



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational  
needs and disabilities



Innovation

## Inspection Report 2015-2016

Deira International School

Curriculum: UK/IB

Overall rating: Very good

Read more about the school



www.khda.gov.ae

‘Great achievements  
remind us to be  
humble, but we  
should always be  
determined to do  
more’



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 .....	19
5. The protection, care, guidance and support of students .....	20
Provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) .....	21
6. Leadership and management.....	22
The views of the parents, teachers and students .....	25

## School information

### General information



Location	Festival City
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2005
Website	www.disdubai.ae
Telephone	04-232-5552
Address	PO Box 79043
Principal	Jeff Smith
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	14 to 17 March

### 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	1,596
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	206
Number of students with SEND	73
Largest nationality group of students	Arab

### Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	153
Largest nationality group of teachers	UK
Number of teaching assistants	40
Teacher-student ratio	1:12
Number of guidance counsellors	3
Teacher turnover	16%

### Curriculum



Educational permit / Licence	UK
Main curriculum	UK/IB / IGCSE
External tests and examinations	IGCSE, IB
Accreditation	BSO
National Agenda benchmark tests	GL Assessments

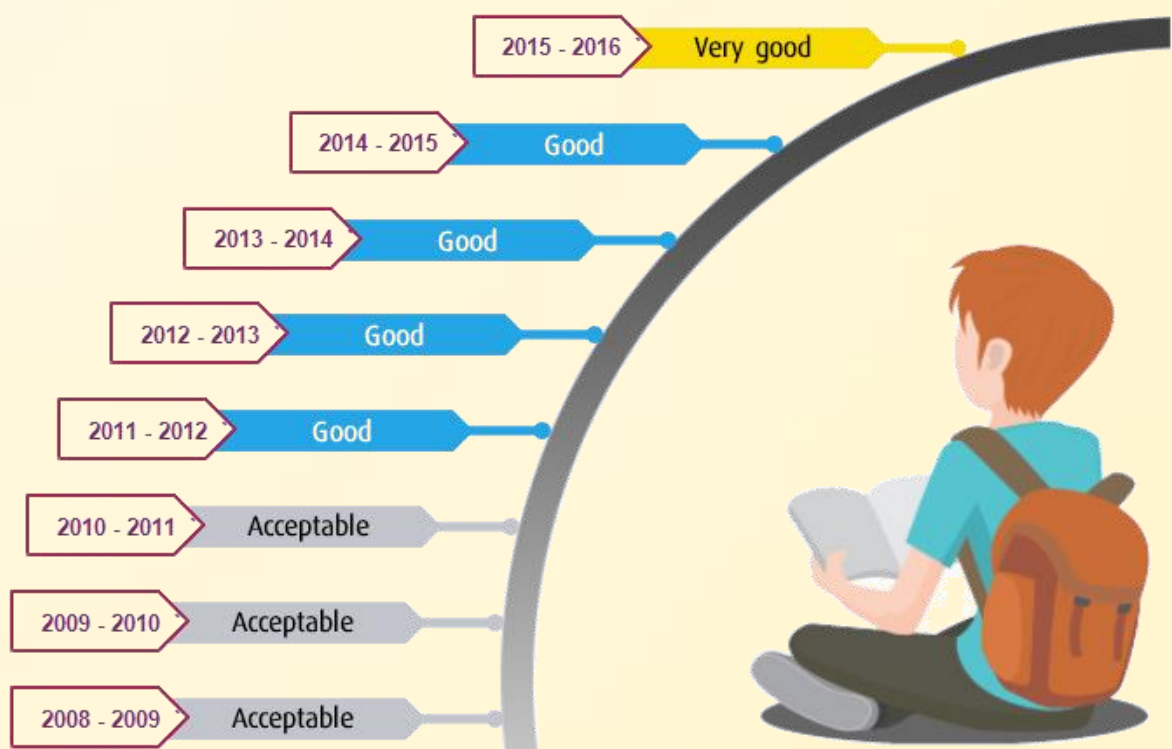


## Summary for parents and the community

**Deira International School** was inspected by DSIB from 14 to 17 March. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **very good**.

In order to judge the overall quality of education provided by the school, inspectors considered six key standards of performance. Inspectors looked at children's attainment and progress in key subjects, their learning skills and their personal and social development. They judged how effective teaching and the assessment of learning were across the school. Inspectors considered how well the school's curriculum, including activities inside and outside classrooms, met the educational needs of all children. They judged how well the school protected and supported children. In addition inspectors judged the effectiveness of leadership and governance, including management, staffing, facilities and resources.

The inspection judgements were drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observing children learning in lessons, looking at their work, talking with children, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and reviewing the parents', teachers' and senior students' surveys.







