



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational
needs and disabilities



Innovation

Inspection Report 2015-2016

GEMS Wellington International School

Curriculum: UK/IB

Overall rating: Outstanding

Read more about the school



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“The race for
excellence has
no finish line”



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

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School information

General information



Location	Al Sufouh
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2007
Website	www.wellingtoninternationalschool.com
Telephone	04-3484999
Address	PO Box: 37486, Dubai, UAE
Principal	Mrs Ruth Burke
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	14 to 17 March 2016

Students



Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	3-18
Grades or year groups	Foundation Stage 1 to Year 13
Number of students on roll	2,469
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	64
Number of students with SEND	128
Largest nationality group of students	British

Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	184
Largest nationality group of teachers	British
Number of teaching assistants	66
Teacher-student ratio	1:13
Number of guidance counsellors	2
Teacher turnover	22%

Curriculum



Educational permit / Licence	UK
Main curriculum	UK/IB
External tests and examinations	IBT, GL, ALIS, IGCSE, IB
Accreditation	British Schools Overseas
National Agenda benchmark tests	GL

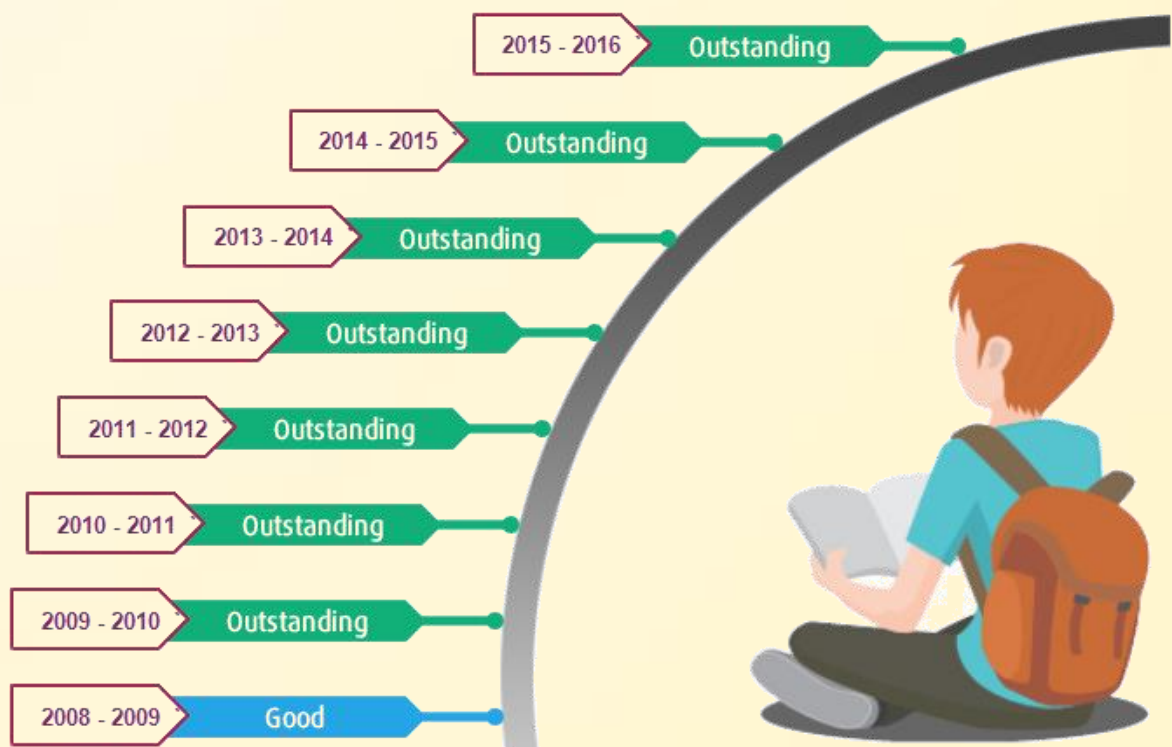


Summary for parents and the community

GEMS Wellington International School was inspected by DSIB from 14 to 17 of March 2016. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **outstanding**.

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, **GEMS Wellington International School** provided an **outstanding** education for its students.

- Students' attainment and progress across almost all subjects and phases were outstanding and their learning skills were extremely well developed.
- Students' attitudes and behaviour were exemplary. Students were highly appreciative and respectful of the values of Islam and the culture of the UAE, and had a remarkable sense of social responsibility.
- Teaching was engaging, motivating and challenging, and led to rapid progress in almost all subjects. Sophisticated, well-designed assessment systems were used to set work at an appropriately challenging level during lessons and to track students' progress over time.
- The rich curriculum stimulated students' imagination and provided a wealth of memorable experiences. Teachers skilfully adapted the curriculum to meet the needs of different students.
- Attention to health and safety was outstanding, and students' were extremely well cared for and supported. Provision for students with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) was also outstanding.
- The quality of leadership, self-evaluation, parental partnership and governance, and management, staffing, facilities and resources was outstanding.



