



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational  
needs and disabilities



Innovation

## Inspection Report 2015-2016

Star International School

Curriculum: UK

Overall rating: Good

Read more about the school



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“Don't look  
behind to  
see who is  
following you,  
but look forward  
to be ahead”



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

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## School information

### General information



Location	Al Twar
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2005
Website	www.starintlschoolaltwar.com
Telephone	04-2638999
Address	Al Twar 2-P.O.BOX:51008
Principal	Durriya Goriawala
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	23 to 25 November 2015

### Students



Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	3-14
Grades or year groups	Foundation Stage 1 to Year 9
Number of students on roll	573
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	70
Number of Emirati students	63
Number of students with SEND	19
Largest nationality group of students	Arab

### Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	42
Largest nationality group of teachers	British
Number of teaching assistants	21
Teacher-student ratio	1:13
Number of guidance counsellors	1
Teacher turnover	24%

### Curriculum



Educational permit / Licence	UK
Main curriculum	National Curriculum for England
External tests and examinations	Cambridge International Examinations
Accreditation	British Schools in the Middle East
National Agenda benchmark tests	IBT

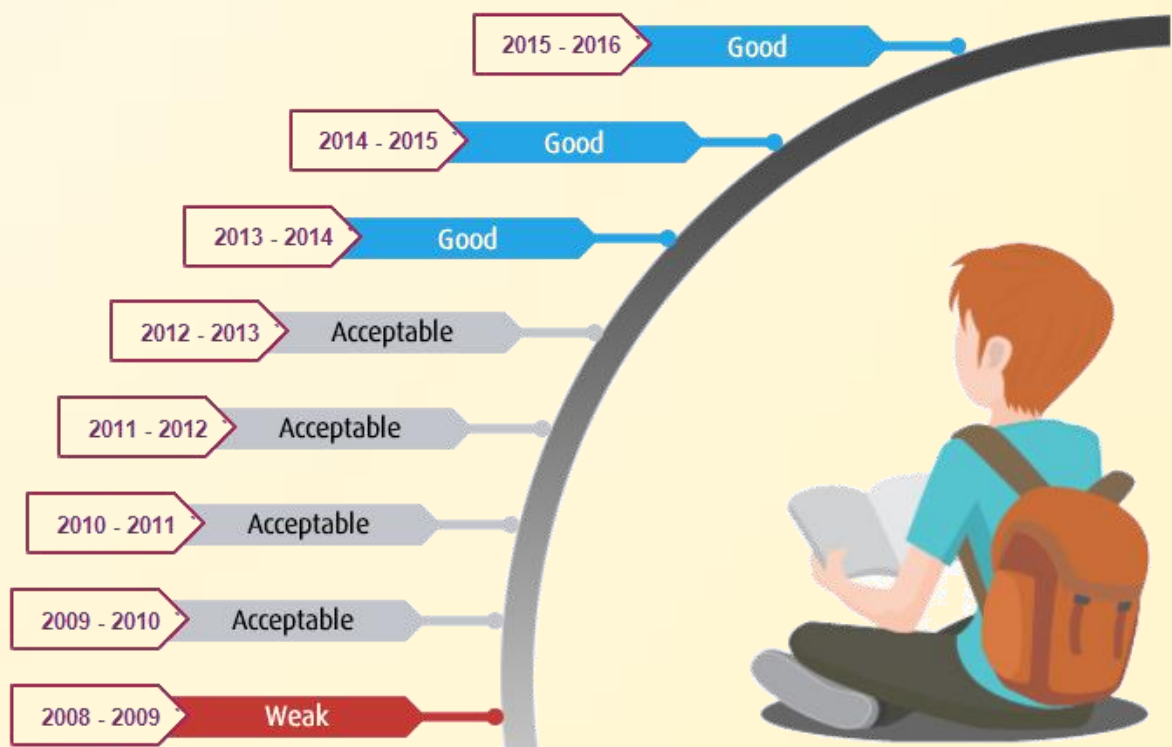


## Summary for parents and the community

**Star International School** was inspected by DSIB from 23 to 25 November 2015. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **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, **Star International School, Al Twar** provided a **good** quality of education for its students.

