



The Sheffield Private Sch...



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational
needs and disabilities



Innovation

Inspection Report 2015-2016

The Sheffield Private School

Curriculum: UK

Overall rating: Acceptable

Read more about the school



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‘Without
challenges,
we won’t feel
the taste of
success and
happiness’



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

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School information

General information 	Location	Al Qusais
	Type of school	Private
	Opening year of school	2001
	Website	www.sheffield-school.com
	Telephone	04-2678444
	Address	Al Nahda Al Thania Ghusais, Dubai-PO Box 92665
	Principal	Matthew Edwards
	Language of instruction	English
	Inspection dates	18 to 21 January 2016
Students 	Gender of students	Boys and girls
	Age range	4-17
	Grades or year groups	Foundation Stage 2 to Year 11
	Number of students on roll	1,634
	Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
	Number of Emirati students	23
	Number of students with SEND	48
	Largest nationality group of students	Arab
Teachers / Support staff 	Number of teachers	104
	Largest nationality group of teachers	UK and Ireland
	Number of teaching assistants	32
	Teacher-student ratio	1:15
	Number of guidance counsellors	1
	Teacher turnover	27%
Curriculum 	Educational permit / Licence	UK
	Main curriculum	UK
	External tests and examinations	IGCSE, A levels
	Accreditation	CIE, ECE, Cambridgeshire CC NQT induction programme
	National Agenda benchmark tests	TIMSS, PISA

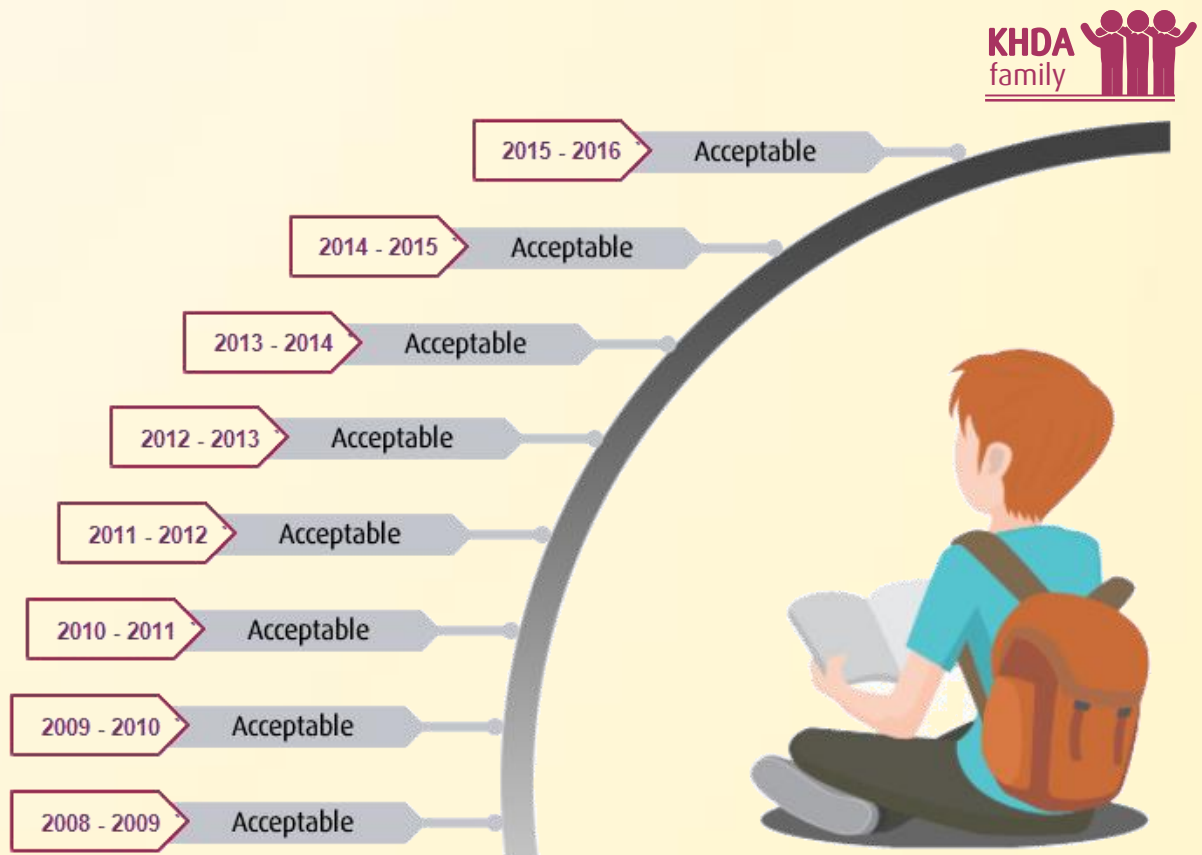


Summary for parents and the community

The Sheffield Private School was inspected by DSIB from 18 to 21 January 2016. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **acceptable**.

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

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





How well did the school perform overall?

This Sheffield Private School provided an **acceptable** quality of education for its students.

- Attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science were good in the middle phases except students' progress in the secondary phase English, where it was very good. In post-16, in mathematics progress was good and attainment was acceptable. However, in science, while students were making acceptable progress their attainment was weak. In Islamic education and Arabic as a first language, they were acceptable across the school. However, in Arabic as an additional language attainment and progress were weak and so was sciences in FS. English and mathematics were acceptable in the FS. Student's learning skills were good across the school except in FS where they were weak.
- All aspects of students' personal and social development were good. Students behaved well and were generally respectful to others. They had a developing understanding of the culture of the UAE and of other world-wide cultures. Most students had a positive work ethic and older students set good role models for those younger.
- The quality of teaching and assessment was good except in the FS and in Arabic as an additional language, where they were weak. Teachers increasingly matched work to students' abilities and used different methods to help students learn. They sometimes had low expectations of what students could do. The assessment systems helped teachers set targets for students.
- The school's curriculum was good across the school except in FS where it was acceptable. The curriculum was broad and balanced and helped students make progress over time. The school modified the curriculum, so that it met students' needs.
- Health and safety arrangements were outstanding across all phases and provisions for the care and guidance of students were good. The school was a safe place for students to learn.
- There had been a number of improvements since the school was previously inspected. All aspects of leadership and management were good except for the school's monitoring and evaluation arrangements, which were acceptable. New school leadership had brought energy and direction. Improvement planning was well targeted, but aspects of monitoring were not precise enough. Parents were partners, governance kept effective oversight and staffing had improved.



What did the school do well?

- Students achieved at least good standards of attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science in the primary and the secondary phases.
- The quality of personal development and relationships was good throughout the school.
- Good quality learning, teaching and assessment predominated in primary, secondary and post-16 phases.
- The schools leadership and management and arrangements for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) students was generally good. There were outstanding arrangements for students' health and safety.



What does the school need to do next?

- Increase the rate of progress children make in FS by developing the quality of teaching, rigorously monitoring children's learning and progress, and providing more support for FS leadership.
- Improve students' progress in Islamic education and Arabic by matching work to students' abilities and assessing their progress against the curriculum standards.
- Increase the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation processes and judgements to ensure that school leaders and governors have a more precise picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses so that priorities for improvement planning can be properly addressed.



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

- Parents' expressed high levels of satisfaction with the quality of reports they received regarding their children's progress. This reporting was based on a range of assessments, including those against subject expectations, personal development and individual education plan (IEP) targets. Parents' agreed that their children were very happy at school.
- Parents agreed that the school had prioritised highly effective communication for those with students with SEND. Reporting systems were good. Parents also appreciated the regular availability of their child's class teacher, head of year and the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCO). Parents felt that their views and knowledge of their children were treated with the utmost respect and that staff valued their contributions.
- Parents felt fully involved in the education of their child. They were well informed of all decisions. Their views were sought and considered when the school wrote and reviewed IEPs and learning plans. Parents were involved in working with their children to enable them to reach their IEP targets. The school gave parents clear information and guidance about appropriate and effective means of support for their child at home.
- Parents spoke very positively about the school's support for them and their children. They praised the continuing support given whenever they had concerns. They were also happy about the guidance and advice they received to support them at home.
- Generally, teachers had good skills to ensure that students with SEND made good progress in developing their learning skills and in their personal development. However, this was not consistent in for all SEND students. The SENDCO had worked diligently to provide all teachers with the necessary information and training to enable more consistency, but sometimes the impact on staff did not match her high expectations.

National Agenda Parameter



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

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

Main points:

- The school met the registration requirements of the National Agenda Parameter. No attainment data from the National Agenda Parameter was available at this stage to make a judgement on the progress towards meeting the National Agenda targets.
- Governors and the principal had effectively promoted awareness and understanding of the National Agenda and its targets amongst pupils, teachers and parents. The English department had developed a sharp focus on reading for comprehension. The mathematics department had introduced more mental arithmetic and a greater emphasis on applications to real life situations. Science challenged students to apply their understanding to debate issues.
- In most lessons students were challenged to think deeply about their work and to enquire. Students effectively used critical analysis of texts to improve creative writing. However, skills to evaluate and interpret data and graphs and to plan independent investigations were less well developed.
- Students could analyse resource materials provided by the teacher working independently for short periods. They had limited opportunities to work independently for prolonged periods, to initiate investigations or to research using either books or the internet.

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:

- Senior leaders' understood the national innovation agenda and the importance of promoting an innovation culture in their school. They had identified areas of the curriculum where innovation learning was included, and shared examples of how students had been successful in developing innovative ideas. Teacher and leadership development and professional learning opportunities were being considered. The infrastructure for promoting innovation was yet not considered by leaders, and there was no separate strategic plan for innovation.