What did the school do well?

- Students' outstanding progress and attainment in most subjects
- Students' enthusiasm for learning, their understanding of Islamic values and sense of social responsibility, underpinned by their exemplary behaviour
- The high quality teaching which inspired, motivated and challenged students
- The wealth of diverse experiences provided by the rich and varied curriculum
- The commitment to inclusion, including the outstanding provision for students with SEND
- The key role of the principal and senior staff in driving improvement, and the highly effective contribution of middle leaders.



What does the school need to do next?

- Sustain the drive to improve students' achievement in Arabic by:
 - clarifying curriculum standards and raising teachers' expectations in reading and writing
 - providing more opportunities for students to develop their writing skills by setting independent tasks that challenge all groups of students.



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

- Almost all students with SEND made good or better progress in English, mathematics and science and acceptable or better progress in Islamic education and Arabic.
- The school gave detailed reports to parents regularly. The Achievement Centre welcomed visits from parents and staff were delighted to answer any questions that parents could have about the progress of their child.
- Communication with parents was of a very high standard. The school responded promptly to almost all requests from parents. Achievement Centre staff and year heads in particular had established very good lines of communication with parents.
- Parents were involved at all stages of identification, and in the planning, development and review of their children's individual education plans. Parents had formed their own support group called 'Include Me' and this group was supported by the school.
- The very well qualified staff of the Achievement Centre often gave advice and support to parents. Parents could avail of time with counsellors. The school organised speakers and visits to support parents of students with SEND.

National Agenda Parameter



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

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

Main points:

- The school met the registration requirements of the National Agenda Parameter. Progress towards meeting the National Agenda targets was as expected.
- The school promoted awareness of the UAE National Agenda through weekly newsletters to parents and the community, and through coffee mornings with parents. In several subjects, students made presentations about the National Agenda to their classmates. In addition, awareness among teachers was raised by involving them in a curriculum review to incorporate the PISA and TIMSS descriptors into the curriculum.
- The heads of departments analysed TIMSS and PISA results and modified the curriculum accordingly. In English, for example, they identified reading as a weakness for boys so they created a boys reading club. In mathematics and science, they identified using graphs as a weakness so they started cross-curricular projects to help students improve this area more widely.
- In their planning, heads of departments used the TIMSS and PISA domains and established strong links to students' daily lives. Teachers developed students' critical thinking skills on a regular basis as inquiry was an integral part of their IB curriculum.
- Students had plenty of opportunities to investigate issues on their own. In Year 12, for example, students were able to use online information on the evolution of human beings to classify different human skulls. They had more opportunities to run independent research using information technology outside the classroom than 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:

- School leaders were committed to the national innovation agenda and had inspired and empowered a strategic thinking school community. A school research team had explored innovation complexities to innovate as a community with a focus on critical thinking and challenge. Through various professional development initiatives, staff received continuous training on embedding critical thinking and problem solving in teaching. The school's infrastructure was well resourced with a wide range of innovation opportunities through the use of digital technologies and innovative spaces. The curriculum contained strands of IB methodology and pedagogy to provide for innovation opportunities and the continuous growth and stimulation of students' innovation skills'.

Overall school performance

Outstanding

1. Students' achievement

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Learning skills	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

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

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

3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Assessment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

4. Curriculum

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

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Care and support	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

6. Leadership and management

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



Main inspection report

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

Judgements are made on a six-point scale



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

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

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

1. Students' achievement

Foundation Stage

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

- On entry to the school, a large minority of children had limited or no knowledge of English. Progress was excellent, especially in communication skills. Most children reached well above expected international levels in communication, reading and writing. They listened to the teacher with good understanding and engaged in purposeful talk with each other. In reading, they were developing increasing fluency and used their phonic knowledge to sound out new words. In their writing they knew to begin with a capital letter, leave spaces between words and end the sentence with a full stop. Most formed their letters correctly and copied words accurately. Most children used their knowledge of letter sounds to independently write simple sentences.
- In mathematics, children of all abilities made outstanding progress. From low attainment on entry, most attained levels well above those expected internationally for their age group. Almost all children could name order and count numbers within ten. They recorded numbers from memory. The use of new resources supported them well in their understanding of number bonds. A large majority could add two digits together within ten and a large minority could subtract within ten. Children recognised two and three dimensional shapes and created repeating patterns. They constructed models with solid shapes. They were increasing their understanding of halves and doubling numbers.
- In science, attainment was outstanding. In lessons, children quickly learned relevant scientific vocabulary and showed high levels of understanding. This accelerated their progress over time, because children could discuss the outcomes of investigative work in scientific terms. During fascinating practical experiments, they learned to question what happens to solids and liquids when heated and cooled and how this happens. They enjoyed melting chocolate and watching ice lollies melt. Through on-going activities, they used magnifiers to observe, discuss and record plant growth, thus increasing their understanding of nature. They learned about the various food and drinks obtained from milk. As in English and mathematics, different groups of children made similarly outstanding progress.

