



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational
needs and disabilities



Innovation

Inspection Report 2015-2016

Al Khaleej National School

Curriculum: US/MOE

Overall rating: Acceptable

Read more about the school ➔



www.khda.gov.ae

“Without
challenges,
we won't feel
the taste of
success and
happiness”



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

Contents

School information	2
Summary for parents and the community	3
Main inspection report	10
1. Students' achievement	11
2. Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills	16
3. Teaching and assessment	17
4. Curriculum	18
5. The protection, care, guidance and support of students	19
Provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)	20
6. Leadership and management	21
The views of the parents, teachers and students	24

School information

General information



Location	Al Garhoud
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	1992
Website	www.gemsakns.com
Telephone	04-2173900
Address	PO Box 26780 Dubai
Principal	Ghadeer Abu-Shamat
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	25 to 28 January 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	2,184
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	1,210
Number of students with SEND	42
Largest nationality group of students	Emirati

Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	139
Largest nationality group of teachers	Egyptian
Number of teaching assistants	36
Teacher-student ratio	1:16
Number of guidance counsellors	2
Teacher turnover	30%

Curriculum



Educational permit / Licence	US
Main curriculum	US
External tests and examinations	MAP, SAT1, TOEFL, IBT
Accreditation	AdvancedEd, NEASC accreditation candidate
National Agenda benchmark tests	IBT

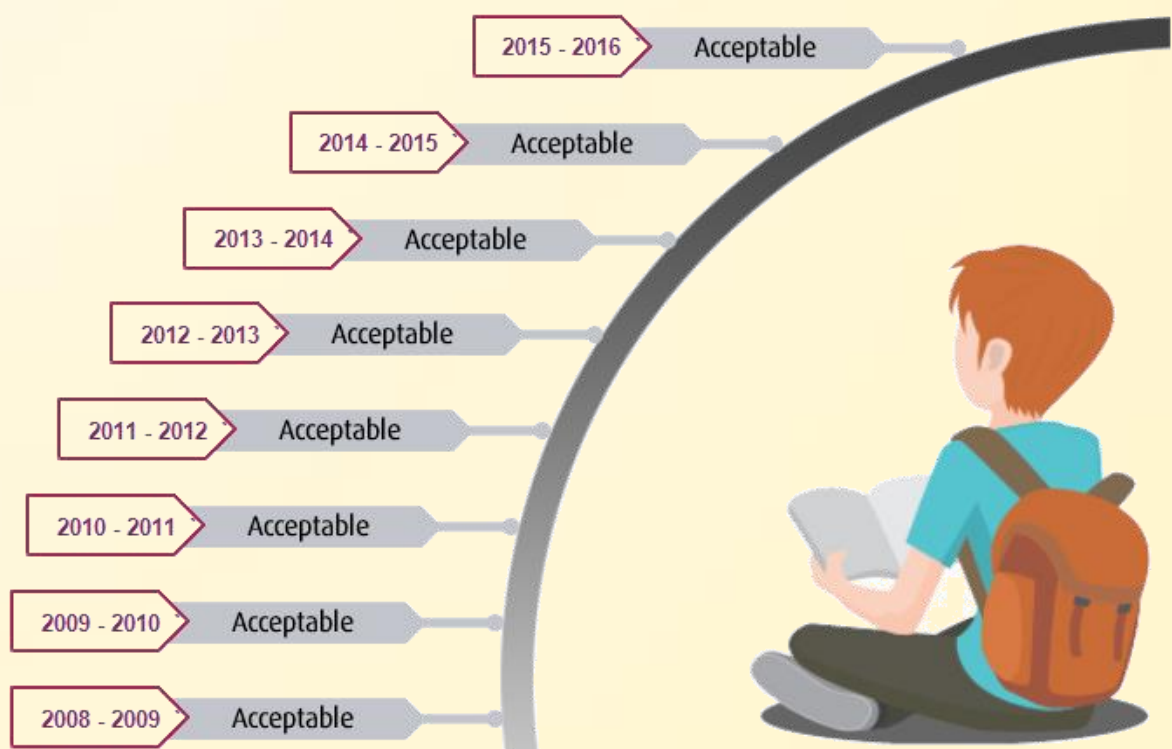


Summary for parents and the community

Al Khaleej National School was inspected by DSIB from 25 to 28 of January 2016. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **acceptable**.

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, **Al Khaleej National School** provided an **acceptable** quality of education for its students.