### How well did the school perform overall?

Overall, **Deira International School** provided a **very good** quality of education for its students.

- Students' achievements were very good in most subjects and phases. Older students learning Arabic as a first language made slower progress, resulting in lower levels of attainment. This was also the case in Islamic education in the post-16 classes. In most phases and subjects, students were enthusiastic learners with the skills needed to carry out independent research and think deeply about their learning.
- Students' behaviour was exemplary. They demonstrated great respect for each other and their teachers. Their understanding of Islam, local and world cultures was very well developed. Through opportunities such as the model united nations, students showed excellent social and economic awareness.
- In most subjects and phases a wide range of creative teaching strategies were used to excellent effect. These motivated students and developed in them a love of learning. This was not consistently happening in all Arabic and Islamic education lessons. Through teachers marking and feedback, peer and self-assessment, students had clear understanding of how to improve their work.
- The curriculum provided an exciting and innovative range of learning opportunities in most subjects. This was particularly so in the Foundation Stage. The curriculum was modified to meet the needs of different learners including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and the gifted and talented. The curriculum modifications were not applied consistently in all subjects.
- The school provided outstanding care and support for all students. Individual needs were quickly identified and met both through specialist intervention and in regular lessons. Older students were supported in making sensible choices for their future education and career paths.
- The governing board, director and senior leaders formed a cohesive team with a shared vision for school improvement. The staff, parents and students were provided with opportunities to express their views and contribute to the school's journey towards an outstanding quality of education.



### What did the school do well?

- The outstanding teaching in the Foundation Stage that resulted in outstanding progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Students' outstanding personal and social development as global citizens and future leaders.
- The inclusive ethos of the school that ensured outstanding care and support for all students.
- Effective partnerships with parents contributed to the improvement in students' academic and personal development.
- The bold vision and clear direction set by the governing board, in partnership with the director and senior leaders, which had led to sustained improvement in the school's overall effectiveness.



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

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise students' attainment in Arabic as a first language, in the secondary and post-16 phases, by planning and delivering lessons that continually engage, motivate and challenge students.
- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching by:
  - providing training to enhance the effectiveness of teaching assistants
  - ensuring that learning technologies are used consistently well in the primary years
  - raising teachers' expectations of what students can achieve in Islamic education, particularly in the post- 16 years.
- Improve transition from the Foundation Stage to Year 1 so that children make a seamless transfer into their next stage of education.



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

- Students with SEND made very good progress. This was because lessons were exceptionally well planned and delivered to meet the needs of all students in the class. Progress was accelerated for students who needed small group or individual work, because it was specifically personalised and the teaching was very good.
- Parents received full and comprehensive reports on learning and progress for their children. Parents of students with SEND had close communication with the school, which meant that they always felt well informed of successes and areas that needed further attention. Support at home given by parents was made easier because information from the school was up to date.
- The school communicated with parents very well, inspiring high levels of confidence that any concerns would be dealt with quickly and efficiently. Technology was used efficiently to communicate with parents, for example when accessing information about lessons and learning.
- Parents contributed to setting their child's learning targets and programmes when necessary, and were mostly very satisfied with the level of involvement they had with their children's learning. Parents routinely sought advice from the teachers or SEND staff.
- Almost all parents of students with SEND had access to a range of general guidance and support within the school. Detailed diagnostic information and advice was resourced elsewhere if needed. Parents of students with very complex needs valued the training opportunities provided by the school.

### National Agenda Parameter



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

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

#### Main points:

- The school did not fully meet the registration requirements of the National Agenda Parameter. No attainment data from the National Agenda Parameter was available to make a judgement on the progress towards meeting the National Agenda targets.
- Governors, owners and the principal promoted awareness of the National Agenda and the National Agenda targets among stakeholders. Governors were aware of TIMSS and PISA tests and the targets set by the KHDA. They saw great value in participating in international benchmarking tests. Parents had been informed of the National Agenda targets and were supportive of the school's action in participating in such testing.
- Teachers were conversant with TIMSS and PISA tests and well aware of the implications for the curriculum and teaching styles. Students, in particular, were most knowledgeable about the rationale for the UAE National Agenda and understood the implications of international benchmark testing. They had led promotional campaigns within the school campus and online.
- The curriculum was generally aligned to TIMSS and PISA requirements. Planning for the relevant skills and knowledge was systematic. Teachers had received professional development in questioning skills and 'inquiry' pedagogy. Lessons were being planned to develop students' critical thinking and investigative skills. These were enhanced through research activities, project based learning and field trips.
- The development of critical thinking, investigative and problem solving skills were regular features of lessons. Teachers had attended professional development sessions to deepen their awareness of how to teach higher order thinking skills.
- Students used information technology (IT) and other resources effectively to develop their research skills. Students used IT devices and educational software confidently from an early age both to develop skills of research and to enhance self-assessment. Interactive use of the school's learning platforms and access to the world-wide web provided pathways to critical thinking. Older students designed experiments, which demanded critical thinking and analysis.