Primary

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students were attaining above national curriculum standards. In lessons and their recent work, they demonstrated knowledge, understanding and skill levels that were above curriculum expectations. By the end of the primary phase, students knew in detail the Pillars of Islam and Faith, and the life of the Prophets. For example, Year 6 students understood the concept of 'khushu' and how to avoid distractions in prayers. Students' recitation of the Holy Qur'an was developing. Students were making better than expected progress from their starting points. However, this was less evident in lower primary, in particular among Arab speaking students.
- Most students studying Arabic as their first language were confident speakers and they attempted to self-correct mistakes. Attainment was in line with national curriculum standards and progress was satisfactory in lessons and over time. Students attempted to use standard Arabic in conversations and when exchanging ideas and presenting arguments. They could read familiar text and answer questions related to the text. Writing was inconsistent across the phase, but students were drafting their writing and beginning to use prompts and assessment sheets to help scaffold their development. Progress was similar for different groups of students.
- Most students studying Arabic as an additional language were developing their confidence. This was demonstrated in their eagerness to communicate their thoughts and create their own sentences using learnt vocabulary in new contexts. In the lower years, they were developing their writing skills, with a majority of students attempting to write new words phonetically. In the absence of international or externally benchmarked tests, attainment and progress was broadly in line with general expectations for the different groups of students.
- Students made outstanding progress through Years 1 to 6 in English, particularly in reading. They read fluently with expression. They understood different genres when analysing and writing text. Older students wrote extensively for a range of purposes, using appropriate and challenging grammar. Year 6 students reflected on an audiovisual presentation about World War 2 and produced quality written work using highly descriptive and emotive language. Students' listening and speaking skills were particularly well developed. Most applied critical thinking skills well through discussion and peer review. Such progress resulted in outstanding attainment for most groups. Students with SEND made more variable progress.
- In mathematics, attainment and progress were excellent when judged against international standards. Most students attained confidence and fluency in number, shape and space, and measurement. Almost all the younger students had attained standards significantly above curriculum expectations in telling the time and early fraction work. The same was true of the older students in their understanding of perimeter, area, units of measure and capacity. In lessons, high quality study skills were demonstrated by almost all students, and were clearly responsible for understanding beyond the standards required of the curriculum. The different groups of students made progress from their individual starting points that exceeded what was anticipated.

- Students made excellent progress and demonstrated outstanding knowledge and understanding in primary science. They were regularly enabled to think and behave like scientists. In Year 2, for example, students were able to experimentally demonstrate that germs could be transferred by shaking hands. Assessment data supported such high levels of attainment and progress against international standards. In lessons, students' progress was consistently rapid because they were very well challenged and were given ample opportunities to learn actively and constructively. This led to outstanding progress over time for the different groups of students.

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

- In Islamic education, most students attained in line with national curriculum expectations. Students memorised chapters from the Holy Qur'an with good pronunciation, applying rules of recitation with few errors. They knew the life of the Prophet (PBUH) and detailed facts about different battles. They demonstrated an understanding of different prayers. For example, Year 8 students, conducted group research on different congregation prayers and Year 11 provided scientific evidence from the Holy Qur'an. In lessons and in their recent work, students made better progress than expected, in particular, in Holy Qur'an recitation. Progress was less secure among Arabic speaking students.
- Most students studying Arabic as a first language attained standards in line with national curriculum expectations. They were able to express their thoughts in well-structured essays, though a few students used colloquial words too readily. However, these students were able to use online and paper-based resources to identify alternative standard Arabic words. They presented their work well, but often read from their presentations rather than use free flow talking. Progress in lessons and over time was broadly in line with expectations for the different groups of students.
- In the absence of externally moderated tests, students studying Arabic as an additional language were making good progress and reaching the standards broadly expected. However, writing and reading skills were too variable across the phase for attainment to be good. Nevertheless, some students could write independently using a range of vocabulary and could link their writing to their own experiences, building on previous knowledge of tenses and sentence structure. Students' listening skills were the strongest and the basis of the good progress made by the different groups of students.
- In English, almost all students exceeded the attainment expected by international standards. Students used higher order thinking skills to critically evaluate a range of texts. Those who had studied *Macbeth* spoke knowledgeably about how Shakespeare had created an atmosphere of menace in the opening scene with his portrayal of the three witches. Others spoke at length about the treatment of minorities in America as seen through the book '*Of Mice and Men*'. Their writing showed a very good grasp of grammar, which they used accurately and precisely. Excellent progress was illustrated by different groups in the ways they could integrate pieces of extended writing in a variety of genres.