- Islamic education and Arabic were broadly acceptable across the elementary and high school phases, except for the middle school where progress in Arabic as an additional language was weak. Science had improved in elementary and high school. Learning skills were good in the kindergarten (KG) and high school phases. Students had positive attitudes and were keen learners. They were developing an important understanding of the ownership for their learning. They were always engaged positively when the activities were appropriately challenging, stimulating and linked to their own international mindedness as citizens of Dubai.
- Students across all phases demonstrated positive and responsible attitudes. They responded well to critical feedback and felt they were valued members of the community. They had excellent levels of appreciation of their Islamic values and respected other cultures well. Students' awareness of environmental issues and actions was now very good.
- The school was taking steps to improve the quality of teaching. Planning, effective use of resources and provision of practical learning experiences suited to students' needs had been prioritized. The implementation of the new more complex strategies was inconsistent, meaning that the impact on students' outcomes remained too low. The school gathered ample assessment data but this was not always reliable, especially in Arabic, Islamic education and mathematics.
- The curriculum promoted interest and enjoyment. Statutory requirements were fully met. The curriculum was planned and sequenced to build on students' previous learning in key subjects. The KG had a suitably strong emphasis on the development of communication and language skills. The curriculum was in the early stages of being mapped for progression and consistency through the ATLAS program.
- Arrangements to keep students safe and secure had improved. Committees were now in place to monitor campus safety, hygiene and healthy lifestyles. Staff were aware of child protection procedures but regular evaluation of this was still required. Support for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) was better due to the recruitment of more qualified staff.
- A new leadership team had been appointed. Well thought out professional development programmes were starting to have a positive influence. Parents were more centrally involved. Staffing and class sizes remained important issues for improvement. Too many staff across the various sections, particularly in Arabic, Islamic education and KG, were not suitably qualified to bring about the required instructional changes.



What did the school do well?

- The new principal had established a clear, shared vision. The majority of leaders were committed and effective. The faculty was becoming increasingly focused on the rigor and skills required to improve teaching and learning consistently.
- Students were taking increasing responsibility for their own learning, especially in the KG and high school.
- Students displayed high levels of commitment to their own personal development through an understanding of Islam, other cultures and effective social responsibility.
- Children in the KG had achieved commendable progress in speaking English. Students in elementary and high school had significantly improved their scientific understanding.
- Governance had improved and students were benefiting from a safe, secure campus.



What does the school need to do next?

- Improve students' achievement in Islamic education, Arabic, English, and mathematics.
- Apply greater rigor in teaching by ensuring that:
 - lessons are planned systematically across the school
 - teachers match the difficulty and challenge of learning tasks to the needs of different groups of students.
- Assess students' achievements in line with the stated curriculum standards, and use assessment information to track the progress of individuals and groups of students.
- Provide students with SEND with sufficient support and guidance, and ensure rigor in all lessons so that their particular needs are met.
- Accelerate the process by which governors and leaders improve teaching and learning through accurate, systematic and focused monitoring, and by using reliable information from the school's self-evaluation.



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

- The recently-recruited specialist team provided valued and effective support to parents of children with SEND. This was sensitively and skillfully applied and reflected the specific challenges of the children and their families.
- More accurate identification of the specific needs of students was in place. This was used to create plans that focused on both academic and social inclusion across the school.
- The school made sure that parents were provided with the information they needed so that they knew how well their children were progressing. This included information about progress in subject areas as well as progress against individual targets.
- Almost all parents were pleased with what the school provided for their children. They were encouraged to work with the school and were involved in their child's education. Parents, and when appropriate students themselves, were involved in the design, implementation and review of the students' specific learning programmes
- Most staff, and especially the SEND specialist team, ensured that parents of students with SEND have a positive relationship with the school. Information exchanged between home and school was frequent, appropriate and useful.

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. No attainment data from the National Agenda Parameter was available at this stage to make a judgement on the progress towards meeting the National Agenda targets.
- The school had programmes which focused on informing parents, teachers, and students about the National Agenda. This information was imparted using assemblies, a newsletter, posters and advisory class meetings. Most students in Grades 4, 8, and 9 had heard of the National Agenda and many could explain why it was important to them.
- The school held meetings several times a year to review assessment data and to adjust the curriculum and instruction to best meet students' learning needs. This was true for mathematics, reading, comprehension and science. The curriculum was still developing and it was expected that planned improvements would be implemented during the course of the following year.
- Some teachers in all phases, but especially in the KG, elementary and high school, had used textbooks to introduce students to more challenging activities, such as enquiry, independent research, activities using the scientific method, and critical thinking challenges. This had resulted in better attainment and progress by some students.
- Students had access to information technology resources to develop their research skills. All students had access to the school library. Only a few teachers provided students with assignments which required research skills to be used during lessons.

Innovation in education

The *UAE Vision 2021* sets out the National Agenda for the UAE to be among the most innovative nations in the world. The National Innovation Strategy sets the context for ‘innovation’ and ‘innovative leadership’. It provides a basis for evaluating public and private schools in order to deliver a world-class education for all children in the UAE.