Overall school performance

Acceptable

1. Students' achievement

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Learning skills	Weak ↓	Good	Good ↑	Good ↑

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

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

3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Weak ↓	Good	Good ↑	Good ↑
Assessment	Weak ↓	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good ↑

4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum design and implementation	Acceptable	Good	Good ↑	Good ↑
Curriculum adaptation	Acceptable	Good ↑	Good ↑	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	Good	Good	Good	Good ↑

6. Leadership and management

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



Main inspection report

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

Judgements are made on a six-point scale



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

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

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

1. Students' achievement

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	Acceptable	Acceptable ↓
Mathematics	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓
Science	Weak ↓	Weak ↓

- Most children were learning English as an additional language and made acceptable progress against general expectations. They listened carefully, spoke with a growing confidence and a majority could answer questions in whole sentences. Letter sounding skills were developing steadily and children had an expanding basic sight vocabulary. Different groups of children could read and write simple three-letter words and a very few were beginning to write short sentences and made similar progress.
- In mathematics, children reached the expected curriculum standards and made acceptable progress. The majority could count and add two single digit numbers. They were developing an appropriate range of mathematical vocabulary and starting to use a range of basic symbols with growing confidence. They had few opportunities to solve number problems or to learn about shapes and measures. The most able children were not challenged sufficiently and made slower than expected progress. The rates of progress of other groups of children were acceptable overall.
- Children's attainment in science was below curriculum expectations. They made less than the expected progress in most aspects of gaining knowledge and the understanding of science. Children planted seeds and knew some of the conditions required to germinate them. They could talk about people who helped them such as fire fighters, doctors and veterinary surgeons. Children's basic factual knowledge slowly increased but their scientific language, skills and problem solving were underdeveloped. The progress of different groups of children were similarly weak.

Primary

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

- In Islamic education, most students were working at the expected curriculum level. Most recited short Surahs of the Holy Qur'an. In Year 6, a minority of students could recite the thirtieth part of the Holy Qur'an. Generally students could perform the appropriate prayers and understood ways of showing respect and using appropriate manners. Similar trends of acceptable levels of attainment had been sustained for the past three years. Most students made the progress expected from their various starting points. Gains in knowledge included knowing not to harm animals and reciting the Dua'a at the beginning of prayers.
- In Arabic as a first language, the majority of students' skill in listening and speaking were above expected levels. Students' ability to read unfamiliar texts and their writing skills were in line with curriculum expectations. Most students could write sentences correctly, but their extended writing ability was weaker. Few could express their opinions using a wide range of ideas in a coherent piece of writing. Most groups of students made expected progress in lessons and over time. However, students in the lower primary years were making better progress than those in the higher years. For example, Year 1 students could recognise almost all Arabic sounds and could match them with their corresponding letter shapes, either individually or within words. The majority of students were able to blend and segment simple words well.
- In Arabic as an additional language, students' listening and speaking skills were weak due to limited exposure to Arabic. Most students could answer only simple questions. Students' speaking skills were limited to single words or short phrases. They could not sustain a conversation and often lapsed into English. Lower primary phase students were beginning to link letters to sounds. Older students could join letters to make words. By sounding out letters, the majority could repeat short words and simple sentences. Students had weak writing skills in the lower years with slow progress by Year 6. In lessons, a minority of students made acceptable progress in reading familiar texts and in responding to direct questions. All groups of students made slow progress in developing their reading comprehension abilities.
- Students made good progress and reached good levels of attainment in English. National tests confirmed these levels and were being used to make international comparisons, particularly through the Primary Years Programme (PIPS). Students listened with understanding and had well developed communication skills. By Year 6 many students were fluent speakers and showed a flair for writing. Almost all started Year 1 with limited English language skills, and most made rapid progress in speaking and in learning the sounds of letters. Attainment had risen significantly since 2013, although girls outperformed boys. Internal assessments, moderated through links with other schools, indicated that students made good progress across all aspects of English. Progress accelerated through Years 3 to 6. The most able students and those students with SEND made particularly good progress.

- The majority of students attained above curriculum expectations in lessons and in examinations in mathematics. Attainment had improved over time. Externally moderated tests in PIPS confirmed good performance. Students developed good number skills and increasingly built their knowledge of geometry, including an understanding of angles and the properties of shapes. Students in Year 4 could draw and interpret bar graphs, while students in Year 6 used their reasoning skills to calculate ratios from a menu. All groups of students used mathematical vocabulary and appreciated how mathematics was linked to other subjects. Problem-solving skills were less advanced than others. Students made good progress, although boys made much better progress than girls. The progress of students with SEND was similar to their peers.
- In science, the majority of students achieved above curriculum expectations both in lessons and in recent assessments, although attainment had fluctuated over a three-year period. Students made good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding. Year 1 students enthusiastically investigated materials to see if they were waterproof. Year 4 students could describe the changes of state of matter and explain the molecular rearrangements. Students continued to develop skills of enquiry and observation throughout the phase. By Year 6 they understood experimental variables and could identify those which needed to be controlled in a fair test. However they had made less progress in developing the ability to make reasoned hypotheses and plan an experiment. Progress was similar for different groups of students.

