan and provides senior leaders and teachers with the appropriate information regarding strengths and weaknesses of individuals and groups of students. In Elementary and Middle phases, this information is beginning to be used positively to impact on teaching and learning.
- The school has made changes to the curriculum and it is now broadly aligned to the requirements of TIMSS and PISA. The alignment of the curriculum to a set of common internationally benchmarked standards is more secure in all sections other than the High School. This results in some uncertainty in expectations for students in this phase.
- Teaching strategies include a wider range of activities and projects to promote students' critical thinking. Teachers deepen students' understanding through the use of questioning that require students to evaluate multiple observations. Some teachers use independent inquiry where students are becoming more responsible for their own learning.
- Students' research skills are developing, but they still require support to determine the extent of the information needed and how best to analyse and evaluate their findings. Students are more confident and proficient in using technology to enhance the presentation of their research and investigations.

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

Innovation in Education

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









Promoting a culture of innovation:

- Through their distributed leadership model, the school is demonstrating particular strengths in promoting a culture of innovation that involve most staff. Across the school, students are provided with many opportunities to develop their creativity. School initiatives are plentiful and provide meaningful innovation opportunities such as, innovation week, and building model satellites using old parts of computers. Students are increasingly confident in expressing their opinions and, as a result, their personal development is enhanced and contributes to the generation of ideas in and outside the classroom.

Overall school performance

Good

1 Students' achievement

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Good	Good

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Very good ↓	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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Very good	Very good	Good	Good
Assessment	Very good	Very good	Very good ↑	Good

4. Curriculum

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum design and implementation	Outstanding	Very good	Good ↑	Very good ↑
Curriculum adaptation	Very good	Very good ↑	Good	Good

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

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


6. Leadership and management

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

Main inspection report



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	Very good	Very good
Mathematics	Very good	Very good
Science	Very good	Very good

- In English, children make better than expected progress in speaking and early reading. They use phonics and word analysis in decoding words and develop very good reading skills as a result of the frequent opportunities to immerse themselves in different genres of text. They read with fluency and expression using their phonic knowledge to blend and segment words. KG1 children are developing their understanding of the concept of print. In KG2, children are able to express themselves in simple writing, retelling their stories with fluency, purpose and expression. Overall the level of achievement is very strong.
- A large majority of children make better than expected progress in mathematical development resulting in a very good level of attainment. Children enjoy discovering mathematics through play and practical activities. In KG1 they order numerically and make sequences and patterns using shapes. They can make comparisons between numbers and are aware that numbers can increase or decrease. In KG2, children can successfully solve addition and subtraction number stories within 20, showing accuracy and applying a systematic approach to solutions.
- Children make very good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of scientific inquiry. The large majority have a very good understanding of the world around them through their well-developed skills of observation and prediction. They observe, explore, investigate and talk about changes in their environment and draw conclusions about their findings. In KG2, children know what plants need to grow and can predict what might happen if a variable, such as light, is taken away. They understand that living things grow and man-made objects remain the same.

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students make better than expected progress in lessons but attain levels that are in line with curriculum standards. In Grade 1 students write briefly about the dining etiquette in Islam and can describe the Pillars of Islam, although they do not have a clear understanding of how these relate to their lives. Towards the end of the phase, a few students make better links between Islam and global citizenship. Recitation skills are under developed. Overall, Non-Arabs students make better progress in lessons.
- The majority of students make better than expected progress and attain skills in Arabic as a first language that are above curriculum standards. Speaking and listening skills are strongest and students use a wide range of vocabulary in their conversations and respond well to their teachers. They read well and can produce writing of a reasonable length and accuracy, although with a few spelling mistakes.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students make better than expected progress overall considering the number of years studying the language. They read Arabic script well especially in the lower grades. In their lessons, students are able to comprehend and respond well to their teachers' instructions, which are given in standard Arabic. Students make good gains in learning new vocabulary and rapidly develop their skills in using dictionaries to support their learning. They use their new vocabulary to express ideas both orally and in writing. Progress is significantly slower for SEND students.
- In English, students make very good progress from their individual starting points and attainment for the majority is above curriculum standards. This level of attainment and the very good progress seen in lessons and students' work does not always translate into high results in the MAP benchmarking tests which are below international expectations. Students develop a good range of speaking and listening skills. They make very good progress in reading because the skills are developed systematically. Weaknesses in spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting, slow the development of writing skills.
- In mathematics, a large majority of students make better than expected progress and attain levels, both in lessons and through internal assessments that exceed the curriculum requirements. Whilst external international benchmarking highlights less impressive attainment, it also demonstrates that most groups of students are making better progress than anticipated. In lessons, and in their recent work, a large majority of students' exhibit knowledge, skills and understanding that extend beyond the unit objectives for the class.