- In mathematics, almost all students attained standards that exceeded internationally expected levels in geometry, trigonometry and number, and most did so also in algebra. Independent problem-solving skills were highly developed amongst most of the younger students, leading to understanding at and above the expectations of the curriculum. Almost all the advanced older students made considerable progress, for example in learning early calculus. Outstanding progress was shown by almost all groups of students, such as those with SEND and by the less able students in the upper age range.
- In science, students demonstrated outstanding attainment and made excellent progress in the science subjects when compared with international standards. In lessons, they were fully in charge of their learning. Different groups of students acquired information and developed skills at their own pace. Students regularly used experimentation to understand new scientific concepts. In Year 8, for example, students were able to determine the reactivity series of metals by measuring the reactions of them with water. The highly challenging learning objectives and the excellent resources available to students optimized the progress of different groups.

Post-16

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

- In Islamic education, most students attained in line with curriculum expectations. Progress was good as students developed knowledge, understanding and skills in most concepts. Most students could read long chapters from the Holy Qur'an, but their memorisation was less secure. Year 12 students could identify the conditions of the Hadeeth and could explain the relationship between causes and consequences in different settings. In lessons and in their recent work over time, the majority of students made better progress than expected, in particular in Sunnah and understanding of the Hadeeth.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students were confident users of standard Arabic with a minority making reference to colloquial terms. Attainment was broadly in line with national curriculum expectations. Students engaged well in discussions about a given text and were able to critique an author's use of phrases providing well-reasoned arguments for alternatives. Progress made in lessons and over time by different groups of students was acceptable.
- Almost all students demonstrated that they could communicate very well in English and wrote fluently and persuasively about literary texts. Attainment and progress were well above international standards. Students read widely and demonstrated their grasp of the key messages and emotions being conveyed by the author. For example, in *The Great Gatsby* they re-enacted the 'party scene' as the guests waited for the arrival of Gatsby. Students understood the key parts of the language and how each has a purpose. They explored and demonstrated a good understanding of variations in language, form and contexts for meaning.

- In mathematics, a large majority of students attained above international expectations in differential calculus, integral calculus and statistics. In lessons, inconsistent algebraic skills and fluency with basic techniques held back the attainment and progress of a minority. A similar issue with number work in mathematical studies hindered the attainment of a minority of these students. Attainment over recent year has been above IB standards for a large majority. Progress of a large majority, from their previous starting points, exceeded external IB standards. Most students were making confident progress in communication, organisation and problem solving.
- Students' attainment and progress in the sciences were outstanding. Students' internal and external assessment data supported high levels of attainment and progress that were maintained over the previous few years. In lessons, students took complete control of their learning to demonstrate excellent knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts. In Year 12, for example, students were able to use the theory of evolution to identify pictures of different human skulls and used them to build a historical time line. Students made excellent progress in lessons because different groups of students were strongly challenged by differentiated learning objectives, and made full use of the rich resources available to them.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Learning skills	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Across the school students enjoyed learning. Children in the Foundation Stage enjoyed coming to school and quickly chose an interesting task to work at. Throughout the school students displayed a clear sense of urgency and eagerness to learn in the classrooms. As they progressed through the upper stages, students were keen to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Students interacted and collaborated very effectively to achieve key goals. They felt confident enough to explain their understanding to their teammates and to their teachers. In science, for example, students challenged each other's thinking supportively and robustly. In English and mathematics lessons, students interacted and collaborated well and enjoyed their learning.
- Students consistently made meaningful connections between their learning and the real world. In Islamic education, students discussed the importance of Zakat in the UAE and the importance of clothing in respecting local culture. In English, students reflected on the treatment of minority groups in the USA through their studies of the class text. These experiences, coupled with realistic assembly presentations, raised levels of empathy and understanding.
- In many classes students demonstrated their independent learning skills through research and analysis of information. In Islamic education students were working on higher order thinking questions using a 'pyramid' of questions. Critical thinking and investigative learning were integral parts of the science curriculum. Some students in English classes used a web-based application to read QR codes to bring texts to life.