## 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 integrated elements of it with the school's strategic plan. They had implemented a number of innovative approaches into their administrative practices and the curriculum. Teachers received professional development on the effective use of technology to enhance students' critical thinking skills. The school was very well resourced to support learning through inquiry. The curriculum provided a number of innovative opportunities for students to develop their investigative and presentation skills.



Overall school performance

Very good ↑

1. Students' achievement

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Learning skills</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Very good ↑	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	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑
Assessment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding ↑	Outstanding

## 4. Curriculum

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

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

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

## 6. Leadership and management

	All phases
The effectiveness of leadership	Very good ↑
School self-evaluation and improvement planning	Very good ↑
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	Good	Outstanding
Mathematics	Very good ↑	Outstanding
Science	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The attainment by the majority of children in English was above the curriculum standards for Foundation Stage (FS). Children entered with little or no English language skills and their progress was outstanding. In FS 1 children could listen to and follow instructions. They were developing confidence when speaking with adults and peers. By FS 2 the children had developed extensive oral vocabularies. They had good quality phonic skills. Many children could read short passages, with a few higher achieving children reading short stories. The children could write simple sentences, often linked to their story topics. Most children made outstanding progress from their starting points in lessons and over time.
- In mathematics, most children were making better than expected progress against the expected learning outcomes. Their attainment over time had improved and a large majority were working at levels above the curriculum standards. By FS 2 most children could identify and sequence numbers to 20 and beyond. They were developing deep understanding of mathematical concepts such as doubling, halving, addition and subtraction. They were secure in their understanding of comparative languages. They could sort according to colour and size and recognise the properties of shapes. They could apply their mathematical skills in problem solving situations and in real life contexts. Their progress was reinforced through an extensive range of active learning.
- All groups of children made outstanding progress in science. As a result, most attained above the curriculum standards. They had developed clear knowledge and deep understanding of concepts such as the life cycles of a butterfly or plant. Their inquiry, observational and investigative skills were exceptionally well developed. Through their understanding of the world, the children had developed high quality skills in using digital learning technologies.

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students attained levels that were above the national curriculum expectations. Most students recited Surah Al-Houmazah in Year 2 using the Tajweed rules. The majority of students knew and understood the correct manners to use when reading the Qur'an. Students in Year 4 could explain the Hijri months and their meanings. Year 6 students could explain the importance of choosing a good friend. The majority of students made good progress in lessons and over time from their starting points. There was no significant differences between the progress of boys and girls.
- The attainment reached by the majority of students in Arabic as a first language was above the national curriculum expectations. Students showed confidence and fluency when expressing their ideas and opinions. There was good use of standard Arabic. Most students had well developed skills in reading for comprehension. Their creative and extended writing was also well developed. The majority of students made good progress in their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in relation to their starting points and against learning objectives in lessons.
- Learning Arabic as an additional language, in the absence of external measures, the majority of students attained above the general curriculum expectations. In lessons, most of the students' listening skills were clear. A majority of students' speaking skills were developed through repeating familiar sentences. They read short sentences aloud with few errors. Year 6 students were to write paragraphs using connective words. The school's information about students' attainment over time was inconsistent. A majority of students made good progress in relation to their starting points. The school's data did not show any differences between boys' and girls' progress.
- The attainment by the large majority of English students was above both the national and international standards. In Year 1 students could blend and read words and write legibly with accurate spelling. Students continued to develop their literacy skills throughout the primary school. They listened carefully in lessons and became increasingly confident and articulate speakers. In Year 6 students debated with one another on the traits of characters in novels. Most students read a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction with enjoyment and understanding. Students made very good progress in writing. They developed wide vocabularies and wrote fluent, creative descriptions, for example about Shakespeare's life. Students with SEND made very good progress over time.
- The school's internal mathematics tests indicated that a majority were attaining above the curriculum standards. In lessons, the large majority of students made better than expected progress in relation to appropriate learning objectives aligned with the new UK curriculum. There was little difference in progress rates between girls and boys. By Year 6, students could apply basic mathematical knowledge in straightforward situations. They could demonstrate understanding of whole numbers and some fractions. Students could interpret bar graphs, pictographs, and tables to solve simple problems.









- In science, recent internal tests indicated that most students had attained at or above the curriculum standards. However, only a small percentage had attained higher levels. This indicated acceptable attainment and progress overall but did not reflect the students' general levels of achievement. Students' attainment and progress were better than this in all the lessons observed during the inspection, with a large majority attaining above the curriculum standards. Year 1 students read simple scientific instruments successfully, prior to experiencing what 'cold' really meant at the Dubai ski centre. Year 3 students predicted and successfully discovered which rocks provided suitable roofing for a local builder. They understood the concept of a fair test. In Year 6, students understood and imaginatively modelled the functions of blood and the operation of the circulatory system.