- In science, a large majority of students achieve attainment and progress standards that are at or above expected levels. Students are beginning to develop appropriate inquiry and investigation skills through the science focused units of inquiry, although most require further development of their data collection and analysis skills. Students can make predictions about the likely outcomes of investigations they plan and carry out. They are able to express their ideas and understanding, often using the correct scientific language. Attainment and progress of all groups of students is similar.

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

- Most students attain levels of knowledge and understanding of Islamic concepts that are in line with curriculum standards. They are aware of the importance of knowledge and can discuss and draw conclusions from the lessons of the Prophet Suleiman. Although students talk about Islamic concepts, they do not discuss in any depth the impact these have on their daily lives. Most students make the expected progress in lessons by responding to questions from the textbook. In their recent work, progress is variable with skills of recitation skills still underdeveloped.
- The majority students attain skills in Arabic, as a first language, that are above curriculum standards. Most but not all students are fluent in speaking and understanding standard Arabic in different contexts. Their writing skills are developing well. For instance, Grade 7 students can write a well-structured and accurate analysis of a text. The majority of students make better than expected progress across all skills in lessons and in their recent work.
- In Arabic as an additional language, the majority of students make better than expected progress across all communication skills. Internal assessment data indicates that attainment is in line with the expected curriculum levels. Most students read familiar texts well and can provide brief oral responses to questions. Listening and comprehension skills are developing well, supported by the use of dictionaries which help students to write short sentences and more independent writing with expression. Progress is more rapid for the more able than other students
- In English, internal and external assessment data, indicates that the majority of students attain levels that are above curriculum expectations. In lessons, students learn very quickly and demonstrate reading, speaking and listening skills that are above those typical of their age. Writing skills are improving, although at a slower rate than the other three skills. In Grade 8, students are able to analyse text and find evidence to support a point of view. However, for a minority, underlying weaknesses in comprehension and vocabulary remain.
- In mathematics, external and internal assessment data show that the majority of students are working above curriculum and international standards, with most groups progressing better than might be expected. Students apply their knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts well and make good progress in lessons. Achievement measured over time is a little inconsistent, but taken as a whole the majority of students continue to operate above curriculum standards. Progress from their starting points is good.

- Attainment in science as measured against curriculum standards shows that a majority of students are above expected levels. Students are actively engaged in their learning, leading to very good progress in inquiry and investigation skills, despite progress in data-collection and analysis being more limited. Students express their ideas with clarity using the correct scientific terminology. Most are able to relate the learning to real-life situations and to make some connections between other subject areas. All groups of students make similar rates of achievement in science in this phase