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

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

- Across all four phases, students demonstrated an exemplary attitude towards taking ownership of their learning. Almost all appreciated feedback as a means to improve their work and their learning. Students demonstrated responsibility for their own progress and understood that taking risks was necessary for growth.
- Behavioural standards were exceptionally high in all phases of the school. Clear and consistent expectations in the Foundation Stage, reinforced through primary phase, led to a body of self-disciplined students where dispute and discord were extremely rare.
- A trusting and respectful relationship existed between the students and adults. Students were inclusive, tolerant and thoughtful for each other, offering support and encouragement when needed. Students were grateful for, and appreciative of, their teachers and felt supported and valued in return.
- Starting in Foundation Stage, good habits with hygiene and healthy eating were evident throughout all phases. Health and fitness were seen by the majority to be important, as shown by the participation in the extensive range of sports activities available. The value of maintaining balance and emotional well-being was seen as something to strive for in and beyond school.
- Almost all students were punctual at the start of the day. Rarely were students late for class without a reason. Overall attendance was good.

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

- Students had a strong understanding and appreciation of the values of Islam. Across all the phases, students showed an excellent awareness of how these important values influenced the local community. For example, Year 8 students were eager to explain the 5 Pillars of Islam, different Islamic festivals and the role of mosques for the Muslim community.
- Students highly appreciated living in Dubai. They contributed to rich displays of the Emirati culture and local tradition. Children in the Foundation Stage were very respectful when the National Anthem was sung, and when they performed a song about the seven Emirates during assembly. Year 7 students understood the significance of early pearl diving and farming that helped shape the beginnings of modern Dubai.
- Students were very proud of their own culture and demonstrated secure understanding of different cultures around the school. They had access to a culture-rich curriculum that celebrated different aspects of Dubai and life in the UAE. In the Foundation Stage, children enjoyed taking part in story telling by parents from different nationalities and languages. In other phases, students initiated and celebrated world cultures during international day.

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

- Opportunities for developing social responsibility and innovation skills were successfully integrated throughout the daily experience of students. Students in all phases took advantage of, and created, opportunities to imaginatively be involved in their immediate community and throughout Dubai.
- Students' work ethic was exemplary. Students were proud of their entrepreneurship, such as the whole school musical productions and fundraising projects. They participated in global challenges and competitions, creating their own mini-businesses. They initiated projects such as the secondary LEGO robotics and the GEMS Junior LEGO Engineering Challenge.
- Students showed an insightful understanding of environmental sustainability. They initiated exemplary eco and environment initiatives that raised and challenged students' awareness of environmental sustainability.

3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Teachers had excellent subject knowledge coupled with a very clear understanding of how students learn. They planned imaginative lessons which stimulated learning. In the early phases they made learning exciting, offering appropriate praise and authentically valuing children's efforts. In Arabic lessons, whilst teachers had secure subject knowledge, they did not consistently understand or appreciate how language is acquired.
- In the early years, the resources provided ensured a hands-on approach, so learning was meaningful and often linked to real life experiences. Throughout the school, teachers were skilled in choosing resources which stimulated and motivated the students. Almost all teachers planned lessons that engaged students, including those with SEND and involved them in meaningful ways.
- High quality interactions resulted from strong and respectful relationships between students and staff. Questioning in mathematics and science was challenging and promoted critical thinking. In English classes, questioning encouraged students to engage in discussions and enabled them to talk together to share their thinking. Teachers in Islamic education frequently did not allow students sufficient time to reflect on questions prior to answering.
- Teachers used varied strategies that were highly effective in engaging students and meeting their needs. In the early years, teachers planned appropriate activities and supported different groups of children at a level matched to their ability, often using specially produced resources. In Islamic education and Arabic the less able children tended to struggle, as too many tasks were knowledge based and repetitive.