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of the students attained above the national curriculum expectations. A majority of students in Year 9 knew and understood the Seerah of Khalid Ibn Ul Waleed, while in Year 10 the majority of students could distinguish between the Battles of Uhud and Hunayn. The majority of students made good progress in relation to their starting points. A majority could support their views using Hadith and the Holy Qur'an. School assessment information indicated that there was no significant difference between the progress of boys and girls.
- The attainment by most students in Arabic as a first language was in line with the national curriculum expectations. Students' listening, speaking and reading skills were secure. Their abilities to do creative and extended writing were less developed. When speaking, most students could express their ideas and opinions; however, they had more limited use of standard Arabic. Students lacked confidence when expressing their ideas and opinions. Their skills when reading for comprehension were in line with expectations. Most students were making acceptable progress in the development of listening, speaking and reading skills, however their progress in developing writing skills was slower. A significant minority of students were unable to demonstrate basic competency in the language.
- When learning Arabic as an additional language, in the absence of external benchmarks, the majority of students attained generally above the curriculum expectations. They had good listening and speaking skills and could use a range of familiar and a few unfamiliar words. Their writing skills were developing from copying to free writing. Their debating skills were developing well. The majority of students made good progress in lessons and over time from their starting points.
- The large majority of students attained above both national and international standards in English. Older students achieved very well on external examinations. Most students could write fluently for different purposes. They had excellent reading skills when studying texts such as *Much ado about nothing*. Many students used laptop computers or tablets to carry out research independently. They were confident, articulate speakers. For example, Year 7 students eagerly discussed the characters and their motives in *Othello*. They could think critically about poetry and expressed their ideas in coherent literary analysis, supported by well-chosen quotations. In Year 11, students were able to construct logical, persuasive essays, which demonstrated their command of vocabulary. Different groups, including those with SEND, made very good progress in lessons and over time from their starting points.

- In the 2015 IGCSE examinations, a majority of students' attainment was above international and national standards in mathematics. A small number of higher achieving students experienced success at the AS level. Internal test data for 2015 showed that a large majority of students' attainment was above the curriculum standards. In lessons, a large majority of students made better than expected progress in relation to appropriate learning objectives. Girls' and boys' attainment and progress were similar. Year 11 students could understand and work with multiple representations, including algebraic models of real-world situations. They could modify a functional model or graph to fit a specified change to the situation and communicate the resulting explanations and arguments.
- Internal data indicated that attainment and progress in science were above expectations by a large majority of students. This was also the case in the lessons observed. In 2015 the IGCSE results were outstanding when compared to international standards. Very strong acquisition of scientific skills and critical thinking led to very good research projects. Year 7 students strengthened their enquiry method and could explain the levels of organisation in organisms. Year 8 students discovered and explained the concept of a balanced diet. In Year 11, some students applied scientific skills and knowledge to design experiments, evaluate their method and identify errors.

#### Post-16

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

- In Islamic education, most students attained in line with the national curriculum expectations. Most students knew and understood the importance of following the Prophet in all of their actions. They made acceptable progress over time in relation to their starting points. In lessons, most students made acceptable progress also, for example when relating the topics they were learning to real life. The school's assessment data indicated that there was no significant difference between boys' and girls' progress.
- The attainment by most students in Arabic as a first language was in line with the national curriculum expectations. Students' listening, speaking and reading skills were secure. Their writing was less well developed. In speaking, most students could express their ideas and opinions, but with limited use of standard Arabic. Most could read for comprehension at the levels expected. Most students were making acceptable progress in most aspects of language development from their different starting points.
- Most students' attainment in English, when measured against international curriculum standards, was above those expected. In lessons, the attainment of a large majority of students was above the curriculum standards. Students demonstrated very good understanding of a range of demanding literature. They critically analysed the poetry of Sylvia Plath and Wilfred Owen. Year 13 students' literary appreciation skills were highly developed; they were able to review their writing, reflect on its strengths and weaknesses and knew what to do to improve. Year 12 students demonstrated a serious and committed approach to the subject. Students' very good progress was shown in their written work. All groups of students, irrespective of their prior attainment levels, made very good progress over time.