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

- In Islamic education, most students make the expected progress in lessons in relation to learning objectives, and attaining levels that are in line with curriculum standards. They can explain the rules and guidelines from the verses. For example, Grade 10 students understand that Islamic values in the Holy Qur'an are important for building a strong community. Grade 12 students discuss the impact of gambling on Muslims' lives. Non-Arab students make better progress in lessons.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students attain skills that are in line with curriculum standards although a majority make better than expected progress in lessons and in their work. A lack of development in the use of standard Arabic when speaking, impedes progress for some groups of students. In the upper grades, however, students develop skills at a faster rate, for example in discussions and in their writing, where they link different elements within and beyond the learning objectives. Erratic spelling is a common feature across the phase.
- In Arabic as an additional language most students attain levels that are in line with the curriculum expectations. They reach acceptable levels in reading comprehension, and are able to identify the main points as well parts of speech in familiar texts. Adequate progress is made in writing overall, although students are often heavily reliant on the use of dictionaries and support from their teachers to develop their independent writing further. Listening skills are secure for most students. Progress is slower for the less able students and for those with SEND.
- In English, students make very good progress and attainment is well above the expected curriculum standard. The most recent IBDP examination results are well above expected levels. Students read and understand a range of demanding texts and make mature connections with current social, cultural and technological trends. This was seen, for example, in a Grade 12 lesson, where students explored the influence of social and cultural factors on the evolution of language. Students express their views confidently and listen intently to the views of others. Their writing shows well-developed skills of literary and textual analysis.
- In mathematics, the majority of students attain levels above curriculum and international standards as measured by internal and benchmarking data. Such attainment has been maintained over the past three years as demonstrated by IBDP results. The mathematical knowledge, skills and

understanding exhibited by the majority extend beyond curriculum expectations. Different groups of students generally show very good growth. In lessons, the majority make better than expected progress against lesson objectives and curriculum standards.

- In science, the majority of students make better than expected progress attaining levels that are above the school's curriculum and IBDP standards. Results in the IB Diploma examinations are better in physics than the other science, although overall, improvement is evident in attainment over the past three years. In Grades 11 and 12, students are skilled in using effective inquiry and investigative approaches using technology effectively to support their research and learning. Most are able to hypothesise, developing investigations to test their hypothesis, based on acquired knowledge and understanding

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Good	Good

- Students are keen to learn and in all grades demonstrate that they are able to take responsibility for the own learning. In the KG children work independently and for long periods of time on freely chosen activities. In all phases, the use of assessment rubrics enables students to know their strengths and most make efforts to improve.
- Students communicate well when working in pairs or in small groups and most collaborate effectively with their peers in a wide range of learning activities. They work purposefully and enjoy sharing their ideas and learning from each other. Occasionally, a few students allow others to do the bulk of the work when working cooperatively.
- Children in the KG make meaningful connections between their new learning and their prior knowledge. In the elementary phase, students make connections across subject areas and explore links to their everyday lives, thereby consolidating knowledge in new contexts. Connections between areas of learning and the wider world are less consistently seen in the Middle and High schools.
- Students are innovative and enterprising and capable of carrying out independent research. Their competence in the use of technology facilitates more rapid feedback on the strengths in their work and enables them to concentrate on how it can be improved. When presented with open-ended challenging tasks, most students show that they are capable of critical thinking and problem solving.

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Very good ↓	Outstanding

- Across all phases of the school, students demonstrate a high level of personal responsibility, a commitment to learn and very positive attitudes toward school. They seek and respond very well to feedback and show genuine keenness to improve their work. They show clear independence of mind and this is reflected in their work when given the opportunity to work without support.
- Almost all students' behave very well. They respect adults and respond well to them. They demonstrate excellent self-discipline and resolve difficulties in mature ways. Most students show respect and sensitivity to the needs of their peers, including those with special educational needs. However, a few Middle School students use social media inappropriately.
- The relationships amongst students and between teachers and students contribute to a very positive and supportive learning environment. Almost all students say they are listened to and are happy to work collaboratively and interact with others. Students support each other well and often volunteer to help others when needed.
- Students have an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy living. They actively engage in sporting events and activities, both inside and outside school, such as the Athletics Programme. They make good choices of food and have excellent awareness of the impact of healthy diet and good sleep on their energy levels and their wellbeing.
- Students' attendance is very high overall. On a few occasions, students arrive late to school in the morning and to lessons, particularly in Arabic and Islamic education.