- Most students showed a willingness to take responsibility for their learning and became capable, independent learners. Teachers successfully promoted students' critical thinking and problem solving skills. An increasing number of lessons in secondary and post 16 English lessons included examples of critical thinking and problem solving. In a science lesson, the teacher innovatively enabled students to demonstrate how germs spread by handshaking using coloured glitter.
- In Arabic as a first language, teachers in the different phases planned activities collectively that focused on consolidating subject knowledge, by using a range of resources including ICT to make activities relevant and interesting. In the better lessons teachers were starting to engage students by linking their learning to real life contexts and encourage them to use their independent learning skills.
- In Arabic as an additional language, teachers demonstrated secure subject knowledge, and the more skilled teachers demonstrated an understanding of how language is effectively learnt. The more able children made better progress, mainly due to the higher level of challenge they received in the lessons. Some teachers questioned students about their choices, which led to interesting interactions between students and teachers.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Assessment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Extensive baseline data and subsequent data from periodic benchmarking was captured and used to track students' progress. All teachers and staff teams had up-to-date data available to them. They reviewed and analysed data regularly to look for trends and changes.
- External examination data from a full and growing range of diagnostic, predictive and comparative tools were used across the phases. Students' attainment as measured by these tools, was continuously analysed, and where necessary, resulted in adjustments to the curriculum.
- A wide range of assessment programmes, including technology-based systems were regularly used to monitor students' progress. In the Foundation Stage, teachers used a bespoke program which enabled them to make notes and take photographs of significant events in children's learning and to create a detailed electronic record of each individual child's progress.
- Assessment data was used to modify the curriculum and align it with UAE National Agenda requirements. In the latter phases data were analysed by most teachers and used to set individual targets. Regular analysis of students' records was used to check progress and to trigger interventions when necessary.
- Teachers knew their students' abilities, strengths and weaknesses extremely well. They routinely provided useful feedback to students during lessons and through their marking. Self-assessment was commonly observed and students frequently evaluated the work of their classmates. New assessment strategies in Arabic had been introduced, but teachers were not fully confident using them.

4. Curriculum

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

- The inspiring curriculum was continually progressing to include a wealth of innovative ideas. It was founded on the National Curriculum for England, the IB and the UAE Vision 2021. The extensive range of inspiring courses were extremely relevant and well personalised to students' academic and personal needs. Curriculum enhancement programmes offered students a good range of worthwhile opportunities to practise and review new concepts.
- The comprehensive planning structure and regular meetings between staff ensured continuous progression through the phases. The detailed plan was fully aligned to next steps in learning. Consequently, students were very well prepared, resulting in seamless progression between phases. For example, students in Year 6 began the Year 7 curriculum after their Year 6 tests in May.
- Children in the Foundation Stage had extensive choices as they learned through a myriad of activities. Older students chose from a range of subjects to address their future academic or career needs. School clubs meant students participated in a range of activities. The school offered the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme for older students. Arabic and Islamic education were available in the Foundation Stage and Arabic in post-16.
- The thematic approach in the primary phase made learning a captivating experience. The cross-curricular approach to the creative arts offered extensive enhancements to students' creative and personal development. Mathematics and science topics were well linked. The school offered additional time for physical education. Themed weeks and educational visits both locally and worldwide widened students' experiences.
- Curriculum review was a continuous process, triggered by new data becoming available such as the TIMSS report that instigated a review of shape and space in mathematics. The school shared best curriculum practice through outreach networks and took part in the recent 'What Works' conferences. In response to students' requests, additional courses including extra sciences, astronomy and human health biology were available.
- UAE Social studies was integrated in other subjects in the curriculum. The outcomes were extracted from the MOE standards and implemented in various areas in the curriculum. In the Foundation Stage, UAE social studies was fully integrated in most subjects including English, mathematics, science and Arabic. In the secondary, students studied UAE social studies as part of the humanities.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum adaptation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Modifications of the curriculum to meet the needs of all students were of a very high standard. These modifications were evident in lesson planning, and in the wide range of interventions and personalised learning plans. Modifications took place often after review of examination results, as in post-16 English, to ensure that the curriculum fully matched the needs of students.
- The school had continued to expand the range of subjects on offer, such as theatre studies and Arabic. A very wide range of extracurricular activities was also made available to students. Opportunities for enterprise and innovation were promoted across all curricular areas through the DECCA and STEAM challenges and resulted in such spectacular outcomes as the development of the Bath Bomb and the wind turbine.
- Links with Emirati culture and the UAE society were embedded throughout all aspects of the school's curriculum. Projects celebrated all aspects of life in the UAE. The curriculum was extended by the introduction of Arabic in the Foundation Stage which exposed the children to the language and culture of the UAE.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The child protection and safeguarding policy was detailed and clearly identified responsibilities. The school made arrangements to ensure that all parents, students, and staff were aware of its regulations and procedures. The school had been highly effective in protecting and safeguarding students from all types of harm including psychological, physical and verbal abuse, and cyber bullying.
- Highly effective procedures ensured that students were supervised and safe at all times on campus and on busses. The school ran a smooth and well-monitored school transport operation at the beginning and at the end of the school day. All legal and regulatory safety requirements were met, including emergency evacuation drills.
- Building and resources were kept in fully hygienic and functional condition. Comprehensive records were kept on scheduled and unscheduled maintenance of buildings and facilities. The medical staff in the two clinics kept detailed health-related records on all students.
- The premises, facilities, and resources were highly suited to the educational needs of all students, including those with SEND and children in the Foundation Stage. They helped to ensure that students were highly motivated and were often engaged in a wide range of challenging and interesting activities.