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

- In Islamic education, most students reached levels that were in line with curriculum expectations when measured by internal assessments of national curriculum standards. Most students understood that Hajj is one of the Five Pillars of Islam and knew about the Prophet Mohammad's (PBUH) Hajjat Al Wadaa. They understood the importance of the purpose of Hajjat Al Wadaa in Muslim life. Over the last three years, most students' attainment was at an acceptable level maintained by acceptable progress in lessons and over time. Different groups made similarly acceptable progress.
- In Arabic as a first language, almost all students attained in line with national curriculum expectations. They had adequate listening skills when following lengthy dialogue and could identify the main points. They could respond to questions about different ideas, but only a majority could make extended responses using more advanced vocabulary. Most students' reading was in line with expectations, but their ability to analyse literary text and work out the meaning of new words was underdeveloped. A minority of students had a good command of standard Arabic grammar usage. In most students' writing, the meaning was not conveyed accurately and contained basic errors. Most groups of students made appropriate progress in determining the author's point of view, the central idea and in summarising.

- In Arabic as an additional language, in the absence of available externally benchmarked tests, attainment and progress were weak. The majority of students had adequate listening and speaking skills when compared to general expectations and internal assessments. Students made slow progress in extended speaking and creative writing. They made better progress in learning new Arabic vocabulary, but they did not use this in discussions. Students made slow progress in understanding what they had read. Their knowledge of a range of language functions was limited in all year groups as was their application of grammatical forms. Progress was similarly weak for most groups in lessons and over time.
- In English, the schools International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) results were above expected levels. Students studying literature performed particularly well. During lessons, students were highly articulate and communicated their knowledge and understanding coherently. Most wrote with considerable flair and accuracy, using an extensive range of vocabulary. Attainment levels had risen over the previous three years. Tracking records indicated that students made better than expected progress, particularly in the analysis of text and in their writing. During lessons students made very good progress, particularly in using their critical thinking skills when analysing texts. This was reflected in their increasingly insightful written work. The majority of groups, including the most able and those with SEND made at least good progress. Boys made less progress than that of girls.
- The majority of students' attained above curriculum expectations in their IGCSE mathematics examinations. Attainment had improved over time and results were now above international benchmark levels. In lessons, students had good skills in relation to number, algebra and geometry. In Year 10, students confidently used their knowledge of circle theorems to calculate missing angles. In Year 11, students used vectors with increasing confidence and appreciated their use in real life. The most able students used vectors to solve geometric problems. Construction and graphical skills were variable while critical thinking remained an area for further improvement. In relation to their starting points, students, including those with SEND, made good progress although boys did better than girls.
- Students' attainment in science at IGCSE had fluctuated over the last three years. A majority of students had achieved levels above expected curriculum standards and attainment was particularly strong in physics. Students made good progress in developing their conceptual understanding of science. They could explain properties of elements in relation to their position in the periodic table. In lessons, students critically evaluated source material and then used their scientific understanding to debate issues such as the effect of lifestyles on health. They made good progress in developing practical skills, but their ability to develop a hypothesis and plan and evaluate an investigation to test this was weaker.

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	Not applicable	Not applicable
Mathematics	Acceptable	Good ↑
Science	Weak ↓	Acceptable

- In Islamic education, most of the students were achieving the expected attainment in relation to the national curriculum standards. The school also used the International Baccalaureate (IB) assessment of Islamic education in this phase and results showed that most students were attaining in line with these expectations. Most students could recite the Prophet Hadith about the conduct of the person who seeks knowledge. Attainment trends over three years showed a similar pattern of acceptable attainment. Most students understood the importance of Muslims pursuing their learning. Progress in lessons and over time was acceptable for the different groups of students.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students reached acceptable standards of attainment based on internal tests and national curriculum expectations. In discussions at relatively simple levels they could present a point of view, reason, make wider word choices and use different emphases and tone. Most language skills were developing at the expected rate, progress in lessons and over time was acceptable. Only a minority had good skills in writing coherent and well-formed longer texts. Progress in analysing literary texts and extracting rhetorical forms and links was weak. Students could hold a discussion on controversial issues, but their ability to provide evidence-based arguments and play a part in dynamic conversations was weaker. Progress was similar for different groups of students.
- In mathematics, most students' work, as measured against school's curriculum expectations and external examination results, was below expected standards. However, recent work was of a better standard so that attainment was broadly in line with expected standards. In lessons, students were confident in their use of algebra, trigonometry, logarithms and calculus. Their graphical work was well presented and they could accurately sketch and draw graphs and calculate the area under a curve. Examination practice papers showed a tendency for students to make careless mistakes. Students were beginning to develop their independent learning skills but critical thinking was weaker. They made good progress in relation to their starting points.
- Science was taught at this level for the first time during the last academic year. Most students did not achieve the expected curriculum standards. Students made acceptable progress in lessons and developed appropriate levels of understanding. Over time, students made acceptable progress in developing skills to interpret tabulated and graphical data. In work on Hooke's law for example, they could carry out appropriate mathematical computations. Overall, students reached levels of attainment somewhat below expectations, but most groups were making acceptable progress.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Learning skills	Weak ↓	Good	Good ↑	Good ↑
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students enjoyed learning. From Year 1, they delighted in spotting whether tiger was 'under, next to or in front of' the desk, to Year 11, where students were highly engaged in evaluating various sales pitches. Through the school, students took increasing responsibility for their own learning, for example they devised their own success criteria on 'what constitutes good work?' In Arabic lessons students were sometimes distracted and lacked concentration. Students routinely collaborated and were mutually supportive. They were confident that their views would be respected, albeit often challenged, by their classmates. However, group interactions in FS were rare. Discussions, particularly in the secondary phase, revealed students' good independent thinking and communication skills. In Year 7, for example, students shared ideas about how the animation 'Shrek' might appeal to adults as well as children. Students readily made connections between learning and their everyday lives. For example, during a Year 10 lesson, they drew on their own experiences when exploring the features of trailers for action films. Year 9 students made use of local landmarks and maps to calculate lengths using Pythagoras' theorem. In biology, they debated whether e-cigarettes should be banned in Dubai. They put forward coherent arguments and also rebutted those of others with sensitivity. Students demonstrated their ability to think deeply and critically and to articulate their views in most English lessons. Opportunities for independent problem solving and research were not well established in other subjects. Students had secure skills when using modern technology. 				