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

- Students have a deep appreciation of Islam and the role it plays in Dubai. They acknowledge and appreciate the multicultural diversity of the UAE. This is very well reflected around school through their work and their behavior.
- Students have a profound respect for the heritage and culture of the UAE. They are aware of the attitudes required to adapt in different contexts. Older students are active in supporting younger students, by for instance, reading stories to them about the unification of the Emirates and the founding of the country.
- Students have a very good sense of their own, individual identity and are fully integrated into the local culture. Through debates and focussed activities, they are able to compare and contrast different cultures and celebrate vibrant aspects of international life in Dubai.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students show excellent awareness of their responsibilities towards the school and the contributions they can make to school, the local and wider communities. They actively engage in a wide range of student initiatives and activities both inside and outside the school, to raise funds for a number of charitable causes.
- In most subjects, students show an excellent work ethic. They work diligently and complete their work to a high standard. They act positively upon the feedback given to them and do their best to improve the quality of their work. When given the opportunity, they demonstrate creativity with independent work and projects, for example, in the 'Innovation in Arabic' initiative.
- From a young age, students develop an astute awareness of global environmental issues. They understand the impact of global warming on natural habitats and explore how this links with their lives in Dubai and the UAE. They show countless interest and active involvements in recycling activities, energy conservation demonstrating knowledge and skills in a number of varied research projects.

3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Very good	Very good	Good	Good

- Teachers' subject knowledge is secure in most areas of the curriculum. Examples of high quality teaching, in which teachers use their subject knowledge to plan stimulating work that fully engages students' interest, are seen in all phases. In the KG, teachers use their knowledge of how young children learn very effectively to ensure that most make very good gains in their learning.
- Most lessons are well-planned and successfully taught. Lesson objectives are usually made clear, so students know exactly what they are going to learn. However, in a few lessons, mostly in the High School, the objectives are focused on what students are going to do rather than what they are going to learn. Attractive wall displays and the effective use of other resources contribute much to students' learning.
- Positive relationships between adults and students ensure that teaching takes place in supportive learning environments. Skilled questioning is used well in many lessons to challenge students' thinking. This is a strong feature of teaching in English, for example. Students respond well when given the opportunity to work in small groups; however, in a few instances these opportunities are restricted by lengthy introductions or explanations.
- Teachers are generally aware of students' diverse abilities and use a variety of strategies to meet the needs of different groups of students. Expectations are generally high and students are encouraged to do their very best at all times. However, in the Middle and High schools, the work is not always sufficiently varied to provide appropriate challenge for all.

- There are many instances of critical thinking being promoted effectively. For example, the development of reasoning and problem solving skills is seen in science, and critical analysis is developed well in both English and Arabic. As a result, students gain confidence in their abilities and become less dependent on the teacher. However, these skills are not consistently developed in all subjects and grades.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Assessment	Very good	Very good	Very good ↑	Good

- The assessment policy describes a set of processes for both formative and summative assessment practices. Students' attainment in key subjects is assessed at regular intervals. The results, linked to the school's curriculum outcomes, are used to provide a measure of students' attainment and progress.
- The school effectively analyses and uses results of the National Agenda Parameter approved MAP tests in KG 2 to Grade 10, to compare their students' performance to international standards. In addition, they use the CAT4 test to provide students' potential profile.
- Assessment data is analysed successfully to evaluate the performance of individual and groups of students and are used to set targets. However, the tracking of progress is efficiently developed in the KG but not as well in the rest of the school.
- The results of data analyses are used to review the curriculum, particularly in relation to National Agenda requirements. Data is also used increasingly to modify teaching in terms of lesson planning and teaching strategies, especially in the Elementary and Middle phases. However, this is inconsistent and as a consequence, the learning needs of some students are not always fully met.
- Teachers' awareness of their students' strengths and weaknesses is improving as they make better use of assessment data. In the better lessons, teachers provide students with appropriate challenge and support. In some instances, students engage in self and peer assessment. The use of rubrics aligned to curriculum standards, to provide constructive feedback to students is under-developed.