- Students' attainment and progress were good in English, mathematics and science. Progress in Foundation Stage (FS) English was outstanding and in the secondary phase it was very good. In Islamic Education, attainment was acceptable while progress was good. In Arabic as a first and additional language, attainment and progress were acceptable. Students in all phases were developing good learning skills.
- Students' strong personal development was one of the strengths of the school. Across the school, students had a strong sense of personal responsibility and a good understanding of Islamic values.
- Teaching was good in the FS, primary and secondary phases, but the teaching of Arabic needed improvement. The use of assessment information to influence and support students' learning was developing well.
- The curriculum was broad, balanced and effective in developing students' knowledge, skills and understanding. Modifications made to the curriculum for different groups of students were effective, especially for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- The school was fully aware of all requirements for the health and safety of all within the school community. There were rigorous procedures in place for the care, welfare and support of students. Interactions between staff and students were based on mutual respect, trust and confidence.
- School leaders had established an ethos that was valued by parents. Systems of self-evaluation provided the school with an understanding of areas that needed to improve further. Governors were supportive of the school but did not hold the leadership to account fully. The quality of management, facilities and resources was good overall, but limited facilities for learning technologies, particularly in the secondary phase, limited opportunities to develop students' learning.



### What did the school do well?

- There was a caring and supportive ethos throughout the school.
- Students' attainment and progress in the key subject areas were generally good throughout the school. In English, students made outstanding progress in FS and progressed very well in the secondary phase.
- Students developed outstanding social responsibility and innovation skills in secondary.
- The curriculum offered in FS was very good.
- The quality of the systems to promote a safe and secure learning environment was outstanding.
- Links with parents and the community were very strong.





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

- Improve school improvement planning by:
  - using whole-school action plans that include succinct, measurable success criteria that focus on students' learning outcomes
  - ensuring internal and external assessment data is used to compare the students' attainment with international expectations
  - formulating a clear and ambitious vision for the school that is fully integrated into the schools longer-term strategic planning.
- Raise attainment and progress in Arabic by:
  - monitoring the attainment and progress of students and matching the degree of challenge within tasks with the needs of different groups of students
  - aligning internal assessment processes to curriculum standards, and extending the range of teaching strategies to provide challenge and promote independent learning.
- Ensure that the governing body holds the principal and senior leaders fully accountable for the quality of the school's performance.



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

- The provision for students with SEND was good and improving. These students made good progress overall. However, their progress in Arabic was less pronounced.
- The new SEND coordinator organised the work of students with SEND effectively. All teachers were aware of the needs of individual students with SEND in their classes and could adjust the curriculum as needed. Students' progress was reported to parents regularly.
- The communication systems with the school were good and the SEND coordinator contacted parents regularly.
- Parents were regularly consulted, kept up to date with their child's progress and had explained to them how their child's confidence had improved.
- Guidance and support services were available for parents of students with SEND. These were responsive to the challenges experienced by the majority of students.

### 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.
- There was no evidence around the school of the National Agenda or displays related to it. Students interviewed were aware of taking part in international testing but did not link the tests with the National Agenda. Other stakeholders, including the parents and governors, had a small amount of knowledge about the National Agenda. The Principal was aware of the Parameter but had not yet begun to promote the National Agenda fully.
- The modifications made to the curriculum were not in the context of the National Agenda. However, the analysis of the previous TIMSS outcomes and the awareness of the targets had prompted a greater emphasis on certain skill areas. The introduction of problem-solving, mental mathematics and developments in the key subjects of English and science were part of the preparation for TIMSS and the IBT tests.
- The school had invested time in helping teachers to improve their questioning skills. The development of critical thinking skills was not a specific feature of most lessons, although there were activities in some that provided opportunities for students to think. Problem solving in mathematics did not provide sufficient opportunity for students to carry out independent, open-ended investigations where students could research and evaluate possible solutions.
- There was an adequate range of print resources available to students for research purposes in the FS and primary phase libraries. Secondary students had access to library resources that were held in one of the classrooms. However, the school had a limited number of computers that students could access. All students had ICT lessons and there was one class set of computer tablets for use in the school. However, overall there were insufficient opportunities for students to develop their research skills across the key subjects because of this.

## 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 had developed their own view of innovation as a means to improve educational outcomes. They had not yet identified specific measures to foster a school culture of innovation. The 'teacher learning community' forum had been identified by the school leadership as a means of promoting the innovation agenda and building capacity for teachers' innovative practice. The school had not yet modified the learning environment, the resources and the school's infrastructure to ensure the development of students' innovation skills. There were efforts to stimulate students' interests through school activities; however, school leaders had yet to develop a consistent approach to curriculum design.