- International Baccalaureate (IB) mathematics test results showed the majority of students attained levels above the international standards in 2015. These high standards had been sustained over the past three years. In lessons and in their recent work, a large majority of students demonstrated levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that were above the curriculum standards. Students' progress from Year 11 to Year 13 was very good, by both girls and boys. Students could reason with data from several sources or unfamiliar representations to solve multi-step problems. Some understood mathematical modelling as applied to probability and statistics. Others could apply probability to real life situations, such as predicting and analysing the outcomes from heating popcorn.
- In international tests across all science courses, almost all students attained above the curriculum standards in 2015. These were outstanding results. Independent enquiry, research and critical thinking were strong features of learning in science. In Year 11, students made very good progress in their lessons and displayed all the characteristics required of the learner profile within the IB curriculum over time.


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

- Students were engaged enthusiastically and responsibly in their learning. This engagement varied in Arabic and Islamic education lessons, especially in the secondary phase. By Year 11, students often designed their own investigations, but noticeably not in Islamic education. Students frequently reflected on their strengths and areas for development.
- Students collaborated well in groups. In primary lessons a group leader sometimes managed this. Structured sharing of learning was strong in English lessons in all phases, but in other subjects students spoke to their teachers, rather than to their classmates. International Baccalaureate students were particularly good at synthesising and sharing their findings from research.
- Students in all phases related their learning to local and global contexts. Foundation Stage children studied space, 'taking off' from Sheikh Mohammed's Mission to Mars. Others frequently acknowledged connections between mathematics and science. Students rarely linked their Islamic education topics with the UAE's culture. The older IB students presented thoughtful arguments during analysis of newspaper articles about parenting in the modern world.
- Higher order skills were not applied consistently. Students used electronic devices confidently and interacted well through the virtual learning environment (VLE). Whilst their study skills were strong, there remained a gap between IGCSE learning and the greater self-direction required of the IB learner profile. In Year 12 students were knowledgeable thinkers and communicators, but did not take risks in learning or reflect well enough upon their work.

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

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

- Students shared a very strong sense of personal responsibility and showed independence of mind. They were proactive and resilient. They thrived on giving and receiving critical feedback. Students often took the lead in whole school events such as 'Capture the culture,' a digital celebration of the UAE. They spoke highly of the value of the 'skills for life' programme for developing their social responsibility and self-reliance.
- Students' attitudes toward school and others resulted in their excellent behaviour and respect. Around the campus at break times, students could be seen showing high levels of self-discipline. Groups of mixed ages and genders required only light adult supervision. Post-16 students effectively carried out their mentoring roles in the recent 'anti-bullying' week.
- Students enjoyed excellent relationships with the staff. They said that they felt safe, valued and supported. This led to effective relationships amongst students. They showed genuine concern, empathy, and tolerance toward others. Students were only too willing to help those younger. There was a successful transition programme for students moving from the primary to secondary phase, with Year 7 students acting as 'buddies' for Year 6 students.
- Students showed a strong commitment to following safe and healthy lifestyles. They showed responsibility by making healthy eating choices. There were substantial numbers of students participating in extra-curricular sports activities. The IB students suggested that healthy living would be enhanced if physical education were an integral component in their programme.
- Students' attendance was very good and they were punctual when arriving at school and for lessons throughout the school day. They were aware of the need for good attendance, recognising the link between their attendance and high achievement.

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

- Students demonstrated excellent understanding of Islamic values. Non-Muslim students were fully aware of the impact of Islam on the lives of Muslim students. They understood that Muslim women must dress conservatively in public places and that Muslims pray five times a day. They appreciated the impact of these values on everyday life in the UAE. Muslim students diligently put into practice their Islamic values.
- Emirati heritage and culture were very well known and understood by students, who recognised their importance, relevance and value to people in the UAE. Students could talk in detail about the cultural activities in which they had taken part.



- Students fully appreciated and celebrated their own cultures. They showed experience and knowledge of cultural diversity and breadth, including music, art, and literature from around the world. They were very aware of the common elements between cultures.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Social responsibility and innovation skills</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students across the school were fully involved in making suggestions to support the school's improvement. They readily provided feedback to support school improvement. Students had a very well developed social conscience and many took part in activities to benefit others who were less fortunate than themselves.
- Students demonstrated an excellent work ethic. They readily took responsibility for others in school and in the wider community. They were involved in programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award and the Model United Nations. They were able to debate issues such as the impact of war and poverty and make sensible suggestions to bring about changes.
- Students strongly appreciated the school environment and were willing participants in maintaining the high levels of cleanliness and order. Students made sensible and practical suggestions to bring about sustainability and conservation. For example, those relating to renewable energy, greening the desert and reduction of the carbon footprint in the local and the global environment


### 3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Teaching for effective learning</b>	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- Most teachers had high levels of knowledge and understanding of how their students learn. Teachers applied their subject knowledge in ways that enabled students to grasp even the most difficult concepts. For example, in Year 11 a very good explanation of nuclear fission as an energy source fulfilled the learning needs of science students very well.
- Carefully planned lessons incorporated effective teaching strategies to engage students. Teachers used interactive white boards superbly to provide students with clear understanding of their learning tasks. Resources, such as laptops and tablet computers, were used imaginatively to enable most secondary and post-16 students to learn independently. In Arabic and Islamic education, lesson plans were consistent in format but did not meet the needs of all students.
- Teachers' interactions with students ensured they were active and focused learners. They encouraged students through challenging dialogue and open-ended questions. For example, Year 12 English students were encouraged to use quotations from poetry that would help them write critically and articulate their understanding. Primary teachers engaged students in lively discussions, which encouraged them to develop their own ideas and respond creatively.