4. Curriculum

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum design and implementation	Outstanding	Very good	Good ↑	Very good ↑

- The curriculum is aligned with AERO Common Core Plus Standards (AERO CCPS). Inconsistencies between teachers' understanding of the school's curriculum are being addressed to ensure the ongoing implementation of a standards-based model. In Grade 12, the curriculum for Arabic as a first language is not sufficiently aligned to the standards of the Ministry of Education (MoE).
- Curriculum planning is being developed using the Atlas mapping system to document its continuity and progression across grade levels. In the KG and Elementary, the curriculum promotes an excellent balance of skills and understanding. Grade 9 students will be the first cohort to follow AERO CCPS with an annual Grades 10 to 12 implementation in ensuing years.

- The school offers a broad selection of curricular choices to provide Middle and High School students with opportunities to pursue their interests such as arts, drama, choir, band and outdoor education which enrich their learning experiences. High School student electives support college and career choices.
- The curriculum in the KG is designed to ensure links across subjects are clear and consistent. This is not as consistently applied in other phases of the school. In the Middle School, for instance, links do happen for example, in a project linking the standards in social studies, science and English.
- The school is currently reviewing the curriculum and implementing AERO CCPS in Grades 6 to 10 in order to fulfil the requirements for U.S. curriculum schools. Most of the curriculum is now well articulated and identifies clear outcomes. For instance, a whole-school review of literacy is complete and the final stage of the English Language Arts programme evaluation documented to support further development.
- UAE social studies is an integral part of the curriculum and is particularly well promoted through Arabic as a first language. KG and Elementary students learn about, for example, local traditions, national dress and the foundation of the country, while Middle School students compare the influence on society of edicts in ancient Indian history with the vision and influence of Sheikh Zayed on modern day UAE. Integration is not as evident in the High School. Social studies is assessed informally in the KG and Elementary phases and using a mixture of formative and summative assessments in the Middle and High schools.

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

- The school is successful in ensuring that teachers modify the curriculum to meet the needs of almost all groups of students, particularly in KG and Elementary. This is largely due to improved communication among classroom teachers and learning specialists. Curriculum modification is less well developed in Islamic education and Arabic.
- Opportunities for enterprise, innovation, creativity and social contribution are provided through almost all curricular areas. A wide programme of extra-curricular activities within and outside the schools, significantly enhances students' development. The curriculum options in High School have increased, significantly supporting provision in this area.
- Coherent learning experiences are embedded through almost all aspects of the curriculum and enable students to develop an excellent understanding of the UAE's culture and society. On occasion, the links between the core curriculum and the social studies curriculum are missed, for example in geography in the High School. Student initiated links to Emirati culture and community partnerships are having a positive impact on their academic and personal development.

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The school's child protection policy has clearly defined responsibilities and staff have up-to-date training on its use and implementation. The school is very effective and proactive in protecting students from any form of physical abuse. It is actively combatting incidents of disrespectful usage of social media, particularly in the Middle School, and in educating students and parents about the consequences of bullying.
- The school premises are safe and hygienic. Medical cover is available at all times, including during after-school activities. The perimeter of the campus is secure, with close monitoring of visitors to the site. Safety checks are regularly conducted. Students are closely supervised at all times. Bus transportation is secure and safe with drop-off and pick-up arrangements effective in protecting students.
- Buildings and equipment are maintained in excellent condition with clear and comprehensive records of repairs. Accurate records of maintenance, visits to the clinic, fire evacuations, and adults entering the campus are kept.
- The physical environment meets the learning needs of all students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities. Access is provided through the use of ramps and elevators for those who need it.
- The school actively promotes healthy living with both the clinic staff and the school counselors involved in programmes to educate students on healthy choices. Aspects of the science and physical education curricula explicitly address the promotion of safe and healthy living. Nutritious menu options are available for students and staff.