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Personal development	Good	Good	Good	Good ↑
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In almost all primary, secondary and post-16 lessons, students demonstrated positive attitudes towards their learning and took increasing responsibility for it. They respected their teachers and each other. Secondary school students took advantage of teachers' comments on their work and made modifications to improve their attainment. Students demonstrated good behaviour. They were courteous, self-disciplined and responded promptly to adults' instructions. Students played their part in regulating their own behaviour during lesson changeovers and at break times. They generally behaved responsibly although occasionally, when lessons lacked sufficient interest, students did not do their best and time was wasted. Almost all students had a strong sense of belonging to the school community. In such a diverse setting, students enjoyed learning and sharing their understanding of national and cultural differences. They were supportive of each other and were sensitive to the different needs of others. They were well spoken and expressive. Secondary students contributed positively to students' assemblies and ran activities to promote students' awareness of issues such as anti-bullying. Children in FS shared resources amongst themselves, but lacked motivation when their involvement in a lesson waned. 				

- Students had an acceptable understanding of healthy living and they ate healthy snacks if their parents and the school canteen provided them. Through the school's promotion of internal and external sporting activities and active physical education lessons, students kept reasonably fit and understood the value of regular exercise on their health and well-being.
- Attendance for the first term was good, which was an improvement compared to the previous year. This year the school had introduced absence request forms for parents wishing to take their children on holiday. Parents whose children were often late were contacted by the school to discuss timeliness strategies. Punctuality to lessons improved during the week of inspection and was acceptable overall.

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

- Students had a clear understanding and appreciation of the values of Islam. Students across the school knew the importance of a mosque to Muslim communities in the UAE in order to pray regularly. They also knew that Muslims had two Eids annually. Students participated in many school organised charity events and in Islamic celebrations such as Eid.
- Students were knowledgeable and appreciative of the heritage and culture of the UAE. They stood respectfully for the UAE National Anthem and sang it confidently. Students across the school understood and could talk about the UAE heritage and cultures. They participated in different trips and activities such as the National Day celebration with 'Yola' and a falconry show to broaden their appreciation of Arabic culture.
- Students talked in detail about their own culture. Across the school they were curious about and had a basic understanding and appreciation of, the other cultures around them. They named some aspects of their friends' cultures such as different music, food and sports. Students participated in the school celebrations and festivals, for example the international day, to broaden their understanding of different cultures around the world.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good	Good	Good ↑
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students throughout the school had a positive work ethic. Younger children wanted to please their teachers, older students wanted to do well to get on in life. They were aware of what made them successful in their school life and how the school's expectations supported them. Older students took part in an increasing number of initiatives and projects, which were mostly organised by the school. Students of all ages were responsible members of the school community. Student leaders were extremely proud of their role as prefects and as elected head boy and girl. They and the student council members set positive role models and made a good contribution to the well-being of their fellow students. Students participated in charitable work and older ones appreciated the school focus on rights and responsibilities. Students' care of the school was evident from a young age. They kept their classrooms and communal areas tidy. They were very conscious of the need to recycle and used the recycle bins for their projects. Students were also aware of wider Dubai issues of recycling, sustainability and the increasing need to conserve energy and water. 				

3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Weak ↓	Good	Good ↑	Good ↑
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers had sound subject knowledge though some, the FS teachers particularly, had weak understanding of how children learn. In higher phases the best lessons often matched work to students' abilities. In English, science and mathematics teachers used real life examples to enhance learning. Teachers of Islamic education and Arabic did not draw upon a wide enough range of strategies; their ability to get the most from students was weak. Teachers created stimulating lessons and used time and resources well. Displays included prompts for learning, reflection, word lists and examples of students' work. For the most part, teachers shared ideas and planned well-structured lessons, which motivated and challenged. Good preparation contributed to the good pace of learning, for example in a Year 11 lesson a series of clues for a treasure hunt stimulated learning about vectors. Productive and respectful relationships between students and staff contributed significantly to the purposeful atmosphere in most lessons. There were inconsistencies in the teachers' use of questions, particularly in FS, to draw out and extend students' understanding and to stimulate their critical thinking. During English lessons when analysing Shakespearean texts critical thinking was promoted. In mathematics, science and physical education the development of critical thinking was less secure. Teachers used a range of strategies to engage and motivate. Challenge for the most able was not well-established and limited to extension work that occurred towards the end of lessons. Teachers used effective strategies, including audio and visual resources and practical work to support the progress of students with SEND. In Islamic education, work was not consistently matched to students' abilities or needs. 				