- Teachers generally set tasks that met students' individual learning needs well. They gave support to students with SEND. The levels of challenge in Arabic and Islamic education lessons were not consistently high. In the Foundation Stage teachers used excellent strategies to help children make choices and find things out for themselves. Teaching in the early primary years did not build well enough upon the outstanding Foundations Stage practice.
- In many lessons, open-ended enquiry tasks encouraged students to think critically. Problem solving and research tasks underpinned the teaching strategies in most classrooms. Learning technologies were used extremely well in many lessons to encourage research and independent learning. This was less well developed in Years 1 to 5 in the primary phase.
- In Arabic as a first language, the quality of teaching varied but in primary it was generally good. In the secondary and post-16 phases, strategies were too limited and Arabic students were not consistently challenged to do their best. In Arabic as an additional language, teaching was good leading to good progress. Teachers had secure knowledge, but their abilities to meet the needs of all students were inconsistent.

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

- The school skillfully combined the requirements of the new English National Curriculum with the IB's seven point scale. With the use of predictive assessments for students of all ages, these systems provided comprehensive and reliable measures of students' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science. Similar systems were not in place in Arabic and Islamic education.
- The IGCSE and IB results were rigorously benchmarked against international standards. Students' attainment in the Foundation Stage and the primary phase were accurately compared to the curriculum and national standards. The school had introduced regular international benchmark tests and this assessment information had been used very effectively to inform changes to the curriculum.
- Baseline testing upon entry followed by the regular use of predictive tests and moderated internal data enabled the effective monitoring of students' progress. The test information was used exceptionally well to identify individuals and groups who were in need of additional support. Learning mentors were used to great effect to help students meet their learning goals.
- Assessment information was used skillfully in most subjects to influence lesson planning and teaching strategies. Teachers ensured that success criteria were clearly explained and used questioning to check students' understanding. When appropriate, plenary sessions were used by teachers to provide further explanations or to move learning on. Assessments were not used consistently in Arabic as a first language to adapt curriculum delivery.
- Assessments were used very well in most subjects to strengthen teachers' knowledge of, and support for students' learning. They were integrated into almost all lessons; often through the virtual learning environment or the IB online management system. Self and peer assessment were strong features of these lessons. Teachers' marking was very good in most subjects, providing clear improvement guidance.

#### 4. Curriculum

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

- The curriculum had a very clear rationale and was aligned to both the school and national visions. It was relevant, comprehensive and provided challenge. It was highly effective in developing a balance of knowledge, skills and understanding. It fulfilled all the requirements of the UK curriculum, the IGCSE and the IB Diploma Programme (IBDP). The Arabic and Islamic education curricula were aligned to the UAE's MoE curriculum.
- Curriculum planning for students' progression in their knowledge and skills had been fully implemented. Curriculum leaders across the school collaborated to ensure effective continuity and progression. Skills development had been carefully considered and changes made to those introduced at different stages, for example, debating skills in Year 6. This approach had led to steady progression throughout the school and supported students' transition to the IBD programme.
- Students had broad curriculum choices prior to entering Years 10 and 12 and the IGCSE options were extensive. Extra courses were used to supplement the IBDP. The SEND and English language learner programmes provided very good support to students. The Learning Pathways approach used by the school meant that students had curriculum options suited to their needs
- Cross-curricular links were meaningful and planned in most subjects. The primary curriculum included topics such as Ancient Egypt, the Titanic and Dubai's heritage. The secondary curriculum was enriched by cross-curricular events such as World Village day. Cross-curricular learning was embedded throughout the curriculum in the Foundation Stage, and children learned through activity, play and games.
- Teachers and leaders had reviewed the curriculum regularly. A rigorous review of the transition between Years 6 and 7 had led to a strengthening of the 'skills for life' programme. The primary curriculum was continuously reviewed to broaden the range of stimulating opportunities that promoted enquiry-based learning and the whole school curriculum had been reviewed to meet the content and skill requirements of the TIMSS and PISA tests.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum adaptation	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- Curriculum modification was based upon effective information sharing and highly developed planning by teachers. A large majority of lessons skillfully matched the learning needs of students. Learning gaps were addressed in specific sessions during the school day. This was less effectively done when students were learning Arabic as a first language.
- A very wide range of opportunities for extra-curricular involvement was provided and a large majority of students regularly took part. International visits, residential opportunities and ambitious, creative activities enriched learning and lives. Visitors to the school provided learning activities and instruction which added to the breadth and depth of the curriculum.
- Many extra-curricular opportunities were provided for students to learn about their place in the UAE and the values that underpin their society and community. The culture and values of the UAE were not as visible or embedded in lessons. Opportunities were missed by teachers to link students' learning to the UAE's local and national heritage.
- There were two 20-minute lessons of Arabic for Arab children in the Foundation Stage, and the curriculum was designed by the school. Non-Arab children did not have lessons in Arabic as an additional language.