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

- Positive relationships among the staff and students create a calm and positive atmosphere for most on the campus. Students are very polite in their interactions with the staff and with adults in general. Conflict is rare although there are some incidents of "cyber bullying" in the Middle School which counselors have taken swift action to address.
- The school is generally successful in promoting regular attendance and good punctuality. Nevertheless, they allow no room for complacency and are reviewing the current policy and practices to ensure further improvement.

- The school has thorough systems to identify students with special educational needs and disabilities. Response to Intervention (RTI) is now in place to strengthen the overall process and to ensure appropriate classification. A new policy for the identification of gifted and talented students is now in place and being implemented.
- The school provides effective support for most students with special educational needs and disabilities. Early identification leads to prompt and appropriate intervention. The quality of support enables most students to make consistent good personal and academic progress, particularly in the KG.
- The well-being and personal development of all students are closely monitored. This information is used to provide highly effective personal counselling services across the phases. Counselors are immediately available formally and informally to students to support their needs. In addition, a High School counselor, dedicates her time to assisting students and parents through the college application process and career guidance.

Inclusion


Provision and outcomes for students with SEND

Good

- Governors and senior leaders promote an inclusive ethos that is reflected in the everyday life of the school. However, although the school's vision is highly inclusive, the admission policy lists a number of disabilities it would find difficult to accommodate.
- The school makes use of a variety of assessment tools to identify students with SEND. The introduction of Response to Intervention (RTI) is improving the identification process of students in need of additional specialist support, and of those in need of simple modifications by classroom teachers, particularly in the lower phases. The school is in the process of enhancing identification through the appointment of further key personnel.
- The school's SEND faculty keeps all parents well informed of their children's progress involving them as active participants in the design of their students' learning plan. They receive formal and informal reports. These include reporting about subject achievement levels and updates on individual targets, with specific reference to the student's SEND profile.
- Assessment information is used to develop programs that meet the needs of individual students. In some cases, however, goals are too vague and not measurable. Despite this, students generally receive appropriate, effective support to meet their needs.
- The progress made by students with SEND is good overall although it is variable and dependent on the quality of support provided by class teachers.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Very good 

- The principal, ably supported by senior leaders, has a clear vision for inclusion and improvement in line with the National Agenda priorities. Despite significant improvements last year they do not allow any room for complacency.
- Leadership is distributed appropriately with middle leaders well established and increasingly effective. Their priority to promote positive relationships between teachers and students is successful and evident in the purposeful and supportive climate for learning in most lessons. Middle leaders are increasingly successful in supporting teachers in the use and application of data to ensure that most students are appropriately challenged and accurately assessed.
- Teacher retention is higher than last year because of strong collegiality, the high levels of support and opportunities for professional development. Consequently, morale is high and more teachers choose to stay to develop their careers further in the school.
- Staff stability is a key factor in ensuring the improvements in teaching are sustained and developed further. This, together with the recent track record of improvement, indicates the school has a very good capacity for further improvement in students' achievements.
- This ethos of collective accountability is leading to better progress in lessons. Gains made last year have been maintained and further improvements are evident in a number of areas.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Very good


- The school knows its strengths and areas for improvement very well. The systematic approach to self-evaluation is objective and rigorous and based on the use of internal and external data. Priorities for improvement are identified and aspirations are high.
- There is an in-depth evaluation of the quality of teaching. Teachers are held to account for their students' progress. Written feedback on their work is constructive and increasingly effective in improving the quality of teaching; however, it has yet to pay sufficient attention to the progress made by students in lessons.
- The effectiveness of improvement planning is evident in students' outstanding personal development and the impact on Islamic education, Arabic as a first language, literacy levels, and science and learning skills.
- Leaders at all levels have addressed the previous recommendations to ensure compliance with the requirements for American curriculum schools and secure improvements for all groups of students.