- There were a few excellent examples in secondary English lessons of teachers systematically developing students' critical thinking skills and independence. It was less effective in other subjects and in some younger primary classes where the development of independence skills were not often encouraged. In science, investigations were sometimes overly teacher led. Opportunities for independent learning were rare in Islamic education and in FS.
- In Arabic as a first language, teaching was acceptable. Teachers had adequate subject knowledge. However, not all had an effective range of teaching skills to stimulate learning and raise standards. Talking by teachers dominated. There were too few opportunities for students to discuss amongst themselves. In planning, teachers did not have sufficiently high expectations and they did not set work that matched different students' abilities.
- In Arabic as an additional language, teaching was weak. Although the majority of teachers had secure subject knowledge, excessive teacher talk and the absence of opportunities for students to work without constant support and guidance significantly slowed their learning and progress. Teachers' expectations of what their students could achieve were too low, especially for the most able students.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Assessment	Weak ↓	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good ↑

- The school had an appropriate range of internal assessments aligned to the English National Curriculum but internal assessment systems were inconsistent in the FS. Data was collected each term across all subjects and used to measure progress towards meeting individual targets as well as inform interventions and curriculum design.
- The school made good use of a range of tests including PIPS, Middle Years Information System (MidYIS), Year 11 Information System (Yellis) and Advanced Level Information System (ALIS). These were used well to provide individual targets, although some of these targets were not sufficiently challenging. Test and examination results were now being compared with international benchmark test results, in all phases except the FS.
- Assessment data was carefully analysed to identify individual progress, which was shared with teachers and middle leaders. The school identified students causing concern and agreed on suitable interventions to ensure targets were met. The progress of groups of students was also monitored, although gaps between the performance of girls and boys in English and mathematics had still to be addressed.
- Assessment data was used appropriately to inform the placement of students into teaching groups and to modify teaching. Departments used data from assessments to review the curriculum including, the addressing of weaknesses in reading in primary English and the introduction of combined science in the secondary phase. The use of assessment data in the FS and in Arabic was under developed.
- Teachers had a good knowledge of their students' strengths and weaknesses, which was well used to plan lessons and provide effective support and challenge. Teachers' written comments helped students identify weaknesses and offered useful advice on how to improve. Opportunities for students to respond to feedback were a developing feature. Students were increasingly involved in self and peer assessment.

4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum design and implementation	Acceptable	Good	Good ↑	Good ↑

- The curriculum closely followed the requirements of the revised English National Curriculum with additions to comply with the Ministry of Education regulations relating to Islamic education and the Arabic languages. The FS was aligned to the English curriculum for the early years. There was a clear rationale, which reflected the school's values and offered a suitable balance between the development of knowledge and skills.
- The curriculum was successfully planned to build progressively on what students already knew and could do. Transition between phases was well managed using transition days where students were encouraged to ask questions and share their concerns. Career aspirations were actively encouraged through international careers fairs and speakers from universities as well as support from the recently appointed careers counselor.
- The range of subjects available ensured that all students had every opportunity to realise their academic potential and develop their interests and talents. Students were consulted on option choices with recent additions including statistics, media studies and combined science. The FS did not include sufficient opportunities for children to develop scientific skills and understanding. Opportunities for enrichment were plentiful with themed days, school trips and guest speakers as well as theatre trips and a Year 6 residential trip.
- Cross-curricular links were effectively planned and incorporated into schemes of work. In the primary phase, links were suitably developed through topics covering 'The Romans', 'The ancient Egyptians' and 'Different people/different places'. Elsewhere links were made between physical education and information and communication technology. In the FS, links were often tenuous. Opportunities for independent learning, critical thinking and research across the school were variable.
- The school conducted regular reviews of the curriculum, taking account of parents' and students' views, as well as making adjustments to accommodate recent curriculum changes in England. Curriculum developments included a revised history curriculum in the primary phase, media studies in the secondary phase and the international computer driving licence as well as travel and tourism courses in the post-16 phase.
- The school had taken steps to introduce UAE social studies more systematically into the revised curriculum arrangements, both in primary and secondary phases.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum adaptation	Acceptable	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good ↑
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum modifications to meet the needs all student groups' were a strong feature of lesson plans. However, there was variability in how well the learning tasks were matched to students' abilities in different phases. It was effective in primary, secondary and post-16 phases and provided good support for students with SEND. It was much less effective in Arabic and the FS, where children had 60 minutes of Arabic weekly. A good range of extra-curricular, sporting events and community links enhanced the curriculum. This varied curriculum helped motivate students and contributed to their rates of progress. There were high rates of uptake for extra-curricular events, which supported students' personal and academic development. Clubs and activities included; public speaking, debate, science wiz, swimming, French, tennis and karate. Curriculum opportunities for enterprise, innovation and creativity were limited. Embedded within the curriculum were interesting and relevant programmes to develop students' knowledge and understanding of the values, culture and society of the UAE. These included participation in celebrations, national events, local initiatives and support for a variety of charities. The FS did not participate in Arabic formally within the curriculum for the early years, but appropriate regard was paid to the language in terms of children being made aware of basic Arabic greetings and the use of good manners across different interactions. 				