#### 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 school had well established policies and procedures for child protection and safeguarding. They were used highly effectively by staff. Effective systems were in place to protect children when using the internet and other forms of digital learning technologies. Staff had good relationships with students and promoted their welfare well.
- Students were very well supervised by staff throughout the day and the school was safe and secure. The school carried out regular fire drills to practice evacuation procedures and students and the staff knew what to do in the event of an emergency.
- The school buildings were very well maintained and kept clean. Incidents were systematically recorded which affected students' health, safety or well-being along with information about the actions taken. Appropriate medical information was shared with the staff to ensure students' medical care needs were met at all times.
- The school environment supported students' learning exceptionally well, including those students with SEND. The school was accessible to all students, and particularly those with SEND. The management of the science laboratories was very effective, with all the necessary safety protocols being followed.
- Students were encouraged to make healthy life choices and knew the importance of maintaining good personal hygiene, eating healthily and taking regular exercise. When appropriate, the school's doctor contacted students and their parents to give advice and support about healthy living. Courses for students, in all school phases, provided advice on healthy living.

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

- Students and teachers related to each other exceptionally well. Teachers were helpful and respectful of their students and the systems for managing behaviour were highly effective. Students trusted the staff to respond positively to any anxieties or difficulties in all phases of the school. Supervision by the staff was consistent but not intrusive; an approach which fostered a relaxed but well-ordered community.
- Students' attendance levels reflected not just good systems but a commitment by the students to their learning. Parents were kept informed of attendance rates and students were rewarded for very low absence rates. Lessons started punctually, which fostered and reflected a respect for learning by both the staff and students.
- The school accepted a wide range of students with SEND. The identification systems were still developing but were detailed and valuable. The school relied heavily on parents to obtain external advice to support the identification and diagnosis of students with very complex needs. The gifted and talented students were identified accurately.
- Students' learning was supported exceptionally well in a large majority of lessons by teachers who planned the necessary modifications. Students, including those who were gifted or talented, accessed a challenging curriculum and those with the most complex needs received significant and creative adaptations.
- The welfare of all students was highly prioritised in the school and this resulted in excellent support across the four phases. Improved access to high quality careers advice enabled students to feel confident about the future educational and employment opportunities locally, nationally and internationally.

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

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

Very good ↑

- The leaders of the SEND department promoted high quality lessons for their students. The staff was ambitious for the students and their success, which resulted in a highly inclusive community wherein the students were valued. Information that supported students' learning needs, such as individual education plans, was very well organised and constantly updated as a result of well-designed processes.
- Students' needs were usually accurately identified upon entry to the school using an appropriate range of methods. Staff members quickly assessed the support needs and arranged resources around them. Parents were involved at the outset, but access to detailed advice about students with complex needs was not always readily available.
- Parents were very supportive of the school's services to their children. They were consulted when targets were being set and kept informed of the successes and challenges experienced by their children. As a result, parents felt able to help their children at home and were confident that any concerns would be respected and acted upon quickly.



- Very well planned and often exceptional classroom teaching enabled almost all of the students with SEND to access an appropriate and stimulating curriculum. Teachers knew these students well and modified their learning experiences to match the strengths and targets for each. Excellent and well-deployed resources further personalised the curriculum for students with SEND.
- The progress made by students over time was usually good or better. Teachers were able to judge learning well, using various assessments which enabled accurate measurement of students' progress. The analysis of the data about students with SEND was still under development.

## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Very good ↑

- Senior leaders, including the Director, were committed to securing the best outcomes for students in a fully inclusive school. As experienced professionals they set a clear vision and direction for the school's improvement. They were successful in articulating their vision to the school community and developing the shared purpose of meeting the school's and the UAE's priorities.
- Most leaders demonstrated through knowledge of the curriculum and secure understanding of what constitutes effective teaching and learning. Their expertise was used to very good effect in most subjects to bring about improvement. In Arabic as a first language, leaders were equally committed to improvement but less effective in securing high student achievements in all phases.
- Relationships and communication between all levels of leaders were professional and effective. They ensured that consistent systems operated in all phases. Distributed leadership was a strong feature of the school. Staff members were empowered to devise and initiate improvements. Morale throughout the school was very positive.
- Most leaders demonstrated strong capacity to innovate, strive for excellence and deliver continuous improvements. They were skilled at recognising and removing barriers to improvement, as was clearly demonstrated by the rise in students' attainment in almost all subjects in the primary phase.
- Leaders operated as a cohesive team that was fully aware of its collective responsibility for students' performances. Appropriate actions had been taken to meet all statutory requirements.