- Healthy living was systematically built into the life of the school. The medical staff promoted several health education programmes for teachers and students. Excellent advice on healthy living had improved the variety of healthy food items available in the canteen. The health and safety committee met regularly to update safety regulations in light of emerging safety-related issues and informed staff accordingly.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Care and support	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Teacher-student relationships were outstanding and they were built on mutual respect and understanding. Excellent procedures gave students a voice in the development of behavioural plans and in their implementation. Suggestions from students, such as those regarding improvements to play areas, were implemented. Behaviour 'ladders', designed by students with the help of staff, were core elements in the implementation of the behaviour policy.
- The promotion and management of attendance and punctuality were of a very high standard. Students and parents were made aware at induction and during the year of their obligations in this matter. An electronic attendance system had been established. Swift contact was made with parents to ascertain the reasons for absences. Leave from school had to be authorised and good attendance was celebrated regularly.
- The school used a very wide range of tests and procedures to identify students with SEND. These tests were backed up by the use of progress checks and ongoing analysis of data. Outside agencies were used where necessary. The identification of students who were gifted and talented was well established and the procedures were consistently reviewed and refined to ensure their accuracy.
- Support for students with SEND was exemplary. Great care was taken to ensure that all students identified received appropriate support to enable them to progress at the best level they could. All teachers were conscious of the strategies that should be used in each individual instance. Support for the gifted and talented students was good. The school had explored ways to improve this support.
- At the heart of the school was the provision of care and support to meet the needs of all of the students. The provision of counsellors, career guidance personnel and the support of staff from the school's Achievement Centre, epitomised this ethos of support. 'Student watch' meetings ensured that students having potential problems were cared for at an early stage. Career guidance was of a very high quality.

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

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

Outstanding

- The leadership of the school had further enhanced the provision for those students who had SEND. The implementation of a detailed policy, together with the endeavours of a very well-qualified and dedicated staff, ensured that the school provided excellent support for all students with SEND and enabled them to engage fully in the life of the school.
- The school used a very wide range of assessment strategies and tests, in addition to referrals by teachers and parents, to ensure that there was very early identification of students with SEND. The school used a three-phase identification process. The school made very good use of in-house expertise to develop appropriate programmes for these students and to monitor their progress.
- Communication with parents was of a very high standard. In addition to the regular parent-teacher meetings, parents could contact the school through electronic means or in person at any time. Parents were involved at all stages of identification and in the planning, development and review of the students' individual education plans. Parents had formed their own support group called 'Include Me'. The school supported this group and provided training and information sessions.
- A very wide range of curriculum modifications met the needs of students with SEND. The school had constructed learning profiles for all students with SEND. For students with greater needs, very detailed individual education plans were developed. These plans set out clearly the learning targets of the students both academically and also for their social, emotional and behavioural development.
- Rigorous procedures ensured that progress was accurately assessed for students with SEND. The school tracked carefully the progress of these students over time from their starting points. Almost all students with SEND made good or better progress in English, mathematics and science and acceptable or better progress in Islamic education and Arabic.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Outstanding

- The principal provided excellent leadership. She was supported very effectively by a team of senior leaders that shared a relentless determination to continually improve, underpinned by considerable professional expertise. Local and national priorities were at the forefront of leaders' ambitions. A persistent commitment to inclusion permeated the school.
- The school was a thriving learning community where reflection and creativity were successfully encouraged. Leaders at all levels fruitfully promoted best practice. Primary year group leaders, for example, were exemplary role models in their own teaching. All staff were empowered to explore the most effective ways to promote students' academic progress and personal development.
- Outstanding relationships underpinned the excellent team spirit across the school. There was a strong sense of collective responsibility. This was evident, for example, in the contributions made during meetings of subject and year group teams. Staff knew they were valued and morale was high.