Overall school performance

Good

1. Students' achievement

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

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Personal development	Very good ↓	Very good ↓	Very good ↓
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good	Very good ↑
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good	Outstanding

## 3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good
Assessment	Good	Good	Good

## 4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum design and implementation	Very good ↑	Good	Good
Curriculum adaptation	Very good ↑	Good ↑	Good ↑

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

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

## 6. Leadership and management

	All phases
The effectiveness of leadership	Good
School self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good
Parents and the community	Very 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	Good	Outstanding
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science	Good	Good

- In English, children's attainment measured against curriculum standards was good, particularly as most children spoke English as a second language. In FS1 children chose books and enjoyed looking at pictures. Their increasing interest in using writing materials prompted them to form symbols and write their names. Good listening skills were encouraged and children began to use an increasing range of words to communicate with their teachers and each other. By the end of this stage, children had made rapid progress. They answered questions about stories and began to read words by using their knowledge of letter sounds. Children began to write independently about significant events in their lives and added sentences to their pictures.
- In mathematics, children's attainment and progress were good. They recognised and wrote numbers and counted accurately. Younger children used learning technologies competently to practice number skills. Children used appropriate mathematical vocabulary in FS2 while they were playing, and were gaining an increasing knowledge about shape and measures. They used shapes to make a variety of repeating patterns. When constructing models, they could name shapes and talk about their properties. They had a good understanding of volume and used words accurately when playing with water to describe what they were doing.
- In science, children showed a good understanding of scientific concepts and were gaining an increasing vocabulary and experience of the world through active learning. They correctly used words about floating and sinking and began to make predictions about model boats they had made. Children could name different animals, including those that lived in water. They planted seeds and found that water was needed for them to grow. Their observation skills were developing. They used their senses to identify substances found at home such as garlic, toothpaste and spices. Higher attaining children began to record their ideas with pictures and captions.

### Primary

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

- In Islamic Education, most students were able to explain the Five Pillars of Islam and how to perform group prayer. Students in all grades had a clear understanding of Islamic manners, Islamic values and morals. Students' Holy Qur'an recitation skills continued to develop positively. Overall attainment was in line with curriculum expectations. The progress made by the majority of students in developing their understanding of some of the concepts underpinning Islamic teachings was good.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students had appropriate listening and reading comprehension skills but only a minority could write long meaningful sentences and paragraphs. They showed adequate understanding of language styles and grammatical expressions in sentences but often used different dialects when speaking. Attainment overall was acceptable. Most students made acceptable progress in speaking and reading in relation to appropriate learning objectives.
- In Arabic as an additional language, students were progressing at an acceptable level. Students had secure listening skills and could respond to greetings and basic questions from their immediate environment. They could comprehend basic messages from short texts and read confidently with fluency. Their speaking skills were still developing. They understood a limited range of vocabulary that they generally used in their writing. They were able to form sentences but many made frequent grammatical mistakes. Opportunities were not always provided to learn from these errors resulting in slower progress over time.
- In English, the majority of students achieved levels of attainment above curriculum expectations. By the end of Year 6, they attained good standards in reading and writing in external assessments. They demonstrated confident understanding of texts from different genres and their writing was fluent and accurate. Students were able to identify features in poetry such as alliteration and metaphor. Frequent opportunities to contribute to class discussions meant that most were articulate, confident speakers. Students with SEND received individual support in lessons which enabled them to make good progress. Older students produced extended biographical and descriptive writing which demonstrated good understanding and progress over time.
- In mathematics, students attained levels that were above those expected. When compared with international standards, their performance exceeded the expected levels. Year 5 students were very competent in measuring a range of angles accurately. Students across the school were becoming proficient mathematicians. Year 3 students had a good grasp of units of measure and could apply their knowledge with confidence. Students' work was consistently above curriculum standards over the previous three years. All groups of students had progressed more quickly than expected when compared with students in other countries. In lessons, all groups of students, including those with special educational needs could apply their new knowledge with pace and accuracy to achieve their objective.