Partnerships with parents and the community

Outstanding

- The school is very successful in involving parents actively in their children's learning and in the life of the school. Their views are valued and regularly sought and they participate in shaping initiatives and supporting the continuous development of the school. Parents appreciate the way in which they are welcomed and encouraged to make valuable contributions to their children's learning experiences.
- There is a strong partnership between parents and teachers. Parents express their satisfaction for the systems used for sharing information, and value the regular and high quality of communication with the school.
- Parents are well informed about their children's academic achievements and personal and social development. The formal parent-teacher meetings provide effective opportunities to build home-school partnerships that have a positive impact on students' learning. Parents receive regular detailed reports on their children's achievement and their next steps in learning.
- Partnerships with external organisations, including a large number of universities and businesses are well established and have a positive impact on students' learning. The school is continuously looking for further opportunities for students to become involved in community and country-wide initiatives. In particular, the school's partnership with international communities is highly successful in enhancing and broadening students' learning experiences.

Governance

Very good 

- All stakeholders are represented on the governing board and channel their concerns and suggestions through the, Parents, Teachers and Students Organisation (PTSO). This group has a very strong voice and is increasingly influential in supporting and developing the direction of the school.
- Governors have a detailed knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are very effective in the role of critical friend, providing challenge and support in equal measure. They are effective in holding the school to account, and are involved in monitoring and supporting teachers to increase their effectiveness.
- Despite the impending change in ownership of the school, the governing board continues to work hard to ensure the best possible provision in the best interests of the students. They continue to provide significant resources for staffing and professional development to enable school leaders to provide in-house support for teachers, for example in the use of MAP data.

Management, staffing, facilities and resources




Outstanding

- The day-to-day systems in the school promote positive student achievement through an effective timetable and structured curriculum choices. Spaces both inside and outside are regularly used for teaching purposes enhancing what is available within the well-resourced classrooms. However, the scheduling of science does mean that some classes do not have access to specialist laboratories for all lessons.
- All staff are suitably qualified and receive extensive school-directed continuing professional development as well as funding for individual training. Teachers have the experience and qualifications to deliver the curriculum successfully and are deployed appropriately by the school leaders.
- Facilities in the school are of a very high quality and, where necessary, are designed or chosen for age-specific purposes. The learning spaces themselves and the equipment available, such as interactive whiteboards, are conducive to both effective teaching and learning.
- The school has an extensive range of high quality, up-to-date resources meeting the needs of the curriculum from KG to grade 12. Many teachers use the library, although the large range of new Arabic texts and the availability of an Arabic speaking assistant librarian are yet to be fully utilized.

The views of parents, teachers and senior students

The views of parents, teachers and senior students

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

Responses to the surveys		
Responses received	Number	
 Parents*	2016-2017	77
	2015-2016	396
 Teachers	104	
 Students	223	

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

- Parents are generally positive about most aspects of the school's work and performance. They believe that their children are happy and safe in the school. They appreciate how their children are encouraged to enjoy reading and the support that is offered to meet their social and emotional as well as the guidance they are given for future careers.
- The limited areas of concerns expressed by a few parents, was not evidenced by inspection findings as the school had worked hard to rectify issues.
- Most teachers are also positive about the school although a few expressed concerns around the impending changes associated with the new ownership of the school and challenges with some behaviors of students and range of resources.
- A significant number of students are positive about school. Their concerns focus mainly on teacher – turnover and the need to study all prescribed subjects and some quality of provision in a few subject disciplines.

What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the inspection report. This should address:

- recommendations from DSIB
- areas identified by the school as requiring improvement
- other external reports or sources of information that comment on the work of the school
- priorities arising from the school's unique characteristics.

The next school inspection will report on changes made by the school.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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