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



Promoting a culture of innovation:

- The school's mission and vision reflected the UAE national innovation agenda. With a focus on learning skills, there was a tangible culture of transformation. The changes which seemed innovative for the school were simply good practice. New teachers were hired specifically for their capacity to use modern pedagogies, learning technologies and to develop students' thinking skills. An ongoing professional development program supported this. The student council had an active leadership role. The 'bring your own device' initiative for Grades 6 to 12 showed positive impact. The school was also using several online programs to good effect. The curriculum had been substantially revised to embed learning skills.

Overall school performance

Acceptable

1. Students' achievement

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Good ↑	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good ↑

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

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

3. Teaching and assessment

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

4. Curriculum

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

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

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

6. Leadership and management

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



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	Acceptable	Good
Mathematics	Acceptable	Acceptable
Science	Acceptable	Good

- In English, KG children listened attentively and were growing in confidence in their speaking skills. They knew letters and were beginning to write them correctly, including recognizing letters in words. Their vocabulary and pronunciation was strengthened by their knowledge of numerous songs and nursery rhymes. Although children started school with limited English skills, by KG 2 they had made good progress. Many children wrote their names independently. They made sentences about their pictures and spelled words by matching sounds to letters. Their reading skills improved alongside an increasing interest in books. Children were reading simple sentences confidently.
- Children in KG 2 were achieving in line with curriculum standards for their age and a few performed at higher levels. In lessons, KG 1 children used mathematical vocabulary confidently while they were playing. They sorted toy farm and wild animals into groups and counted up to ten. Their understanding of matching numbers to objects was appropriate for their ages. Most children successfully made shape pictures using colored paper, and they began to understand that shapes have a certain number of sides. Older children in KG 2 recognized and drew numbers to ten and twenty, and started to solve simple number problems. They knew words about time and the days of the week and used this vocabulary correctly to talk about events in their lives.
- Children reached expected levels of attainment in science in KG 1 following the school's own curriculum standards. Under the teacher's guidance, children observed animals and talked about them. They knew, for example, that farm animals provided meat, eggs and milk. They made good progress in increasing their science knowledge and in KG 2 began to understand science concepts such as what is meant by 'living' and 'non-living' things. Some children asked questions to check information about sea creatures and recorded it with detailed drawings. Children reinforced their knowledge by interacting with appropriate computer software. Investigation skills were still underdeveloped. Children were not provided with sufficient opportunities to practise these skills regularly in school.

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

- Attainment in the elementary phase in Islamic education was broadly in line with national curriculum standards. Most students demonstrated acceptable oral skills in reciting short verses of the Holy Qur'an. They had a secure knowledge of the Five Pillars of Islam. A majority understood the differences between the types of prayers and had a developing knowledge of the life of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). Most groups of students were making acceptable progress in learning Islamic concepts and principles, but their progress slowed towards the end of the phase.
- Students learning Arabic as a first language attained levels that were in line with national curriculum expectations. They were at the appropriate levels in knowledge, skills and understanding. Listening skills were the strongest. There was an insufficient use of standard Arabic. Reading skills for most students were also in line with expectations. Creative and extended writing were less developed. Overall, most students were making acceptable progress in their listening, speaking and reading skills, however progress in developing writing skills was slower. Boys and girls made similar progress.
- In the absence of international and national standards, attainment in Arabic as an additional language was broadly in line with general expectations. Students across the phase took internally-written examinations which provided insufficient challenge and only just met the needs of most of the students. Most students had acceptable listening skills, their speaking skills used only familiar words. Most students' reading skills had too many errors; their writing skills were developing slowly. Trends of attainment over time indicated that student outcomes were in line with curriculum expectations. Most students made acceptable progress in line with expectations in lessons and judged against their starting points. The progress made by boys and girls was similar.
- In English, students' literacy skills were in line with the curriculum expectations. Results from national and international assessments indicated that attainment and progress in English was broadly acceptable. Reading skills were developed more than writing skills. Students displayed sound development in sentence structure, vocabulary, and early writing. They knew how to revise paragraphs. Older girls and boys, similarly, were able to display skills in analyzing textual information when reading and discussing folk tales. Communication skills were demonstrably strong when students made presentations in class.
- Students in math in the elementary phase participated in a coherent curriculum that developed their mathematical knowledge, understanding and skills at expected curriculum levels. When checked against tests, broadly average attainment was the pattern across the phase. Building on progress made in KG, younger elementary students were able to count to 20, and understand addition and subtraction. They could identify and describe geometric shapes. These skills were developed and enhanced throughout the elementary phase. By the end of Grade 8, boys and girls, similarly, could analyze and solve linear equations, use functions to model relationships between quantities and solve 'real-world' mathematical problems involving geometric shapes.