- Attainment in science, against English national and Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) curriculum standards, was good and progress was also good. Attainment over the previous three years had been slowly improving and was now good. The majority of students had a sound understanding of a range of scientific topics. Their scientific skills of inquiry, especially in testing their ideas with fair tests, were developing well. For example, students in Year 2 engaged enthusiastically in predicting which materials would dissolve in water and then testing their hypotheses. Progress for all groups of students, including students with SEND and Emirati students, was good.

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

- In Islamic Education, most students had an appropriate knowledge of the stories of the Prophets, the Searah, and Islamic values and morals. The majority of students in the secondary phase showed good progress in understanding the Pillars of Faith and learning to use contextual evidence from the verses they learned from Qur'an and Hadeeth. They made better than expected progress in relation to appropriate learning objectives when compared with the expected curriculum standards.
- In Arabic as a first language, listening skills were the strongest for most students. However, their speaking skills were limited. Similar to the primary phase, the majority of students spoke using a dialect rather than standard Arabic. They had appropriate reading comprehension skills but their writing skills were underdeveloped across almost all year groups. Most students made acceptable progress in speaking and reading in relation to the learning objectives in lessons. Overall attainment and progress were limited by a lack of challenge and rigorous assessment.
- In Arabic as an additional language, students could read texts aloud but there were frequent errors in their pronunciation. They had secure listening skills and could respond in Arabic to basic questions. They had an adequate range of vocabulary which they were able to use in their writing. The more able students in the older classes wrote in a varied range of styles such as descriptions and dialogues. They made progress at a level that was expected for their age.
- Students achieved good levels of English attainment when measured against national and international curriculum standards. They could write fluently for different purposes and they demonstrated a confident understanding of how language could be used to describe and persuade. They had fluent reading skills when studying texts such as 'A Woman in Black' and other fiction. Students confidently contributed to class discussions and expressed their views eloquently when presenting to others. Assessment information indicated that most groups of students' progress over time was very good. By Year 9, students could think critically about poetry and their evaluations were supported by well-chosen quotations. Students with SEND received very effective and individual support which enabled them to make good progress.

- In mathematics, secondary students were working at a level that exceeded curriculum standards; they were proficient in a range of mathematical skills. When compared with others internationally, students' attainment was above expectations. Year 7 students understood how to simplify algebraic terms. Year 9 students worked with a high degree of accuracy when calculating internal and external angles. Attainment levels had remained above those expected for the last three years. Students had progressed at a better rate than expected from their individual starting points, and were able to use and apply their knowledge effectively. Students in Year 7, including those with SEND, were competent in understanding terms and simplifying expressions. As a result, they progressed swiftly, having gained an understanding of the concept.
- Attainment in science in the secondary phase was good and students made good progress in their learning against curriculum standards. Over the previous three years, this picture of good attainment had been slowly improving. Students gained good experience in exploring a wide range of scientific topics including investigating electric circuits. They showed interest and used their scientific skills well in conducting a wide range of experiments to test their own hypotheses, and they analysed data resulting from experiments. Year 7 students investigated forces and motion to determine the forces acting on floating objects and linked this to the work of Archimedes.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Learning skills	Good	Good	Good

- Most students showed positive attitudes to learning and listened attentively in class, especially when motivated by interesting work that challenged them fully. In Arabic and Islamic education, students were keen to learn but took less responsibility for their learning and had a weaker understanding of how they could improve their work.
- Students worked well in pairs and in small groups where they were confident to share their ideas, work through problems and discuss their findings in a clear and thoughtful way.
- Students recognised that areas of learning could overlap and were beginning to find real life examples of things they were studying. For example, art work had recently focused on the styles of famous artists and on the iconic skyline of Dubai.
- A whole-school focus on developing critical thinking skills had a growing impact on lessons in all subjects, most notably in English, mathematics and science where students worked enthusiastically on problem-solving tasks and testing their own hypotheses. Students' independent learning skills were developing positively.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Personal development	Very good ↓	Very good ↓	Very good ↓

- Students' personal responsibility was very well developed across the school. Students had positive attitudes and responded well to critical feedback. FS children welcomed praise when they were successful, for example in word-building games. All students were helpful towards each other and their teachers and valued opportunities to make friends with others and with students from around the world.