- Although the school was very effective, there was no sense of complacency. Leaders were continuously looking for ways to build on successes and drive improvements. No stone was left unturned as leaders gained a sharp awareness of what could be further improved. They successfully encouraged colleagues to be innovative in their thinking.
- School leaders had been successful in maintaining the school's overall effectiveness. They had tackled relative weaknesses in the provision of Arabic with energy and enthusiasm. As a result, students' progress had improved. It was acknowledged that a legacy of slow progress meant that gaps in students' skills would take time to put right. Parents held the school in high regard.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Outstanding

- Self-review was an integral part of the culture and formed the basis of the school's success. Leaders gained an excellent understanding of strengths and areas for improvement. They drew on information from a wide range of sources, including regular and purposeful meetings of subject and year teams. These provided very useful fora for all staff to express their views and to contribute to whole-school self-evaluation.
- The quality of teaching was monitored carefully, taking into account the impact teaching strategies had on students' learning and progress. This provided a clear picture of what worked best and where changes were needed. The most effective practice was shared and, where appropriate, further training was arranged. Highly effective analysis of assessment data provided further insights into the school's strengths and areas for development.
- Development planning took account of the range of information gained from self-evaluation. As a result, school leaders devised plans that were highly relevant. Planning took account of both the school's and the UAE's national priorities. Innovative approaches were used. For example Year 8 students worked cooperatively to explore how classrooms could be set out and equipped to promote independent learning. Their ideas were seriously considered when planning improvements.
- Several aspects of the school's performance had improved, in addition to making good headway in addressing the recommendations of the previous report.




Partnerships with parents and the community	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The commitment to parents as partners was evident across a wide range of areas. Three distinct parent groups provided strategic ideas, raised funds and contributed to school review. Members of the Parent Council joined staff in reviewing areas such as home learning, and participated in the recruitment of senior leaders. There were excellent lines of communication between home and school. Assemblies, ceremonies, coffee morning and parent evenings kept parents well informed. Teachers and parents routinely exchanged email messages supplementing weekly newsletters. A recently launched 'learning platform', accessed through the internet, provided parents and students with access to a wealth of information. A comprehensive system for reporting to parents included half termly assessment and comprehensive annual reports, together with termly consultation meetings. Parents of children with SEND helped devise individualised learning plans and were closely involved in reviewing progress towards their child's targets. Close liaison with other schools were mutually beneficial and had led to improved provision, for example in Arabic. Continuing partnerships with groups such as the Dubai Silicon Oasis Authority, provided enrichment opportunities, particularly in enhancing students' skills of application in modern technology. Extensive participation in world-wide competitions, foreign visits, work placements and visiting speakers contributed to students' all-round development. 	

Governance	Outstanding 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors regularly sought the views of stakeholders through parent, staff and student surveys. The Parent Council operated with school leadership at every level in all meetings. Consequently this involvement helped inform decision making to further improve all aspects of the school. The student parliament and the 'Have your Say' pupil voice systems also had a positive impact on school development. The governing board included members with extensive educational experience. They asked insightful questions and held leaders to account. Governors closely scrutinised students' performance. They were quick to spot any anomalies and provided well-informed advice and practical ideas. They were well aware of their role in strategic planning, at the same time allowing the leadership team autonomy and encouraging an innovative approach to school improvement. Governors were very successful in ensuring the school met its commitment to parents. They used their wide-ranging expertise to good effect in influencing further development. Governors ensured that the school had an effective and experienced teaching staff. There was a rigorous staff screening, selection and interviewing process. There had been a drive to employ, train and remunerate more well-qualified and experienced Arabic and Islamic teachers. 	

Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All aspects of the day-to-day running of the school were highly efficient. Clear systems, well considered procedures and committed staff ensured that the school operated exceptionally smoothly. Administrators, support staff and security personnel made an important contribution to the sense of community. The parent relations executive also played a pivotal role in the school's daily life. • The teaching staff were highly qualified and energetic. They were fully committed to the school's core values and made every effort to sustain them. Staff were deployed very effectively, as evident in the outstanding outcomes in relation to students' academic achievement and personal development. Staff benefitted from bespoke programmes of additional training that was well-matched to their needs and the school's priorities. • The premises greatly enriched the learning experiences of students. Stimulating and well equipped 'learning zones' helped to ensure that pupils were actively engaged in learning and had ample space for relaxation and recreation. • The central space in each primary year group cluster had an abundance of stimulating interactive resources. The imaginative entrance to the science department further exemplified the importance the school paid to creating a stimulating and motivating learning environment. • An extremely wide range of high quality resources supported learning and teaching. They were continuously reviewed and updated. Requests for additional materials from departments were carefully considered and were typically approved. The use of technology was an intrinsic element of much learning, facilitated by school equipment and through the 'bring your own device' scheme. Resources for art, sport and the performing arts were first rate. 	

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	139
	2014-2015	175
Teachers 	55	
Students 	299	

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

- The views of parents who responded to the survey were very positive overall. Most parents were happy with all aspects of the school.
- Almost all who responded to the survey felt their children were well cared for and kept safe.
- Almost all teachers who responded to the survey were positive about most aspects of the school's work. A minority disagreed that they were involved in the school's self-evaluation and felt they did not receive regular feedback on their work.
- The majority of students made positive responses to the survey questions.

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