- Attainment and progress were good in science in this phase. These levels were supported by national and international external test data. Students were eager to participate in learning facts and in exploring activities, investigations and experiments devised by teachers. A majority was able to not only meet the grade level standard, but also progress beyond that. They were able to accept challenges which required them to work collaboratively. They completed open-ended activities and participated in tasks that required higher level critical thinking. They applied their knowledge in new ways, for example, one class of eight year olds made a simple wind speed device. They then went outside so that they could predict and then compare wind speed in different areas around the school.

Middle

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



- Standards in Islamic education were in line with national curriculum expectations. Most students were at appropriate levels in terms of their knowledge, skills and understanding. They could interpret meanings from prescribed verses from the Holy Qur'an and Hadeeth texts. Their knowledge of events and facts of the Prophet Mohammed's (PBUH) biography was acceptable. Only a minority of students were able to link meanings from the Holy Qur'an and Hadeeth sources to support their discussions. Progress was similarly acceptable. The style of teaching restricted progress, most students were therefore unable to make better than this broadly acceptable progress.
- Attainment and progress of students learning Arabic as a first language in the middle school was in line with national curriculum standards. Students' listening, speaking and reading skills were secure. Their creative and extended writing was less developed. In speaking, most students could express their ideas and opinions, however there was a not enough use of standard Arabic, and students lacked confidence when expressing their ideas and opinions. Most students were making acceptable progress in their listening, speaking and reading skills, but in writing it was slower.
- Most students learning Arabic as an additional language attained broadly expected levels of knowledge and language skills. The school required students to sit for internal examinations; these did not provide enough challenge or sufficiently meet expectations. Students' listening skills were in line with expectations. Speaking and reading skills were weaker, as students made too many errors even when using familiar sentences. Writing skills were still developing. Although attainment over a three year period was generally in line with expectations, progress judged against lesson objectives and in terms of learning new vocabulary, was below. Girls were performing better than boys.
- In English, most students performed at expected levels in writing, reading and speaking. Their classroom performance was in line with, or above, common core standards; yet their international test scores were below. They were able to express themselves in writing and orally, using extensive vocabulary and standard grammar. In Grade 7, almost all girls were able to make inferences, and critique literature while evaluating the effectiveness of storytelling. They were able to relate the stories to real life and make connections to the environment. Although most students were able to use good literacy skills, they were not often challenged to write extensive research reports.

- Standards of attainment in the middle phase were broadly in line with curriculum and international expectations. Students participated in a coherent curriculum that developed their mathematical knowledge, understanding and skills appropriately. Starting in Grade 6, students were able to add improper fractions and solve inequalities with one variable. These core skills were developed and enhanced throughout the early grades. By the end of Grade 8, boys and girls could analyze and solve linear equations, use functions to model relationships between quantities, and solve real world and mathematical problems involving geometric shapes. The rates of progress of different groups of students were similar.
- Attainment in science was in line with national and international expectations. Middle school science students enjoyed learning. Whenever practical or imaginative lessons were offered to students, they showed interest and appreciated being able to use their higher level critical thinking skills. Most students met grade level expectations and a minority progressed beyond the standard. In many lessons students were able to apply their science knowledge and thinking during laboratory experiments and investigations. For example, groups of students in one science class were able to collaboratively research how fossils were formed. A class presentation required students to evaluate the information they read, to synthesize their findings and produce summaries, some of which included models of fossils.

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

- Most students learning Islamic education were attaining in line with national curriculum standards. They were at appropriate levels in their knowledge, skills and understanding. They had an acceptable understanding of Islamic rules, ethics, and principles. They could discuss the importance of marriage in Islam and the obstacles for couples. Progress was unchanging in this phase, being broadly acceptable. Progress was not fast enough because lesson planning did not take sufficient account of students' needs and as a result, expectations were too low in many lessons.
- In Arabic as a first language, attainment was broadly in line with national curriculum expectations. Listening skills for most students were stronger than their speaking skills, which were limited. The majority of students used dialect rather than standard Arabic. Although their reading comprehension skills were appropriate for their age, writing skills were underdeveloped across all grades. Most groups of students made at least acceptable progress in speaking and reading judged against the learning objectives of lessons but progressed less well in writing.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students attained broadly at acceptable levels. The school used internal examinations with a level of challenge that was below the expected curriculum. Most of the students listening skills were in line with expectations, their speaking and reading extended to short and familiar sentences but writing skills were underdeveloped. Trends in attainment over the past three years were in line with expectations. Most students made acceptable progress in relation to their starting points and to lesson objectives. Boys and girls were making expected and similar progress.