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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff, parents and students were informed about school policies and procedures concerning safeguarding, child protection of the students and internet safety. This contributed to a very safe learning environment. Premises and buildings were hygienic and clean. The rigorous assessment of potential risks around the school was comprehensive. Safety checks of all staff members occurred. Staff were effectively deployed to supervise the entry and exit of personnel to school buildings and their movement around the campus. Maintenance contracts were up-to-date. Medical records were securely maintained by the clinic staff as were medicines and incident records. The school premises and buildings had suitable access for students and staff with physical needs. Entry ramps and a lift provided access to all floors so that both specialist rooms and classrooms were accessible to all. The school's curriculum provided adequate coverage of the importance aspects of healthy living including dietary requirements and appropriate physical activity. The timetable provided a good balance of physical activities and regular breaks from lessons. The school canteen offered healthy options alongside other forms of snacks. 				

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Care and support	Good	Good	Good	Good ↑

- Relationships throughout the school were positive and were underpinned by the school's ethos. The school had strong systems in place to promote positive student behaviour. This was particularly evident in secondary phase where students were increasingly independent and took on wider responsibilities. When appropriate, the school had taken prompt and effective action to resolve behaviour issues.
- An enhanced management system allowed leaders to analyse attendance and punctuality data and take appropriate action if unfavourable patterns were evident. These actions included communications with home, meetings with parents, as well as celebrations of regular or improved attendance. These efforts had been successful and attendance had swiftly improved. The school prefects and leaders were actively involved in ensuring that students move efficiently between lessons to improve punctuality.
- The school had new procedures for identifying students who had SEND or had gifts and talents. The school had a range of effective procedures to assess and diagnose students' individual needs. Teachers were increasingly aware of this information and planned appropriate activities although this was not consistent across the school. However, students were receiving better care than previously because of the steps taken.
- The school had established individual student entry diagnostic systems. Interventions were effective and rapid. They were matched well to individual education and support plans. However, these plans were not yet being effectively implemented in all lessons. The majority of lessons provided work set at the right level. This promoted good academic progress and personal development.
- The pastoral counselor employed effective systems, to monitor students' personal development. A careers advisor worked with older students on request. Higher education fairs had been organised, so that students were aware of the opportunities available, both in the UAE and abroad. The school consulted with students and parents about proposed changes to areas such as the curriculum, including the choice of options.

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

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

Good ↑


- The school had an increasing commitment to the development of provision for students with SEND. They had appointed a SENDCO to the senior leadership team. A new SEND policy was appropriately designed but not yet applied consistently across the school. There was sufficient school investment in SEND although there was an imbalance in the support across the different phases.
- The school had strong systems for the identification of students with SEND and these were largely accurate. Despite inconsistencies in some reports from external agencies, the school invariably knew how best to address individual needs. As a result, the SEND department provided classroom teachers with appropriate guidance. It also arranged extra curriculum modification and in class support, which had led to improved student outcomes.
- The school had developed highly effective communication routes for all parents of students with SEND. Parents were very satisfied with the regular reports they received on their child's progress. Parents felt

that their communications about their child were treated with the utmost respect by the school and that their contributions were valued. Parents spoke very positively about the support and guidance they and their children received.

- Curriculum modification was largely effective and often linked to IEP targets. In most cases, the different tasks that were set were sufficiently demanding to meet the needs of most SEND students. For the remainder of students, further refinement of the tasks was needed. Support had a positive impact on the students' learning skills and progress.
- Most teachers were sufficiently skilled to ensuring that students with SEND made at least good progress. However, this was not consistent in all classes. The SENDCO had provided all teachers with the necessary information and training, but had not monitored the impact of her guidance in all classes.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Good 


- The new principal had added impetus to school improvement through consultation and action. With his capable senior staff, he built an effective management structure and devolved responsibility appropriately to middle leadership. There was wide involvement in improvement planning which made reference to the UAE National Agenda. Leaders enshrined inclusion within the mission statement and it was practically expressed in the improvements made to SEND provision.
- Most middle and senior leaders had a good understanding of how to make the curriculum relevant through effective teaching and accurate assessments of students' progress. This work was still a developing feature in the newly staffed and led FS, and in Islamic education and Arabic provision. The impact of the school's mission statement could be seen in the raised expectation students had of themselves, for example in English.
- Open channels of communication occurred through the management structure, briefings, consultation and meetings. There were professional expectations of all teaching staff through the performance management system. There was regular scrutiny of students' progress through which targets for improved performance were set. This generally worked well but there was room for improvement in the FS and in Islamic education and Arabic provision.
- The improvement of teaching and learning was set as the school's highest priority. Although not as successful in Arabic as an additional language, for instance, the school had provided strengthened provision to start the process of improvement. Leaders had improved provision and outcomes for SEND students and made good progress on most of the recommendations in the previous inspection report.
- Leaders had either maintained or improved standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science in most parts of the school. Leaders had increased the quality of teaching and learning and improved aspects of students' personal development. With the governors, they made sure that the school met all legal requirements.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Acceptable