### School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Very good ↑

- The leaders used a wide range of monitoring and assessment information to form a mostly accurate view of strengths and areas that need further improvement. Middle managers used data effectively to identify strategies for improvement in their departments. Most leaders could explain clearly the strengths and weaknesses, but some were less confident in measuring students' progress.
- The developments in the school's system for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching were central to students' accelerated progress and improved attainment. Staff members were able to self-evaluate and this was effectively moderated by the middle and senior leaders. All staff members had a clear understanding of the school's 'teacher standards' and worked hard to meet their high expectations.



- The school's three-year strategic plan was ambitious and based upon improving year-on-year and meeting the national agenda targets. Success criteria were included, but they did not always reflect firm links between improved provision and the targets set for students' achievements.
- School leaders had acted upon the recommendations from the previous inspection report. They had made considerable efforts to improve the provision for Arabic, but had not achieved the goal of improving students' achievements in the secondary and post-16 phases.

#### Partnerships with parents and the community

Outstanding

- The school was very effective at involving parents in the education of their children. The views of parents were fully considered when shaping school improvement plans, through regular surveys and meetings with representatives from all year groups. Parental suggestions and activities in the school made positive contributions to students' attainment.
- The school operated an 'open door' policy by which teachers and school leaders were fully accessible to parents. Communication between parents and the school was outstanding, including the very effective use of technology to support and enhance learning at a home. This led to parents feeling exceptionally well informed and involved in their children's learning.
- Reports to parents were a model of good practice. They were highly personal to each student and provided parents with comprehensive details of what their children could do well both academically and personally. The next steps for improvement were made clear. Advice to parents as to how they could support learning at home was fully explained.
- Extensive local, national and global partnerships were used to develop students as global citizens and future leaders with excellent social and economic understanding. Partnerships with other schools and external agencies were used very effectively to enrich students' learning through competitions and involvement in activities such as music, sport and debating.

#### Governance




Outstanding

- The governing board was representative of the school and local community. It included all stakeholders and regularly sought the views of parents, students and teachers. As a result, governors had deep knowledge of the school and what was needed to improve it further.
- Excellent monitoring systems ensured that all initiatives were evaluated and the staff held to account. Regular communication between the board, the Director and the senior leadership team were excellent. Comprehensive reports by the Director, attendance at leadership meetings and daily presence in the school provided the information needed to be a constructive critic and a source of valuable support.
- The governing board played an important part in developing the school by providing educational expertise, local knowledge and the resources needed to support any actions for improvement. Recent investment to stabilise staffing ensured that the school continued to benefit from the expertise of committed and long-serving teachers.

Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school ran very smoothly. Systems to ensure students' safety at drop off and pick up times were very efficient. Information boards and monitors kept the staff and students aware of events and information. Staff members and students were fully aware of the school's routines and procedures.</li> <li>• All teachers had a teaching qualification. They benefitted from a comprehensive programme of professional development. Teachers were knowledgeable about child development and learning. Teaching assistants made valuable contributions in lessons, but occasionally provided too much support rather than allow independent learning to happen. There was an excellent mix of expertise and experience within the staff.</li> <li>• The school environment supported teaching and learning exceptionally well. There were excellent resources for teaching and learning in all subject areas. Of particular note were resources for digital learning, which, for example, supported learning very well in the Foundation Stage.</li> <li>• All classrooms were equipped with interactive white boards that were used very well to stimulate students. The library was very well resourced with both English and Arabic books.</li> </ul>	

## The views of the parents, teachers and students

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

Responses to the surveys		
Responses received	Number	
<b>Parents*</b> 	2015-2016	385
	2014-2015	286
<b>Teachers</b> 	103	
<b>Students</b> 	129	

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

- Almost all parents and teachers who responded to the survey were positive in their opinions about the school's provision and outcomes.
- Parents agreed that their children were making good progress in English, mathematics and science. A few did not agree that their children progressed well in Arabic or Islamic education.
- A minority of senior students also disagreed that their progress was good in these subjects.
- A few teachers did not agree that the school listened to them or that they were involved in self-evaluation.
- A minority of students did not agree that the school provided them with a good quality of education.
- Almost all students agreed that they were safe in school.

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