- In English, most students demonstrated attainment and progress in line with the California Common Core State Standards. They were in line with international standards for reading, speaking, and listening skills. In Grade 12 a large majority were able to use technology, particularly when they debated historical events which changed the direction of the world. Students were able to think analytically and discuss essential questions. They made gains in evaluation techniques, writing for persuasion, reading for research and for personal pleasure. They achieved good writing skills, focusing on editing, revision, and organization. The progress of different groups was similar.
- Standards of attainment in the high school were broadly in line with curriculum and international expectations. Students participated in a coherent curriculum that developed their mathematical knowledge, understanding and skills to the expected curriculum levels. Starting in Grade 9, they graphed a system of linear equations to determine the slope and intercept point. These skills were developed and enhanced throughout the course of this phase. By the end of Grade 12, different groups of students were achieving and progressing similarly at an appropriate level in either calculus or statistics.
- The majority of high school science students demonstrated good attainment and progress. Some of the activities were exploratory, enabling students to observe, measure, and speculate about an object. For example in one lesson, students who had not previously dissected an animal heart were allowed to examine a sheep's heart and to wonder about its functions inside the animal. They had read about and seen illustrations and gained knowledge of the heart, but this was an opportunity to have practical exploratory experience. They applied their knowledge and skills to solve problems, research, investigate, and use the scientific method in well-planned lessons. Different groups of students made similarly good rates of progress.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Good 	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good 

- Most KG children enjoyed school and took increasing responsibility for their own learning. They became more responsible for their own learning as they accepted active roles in taking steps to improve. They worked well in small groups to carry out research, used learning technologies effectively and brainstormed topics which they presented to other members of their class.
- Students were encouraged to collaborate in early grades and this skill continued to develop through school. Communication skills were in line with expectations. Most students were able to work productively in groups. The quality of their collaboration was aligned to the tasks assigned. When students were provided with appropriate activities they were able to demonstrate collaborative skills and could explain what they had learnt.
- Students made clear connections between different areas of learning and to their understanding of the world. For example, they made links between their work in mathematics and their ability to solve problems in the environment and in building. Good links were made by high school students when writing about cross-curricular themes.
- Students could do basic research under the teachers' direction. When given the opportunity, most students could use technology to support their learning. Critical thinking and problem solving skills were developing features. Whenever these skills were offered, students were eager to use them. This was most common in science and English classes, and less common in mathematics, Arabic and Islamic education.

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Personal development	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Students demonstrated positive and responsible attitudes toward their school and learning. They responded well to critical feedback. Students felt that they were valued members of the community.
- The school environment was such that it promoted respect. A sense of caring and responsibility contributed to the development of the student body into a confident, articulate and positive school population. Clear behavioral expectations and standards were evidently in place. Students were kind to each other.
- Most students enjoyed coming to school. Their behavior and attitudes towards each other, their teachers and the school community helped to create a positive ethos that pervaded the Al Khaleej community.
- Students were very aware of the importance of healthy lifestyles and most made healthy food choices during school meals and in their lunch packs.
- Most students enjoyed coming to school. Attendance was good and students arrived at school and to lessons on time.

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

- Students had an excellent understanding and appreciation of Islamic values and could talk articulately about the Hajj. They were able to speak of relevance and importance of these values to people of different nationalities living in Dubai. Students across the school participated in Eid al Adha celebrations.
- All students stood with respect and sang the National Anthem in their classrooms and across the corridors. They participated effectively in the National Flag Day celebration. Students talked about the different Emirates and the Expo 2020. They participated enthusiastically in Sheikh Mohammed's competition to encourage reading.
- Most of the students knew about their friends' cultures and spoke about them in great detail. They understood about other cultures' food, customs and famous sports. They also talked about their own culture in specific detail and focused on the well-known activities they liked to celebrate.

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

- Students took part willingly in activities to support their school and the wider community. Younger students learned to care for others. They helped teachers and with their parents' support, raised money for humanitarian causes. Older students contributed as prefects or by supporting young children with reading. High school girls were increasingly aware of their roles in society and attended a national conference on women in leadership.

- Students showed a very positive work ethic. They researched projects and made choices about how to present information to their peers. They developed problem solving skills, for example by creating their own transportation plan for the city. Some high school students regularly took part in competitions for entrepreneurs and offered ideas about selling products and marketing.
- Students had high awareness of local environmental issues and demonstrated care for their community. Older students attended environmental workshops and events organized by the Clean Energy Business Council. Elementary students participated in projects with Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA) to reduce energy consumption at home and school, and cleaned local beaches. Their understanding of world-wide conservation issues were not so well developed.