- Improvement planning had started with the recommendations in the previous inspection report and the school's analysis of student performance. The senior leaders confidently knew the school's strengths and weaknesses. This knowledge provided the basis from which to build. The school self-evaluation process and outcomes was not completely accurate and did not highlight all of the school's significant weaknesses to enable comprehension action to be taken.
- Besides monitoring progress on the improvement plan targets, a secure system operated for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. This gave senior leaders a generally accurate view of teaching quality, but did not systematically link teaching to its impact on students' progress. Further refinement was planned. The school's system for tracking students' progress gave senior leaders a view in holding staff to account.
- The improvement plan, though limited in range, fitted within the governors' strategic three-year plan and was built on other school action plans. It was well focused and had measurable ways to judge improvement progress. These were rigorously evaluated by the senior leaders and reported to the governors. The school was on track to meet most of its targets. The effectiveness of the governing body had improved in this regard.
- Good progress had been made on the recommendations from the previous inspection report. The school had improved provision for Islamic education, Arabic, the FS and for students with SEND, but the impact had yet to show in the students' performance. Although independent learning skills had not improved in the FS, enquiry and critical thinking skills had amongst the older students as had their breadth of curriculum choice.

Partnerships with parents and the community

Good 

- The school had developed a good partnership with parents through consultation exercises, for example on the new mission statement. Parents had made their views known to the school in a number of ways and these were acted upon. Parents could now regularly meet with the senior leadership team to discuss directly with them any issues they wished to raise.
- The school kept parents well informed in a number of traditional as well as innovative ways. These included the effective e-communicator. Parents appreciated the school reports and face-to-face meetings with teachers, which helped them understand how to support their children at home. Links with parents of children SEND had recently improved and were proving effective.
- School reports on students' progress were regular, detailed and helpful. These covered students' academic progress and personal development. There were opportunities for parents and teachers to discuss the reports in more detail or the curriculum their child was to follow. Of interest was the opportunity for parents of older students to make a contribution to the widening of curriculum choices.
- The school had developed a widening circle of contacts at local and international levels to extend the curriculum for the students and broaden their understanding. Examples of this included the school's involvement in sporting and cultural events, students' support for a cancer ward in Sri Lanka and its link with an outstanding school in England.

Governance

Good ↑

- Governance included representatives from the staff, parents, local and international business and the managing director. The board reported regularly to the school's owner. The board listened to the parent voice more closely than previously through survey analyses and in regular meetings. Recent initiatives in response to parents' views included more access to senior leadership.
- Governors closely monitored the school's performance through analysis of assessments and results and from reports on the quality of teaching and learning. As a result they knew most of the school well. They were pleased with its strengths and provided support and finance to remedy its weaknesses. They were closely involved in both the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- The governors set the school's strategic direction through working with it on the mission statement and on the three-year strategic plan. They supported the school's improvement through additional funding to employ better qualified staff and provide additional resources. They ensured that statutory requirements were met and were influential in how well the school addressed the recommendations from the previous inspection.




Management, staffing, facilities and resources

Good ↑

- The school had established routines and procedures that were well known to staff and students. Behaviour around the school was well managed and this encouraged students' positive attitudes to school and their studies. The timetable was well understood and systems for transfer of information, and record keeping for instance were efficient.
- The school had been successful in attracting a higher proportion of well qualified staff than previously. New staff were inducted well and the level of teacher turnover had been significantly reduced. Staff benefited from focused training and were appropriately deployed, so that students benefited from their expertise, especially in the post-16 phase.
- Displays of work helped to create positive attitudes. Science laboratories and other specialist rooms enabled the curriculum to be taught effectively. All areas of the school were appropriately accessible. The FS classrooms did not have direct access to outdoor play areas but the staff made use of the wide corridors for extra learning areas. A few classrooms were too small to accommodate the number of students in them.
- Staff and students had appropriate access to suitable consumable resources. One weakness was in the school's use of duplicated text books in Arabic. This did not occur in other subjects. There had been an increase in learning technology resources. The library was well stocked and there was a wide range of literature to encourage a love of reading. Physical education equipment enabled the subject to be taught well.

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	225
	2014-2015	199
Teachers 	51	
Students 	116	

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

- A greater number of parents completed their survey this year compared to last year. Around half the teaching population and most senior students completed their surveys.
- Most parents appreciated the school efforts in developing their child's attainment and progress. Most agreed that inspection had led to improvement. The majority who felt that their children made good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- A majority of parents did not know enough about students' progress in Arabic as a first language; about a third did not know about the students' progress in Arabic as an additional language and in Islamic Education.
- Most parents felt that the school provided a good curriculum. A minority felt that the school did not deal well with bullying but most felt that the school was well led and kept them up to date about their children's progress
- Only very few staff disagreed with any of the issues raised in the survey. They strongly believed that the school was well led, that the school acted promptly on any bullying, and that inspection had led to improvement.
- Most students felt positively about the school. Their main concerns were over the quality of education, too few opportunities to learn about Emirati culture and the quality of facilities and resources.

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