3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Teachers were becoming increasingly skilled at using their professional knowledge in ways that helped students learn. In KG a strong start had been made to introduce integrated strategies aimed at accelerating children's progress. In other phases, teachers' understanding of how students learn Arabic, how they should be challenged in Islamic education, along with how they could develop a greater sense of mathematical enquiry, was not yet well established.
- Templates for planning teaching received from other GEMS schools were detailed. However, these were not informed by accurate assessment information nor did they systematically identify the levels of challenge for all groups of students. Typically, plans articulated differentiation strategies, but too often these reflected only low levels of graduated tasks or teachers' unrealistic expectations. Time and resources were not used to deliver effective teaching consistently enough.
- Questioning did not challenge students appropriately. The centrally-developed lesson plans were inadequately contextualized by teachers for the subjects they taught. The better teaching ensured that time was given to students to develop specific lines of discussion and enable groups to contribute thoughts and findings. In Arabic, Islamic education and mathematics, in particular, teachers depended too heavily on textbooks and provided few opportunities for interaction.
- The school staff generally understood the value and importance of modifying teaching to meet the needs of different groups of students. Work with teachers on this aspect had been started, but its impact was limited. As a result, teaching was mainly directed to the middle ability group. Teachers found meeting the needs of the high attaining students and those with SEND challenging.
- The professional development program for teachers incorporated planning for critical thinking and independent learning skills. Teachers' understanding of how to deliver these aspects within the classroom was inconsistent. Only a few teachers skillfully challenged students and differentiated activities. These teachers constructed problem-setting and solving tasks, and used this information to develop the next step for students.
- In Arabic as a first and as an additional language, the quality of teaching was inconsistent. Teachers had secure subject knowledge, but only a few were able to impart this well in their teaching practice. Teaching did not meet the differing needs of students. It lacked adequate challenge and expectations were too low. Most of the questioning was closed and did not develop students' critical thinking or research skills.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Assessment	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Assessments were regularly administered and procedures had been established to gain accurate data on students' attainment and progress. However, the majority of teachers did not assess students' knowledge and understanding in ways that ensured these were secure. As a result, teachers' understanding of the extent to which their students were attaining and progressing was not always accurate or reliable.
- The school used external assessments to benchmark students' progress against national and international expectations. TIMMS, PISA, MAP, SAT and tests in mathematics provided information on students' attainment and progress. Detailed analyses were provided, but the application of this information was still in the developmental stages in curriculum adaptation, implementation and delivery.
- The school had begun to analyze internal end-of-term assessments. The information was rudimentary and required further refinement. Programmes tailored to the school provided additional information on students' reading and writing scores. Teachers had access to this information, but it was not used routinely to help focus teaching.
- Although detailed data analysis was available, the school had not used this information consistently to drive instruction and influence teaching. In classes, tasks and expectations were not adjusted sufficiently to meet the needs of different groups of students, including students with SEND.
- Teachers knew their students and could generally identify their strengths and weaknesses. However, daily use of 'assessment for learning' was not embedded. Teachers' expectations, lesson pacing and success criteria based on a clear understanding of assessment data, were still developing areas; as were self and peer assessment.

4. Curriculum

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




- The curriculum was aligned well to UAE values and vision. It was broad, balanced and relevant to the development of students' knowledge, understanding and skills. It was particularly successful in motivating students and enhancing their personal development by promoting interest and enjoyment. Statutory requirements were fully met, in particular the time allocated for Islamic education and Arabic, as a first and additional language.
- The curriculum was planned and sequenced to build on students' previous learning in key subjects. KG had a suitably strong emphasis on the development of language skills. The curriculum was being helpfully mapped through the ATLAS program. Data from learning was not used well to inform curriculum mapping. Most students were prepared for their next phase of education, university or careers.
- Students had a range of learning opportunities available in the curriculum which helped develop and enhance their aspirations, talents and interests. These included art, information technology, French, music, advanced sciences and robotics. Extra-curricular activities were held after school.
- Cross-curricular links, although not yet fully embedded in the learning community, were planned in some key subject areas. These were underdeveloped and dependent on the teachers' initiatives. Literacy skills were promoted and reinforced throughout all subject areas.

- The school reviewed the curriculum regularly. Reviews involved teachers, department heads, and the curriculum leader. The character development program was initiated as a result of curriculum reviews.
- The school taught UAE social studies integrated with various subjects. It was taught in English and Arabic. The curriculum included opportunities for students to develop their knowledge about the society and history of the UAE. Programmes promoted interest and enjoyment and encouraged students to develop their research skills. The geographic, historic and social structure of the UAE was compared with other countries.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum adaptation	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- The school made acceptable modifications to the curriculum to meet the needs of all groups of students. Students with SEND had individual education plans with modified targets. Instruction that was adapted to meet the needs of different groups of students was still being developed.
- The curriculum was enriched by a program of extra-curricular activities which made a significant contribution to students' academic and personal achievement.
- The curriculum included interesting and relevant programmes which increased students' knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the heritage of the UAE. This included Emirati traditions, culture and the values which influence UAE society. These were evident in art classes where students, in Grades 3 to 12 were learning UAE history through painting, architectural drawings, sculptures, and collages depicting aspects of UAE culture.
- In the KG, Arab children were taught Arabic as a first language, and non-Arab children were taught Arabic as an additional language. Over five periods per week were provided. This overall provision was suitable for them.

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

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

- Policies and procedures had been reviewed and sufficient resources had been made available to support the safeguarding of all. In KG, elementary and middle school, child protection procedures were working well. More widely, some teaching in the high school was insufficiently monitored by senior leaders to ensure that all staff fully understood their responsibilities related to student welfare.
- Effective procedures were in place to manage the health, safety and security of students and staff. Supervision was good, with ample numbers of staff on duty. Entry to the school was carefully and consistently monitored. Security staff were diligent. Senior leaders maintained a daily presence at arrival and departure times and school transportation arrangements were very effective.
- Incidents in school were carefully recorded. Medical support was appropriate and the school had improved its speed of evacuation from all buildings during fire drills. Practical steps to improve evacuation procedures were in place, with further enhancements being introduced through decisions via the committee system.

- Investment in the buildings and infrastructure had been made, including ramps to improve access for those with special needs in mobility. Soft covers for sharp corners of the buildings and demarcation barriers for use when multiple groups shared a common external space were installed.
- An ongoing approach to promote healthy living was in place. School menus had been redesigned, however more was needed to ensure students took greater responsibility for making healthier food choices. Promoting regular exercise and active lifestyles was under-represented, although regular sports activities were available for those wishing to take part.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Care and support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Relationships between teachers and students were positive, and the systems and procedures for managing behavior successful.
- The attendance and punctuality of students was beginning to show improvement. The school was continuing to monitor the late arrival of students to school and consistently following up on all absences.
- The school had effective systems to identify students with SEND. Identification of students who were gifted and talented was at an early stage of development and remained less effective.
- Staffing levels to support students with SEND had increased and consequently most students made at least adequate personal and academic progress. Students receiving specialist support made better progress. In lessons students with SEND received a more variable and inconsistent level of support and too often higher achieving students were not sufficiently challenged, impacting on their progress.
- Appropriate and improving academic and careers advice was provided for senior students and their parents.

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 recently-appointed principal and appropriately-qualified and established leader of SEND had increased the capacity to improve the quality of provision for students with SEND. Their own evaluation of the quality of provision was accurate and their strategy for improvement was appropriate.
- The school used a range of indicators to identify students with SEND. Systems were improving and the school had a greater understanding of the challenges experienced by students, and therefore what actions needed to be taken to promote progress. Further work was required to ensure that this information was reflected in the strategies and modifications used by teachers in the classrooms.
- Parents were generally pleased with what was provided for their children. The specialist team gave valued and effective support to parents of children with SEND. This was sensitively and skillfully applied and reflected the specific challenges of the children and their families. Parents and students, when appropriate, were involved in the design, implementation and review of the specific learning programmes.

- Support provided by the specialist team was appropriate, and it promoted improved learning and progress. Some of the most challenged students made significant progress as a result of the early identification and high quality support they received from the specialist team.
- Despite the careful and targeted support provided by the team for students with SEND, the inconsistent quality of provision in classroom limited students' progress and personal development. Basic modifications, were evident in the classroom, however these rarely promoted good progress, and sometimes limited the level of relevance and meaning the students were able to gain from their work.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Acceptable

- Senior leaders had developed a new, clear and shared vision for the school through effective collaboration. The mission was inclusive of stakeholders and built on the National Agenda and achieving better outcomes for all students. Further work was required to identify the criteria by which the vision would be realized and fully adopted.
- School leaders were committed to positive change, however ensuring high standards remained an aspiration, especially in Islamic education, Arabic, English and mathematics. There was some misinterpretation of how educational standards could be raised. From elementary through high school, leaders applied differing levels of expectation and rigor around how to assess outcomes accurately. Thus, baseline data on the performance of students and teachers were often unreliable.
- While a professional and collaborative culture was established among leaders and faculty, the number of new roles, responsibilities and challenges that were required were significant. Staff morale was high and staff in general were very willing to try as much as possible.
- Not all leaders demonstrated the necessary capacity to improve. Swift action to improve student outcomes resulting from effective data analysis was the hallmark of those departments that understood the key components of good teaching and learning, such as science.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Acceptable

- A culture of self-review had been broadly established. Departments participated in regular evaluations of teaching. The subsequent improvement plan was comprehensive and rigorous taking due account of the National Agenda for the UAE. However, more accurate data was needed to inform improvements. Senior leaders had been partially successful in introducing wider instructional techniques. Improvements in learning skills and in many aspects of science were evident.
- Senior leaders were becoming more skilled at identifying the specific elements of students' outcomes that were directly linked to improved teaching. They had begun to systemize the process, regularly identifying instructional gaps and ensuring that professional development delivered sustained better practice. Training sessions for teachers which focused on teacher-student interactions, group work, practical activities and plenary sessions were taking place regularly.
- Leaders were committed to being as accurate and consistent as possible in their monitoring of teaching and learning. This was not yet fully achieved. The school's next key priorities included teaching students at appropriate challenge levels, assessing accurately and using the information for better planning to meet students' needs. Senior and middle leaders were not yet helping teachers to link their work to students' outcomes.

- Senior leaders were committed to addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection. Progress had been made in establishing a whole-school understanding of the key priorities. The quality of teaching required had been articulated, and professional development focusing on pedagogy was ongoing. Leaders and governors were aware of which aspects of teaching and learning needed to improve, and of the required staff accountabilities that were necessary for this to be achieved.

Partnerships with parents and the community

Acceptable

- Parents were consulted on a regular basis through surveys, feedback requests and the parent council. Increasingly, and where appropriate, their views were taken into account when shaping school improvement priorities. Parents' recent involvement in supporting children's reading in KG, and the Arabic reading program throughout the school, were making a positive contribution.
- Communication with parents had improved, but was sometimes inconsistent. The school provided newsletters, sent e-mails and SMS messages and provided student diaries for communication between home and school. Parents were appreciative of the rapid responses they received from teachers when they had concerns or queries. Partnerships with parents of children with SEND were particularly positive.
- Parents received regular reports about their children's academic grades. However, reporting was underdeveloped because areas for improvement and next steps towards academic achievement were not highlighted, and students' personal and social development were not included.
- The school was developing an increasing number of positive links with the community. These included support of local and national charities and events, parents speaking to students about their careers and links with Universities to provide information regarding courses. A program of sports fixtures, competitions and events with other schools was providing increasing opportunities for students.

Governance




Acceptable

- The governing body was supporting senior leaders in the development of a new vision for the school, which was key to the positive relationships now developing. Appropriate dialogue had been initiated, taking views of all stakeholders into account, and where necessary challenging, ensuring students' development remained central. Regular surveys, more accessible leaders and upgraded communication technologies were part of an ongoing, purposeful home-school relationship.
- The new leadership team had been in post only a short time, but roles and accountabilities were clear. Support for how improvement targets would be met was provided by other GEMS US curriculum schools. Although targets differed, these partnerships between leaders ensured a cooperative response to improving teaching and learning. Although governors were driving this collaboration, the impact on improved teaching practices remained to be seen.
- Governors had started to make the necessary investment in resources. Leaders and governors had articulated the vision to the school and ensured that the key priority of improving the quality of teaching and learning across all subjects and phases was central to it. This work had only just begun.

Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school was well-organized and its day-to-day operations were effective. The campus was more attractive and accessible to the community. Committees had been set up to manage the different aspects of school life, and liaison between them was developing well. Better communication, commitment from staff and increased resources meant that school life was busy but calm. Although staff turnover was relatively high, more suitably qualified teachers were now in the school. More remained to be done in this regard especially in KG, and the Arabic and Islamic education departments. Ensuring that staff had appropriate qualifications for all sections of the school remained a key priority. In particular, more staff were needed to support laboratory preparation and administrative tasks for senior leaders. The premises were in order. New investments including a playing pitch, learning technology resources and improved access had been made. However, the restricted nature of the school site, the volume of people using it daily and the resources required to maintain it, all contributed to the reality that significant redevelopment of the premises needed to be considered. The extra resources in place were making a difference, in the KG in particular. Elsewhere, resources while available, were not always used effectively for students to understand and develop the skills linked to the curriculum. 	

The views of the parents, teachers and students

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

Responses to the surveys		
Responses received	Number	
Parents* 	2015-2016	110
	2014-2015	105
Teachers 	101	
Students 	80	

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

- Most parents, teachers and students that responded to the survey reported that the school had many positive aspects. It had improved over the past year in communication, the quality of the school environment and leadership responsiveness to their concerns.
- Most parents reported that they felt their children were doing well in the key subjects. However, a minority felt Arabic teachers' skills were of concern. They also felt that their child was not being prepared for the next stage in learning and that they were not satisfied with the quality of education being delivered.
- Teachers were largely positive, saying the school was well led, bullying was well managed and that students' behavior was good.
- A large minority of students reported concerns with the qualifications and capacity of teachers, and that teachers did not help with homework. A similar proportion said they were not regularly listened to and the campus needed improvement.
- Most students reported satisfaction with the rate of progress they were making in English, math and science but not in Arabic and Islamic education.

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