- Children and students mostly behaved very well, but a few students showed a lack of self-discipline in some lessons. Most students followed routines and classroom rules by raising hands to speak, listening to each other and collaborating in group work. This created a positive learning environment where students could express opinions and were willing to try.
- Relationships were very respectful. Across the school there was a strong sense of concern for the feelings of others, demonstrated by teachers and students who showed good manners towards each other. In the FS, children were aware that their behaviour could hurt others. Often older students from Year 9 helped younger ones, for example, by reading books to them.
- All students had a strong awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and they brought healthy food to school. Older students showed responsibility at lunchtime by explaining the reasons for, and encouraging others in, making healthy eating choices. Students benefitted from the range of sport activities offered and eagerly took part in what was offered.
- Students valued their time in school, and this was evident in their very good attendance. Students were punctual in arriving at school and for lessons throughout the school day.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
<b>Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures</b>	Good	Good	Very good ↑

- Students had a clear understanding of some of the values of Islam, such as respect. They also understood the Islamic practices that impacted on their daily lives in the UAE. Their understanding was enriched by participating in a range of extra-curricular initiatives such as celebrating national events, visiting major sites and engaging in a range of art work.
- Students expressed their feelings of being welcomed as residents of UAE and understood that Dubai was a city that respected all races, cultures and religious beliefs. They had a secure understanding of the Emirati life style, its beginnings in the Bedouin culture, and how life in the UAE had progressed over time.
- From their discussions and work, students showed a secure understanding of each other's cultures and different lifestyles. A range of activities, as well as extra-curricular activities around International Day and National Day, contributed to their knowledge and understanding of different cultures.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
<b>Social responsibility and innovation skills</b>	Good	Good	Outstanding

- Students were well aware of their rights and responsibilities toward their peers and adults in the school. Student council members were actively involved in supporting their peers and representing the voice of the rest of the student body.
- Students had a positive attitude to work and were seen to be highly positive and active in improving and supporting other school communities. They took action in preserving the environment and saving energy around the school. They had good communication with the school leadership and were confident that their suggestions were being heard.

- Students discussed a number of recycling activities and ways for keeping their school clean such as the 'Enviro-lite' initiative in FS. Some primary school students spoke about ways of saving water, and were clear about the sources of pollution in Dubai. Older student groups spoke about efforts to make the desert greener and explained the concept of green communities.

### 3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good

- In all parts of the school, teachers had a good knowledge of their subjects and they used their subject knowledge adeptly to develop students' learning. This was especially so in Year 6 English where modelling of rhetorical questions was used impressively to enhance students' understanding. It was also a consistently strong picture in Islamic Education, science and mathematics.
- Teachers planned interesting and engaging activities that made effective use of time and available resources. There was good differentiation and pace in science. In Islamic Education the planning was better in the lessons for non-Arabs. Most teachers ensured that learning environments were stimulating with the appropriate level of challenge to enhance learning.
- Throughout the school, students benefitted from a positive dialogue with teachers, which engaged them in their learning. Questioning was a strong feature of English lessons and was particularly effective in developing students' critical thinking skills. There were a few examples of effective questioning techniques in Islamic Education, science and mathematics.
- Teachers used a range of teaching strategies to support the needs of students of all abilities. These strategies took account of differing learning styles. The approaches used to support all groups of learners were not as well developed in Arabic A and Arabic B.
- There was an emphasis by teachers across all phases to develop students' independent learning, problem-solving and thinking skills. This was most commonly observed in English and science. The use of technology was not used consistently to develop independent learning skills.
- Teachers of Arabic as a first language had a secure knowledge of their subject and could share this at a suitable level with students. Time was allocated to review learning. Teachers ensured that students were sufficiently engaged in lessons. They used a range of questions to test students' understanding, consequently students made acceptable progress. However, teachers could not meet all the learning needs of all groups and individuals.
- Teaching in Arabic as an additional language modelled the use of Arabic adequately. Planning across year groups was variable with inconsistent practices in the promotion of learning strategies. Teaching was delivered at a variable pace and time was used efficiently in a number of lessons. Teachers made good use of a range of resources, and differentiated learning more effectively at the lower end of the primary phase.



	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Assessment	Good	Good	Good

- Internal assessments were aligned to the National Curriculum for England, and to the CIE curriculum. The assessment data collected provided valid measures of students' academic development and progress. In the FS, assessment information was progressively developed from the measure of attainment of children when they entered the school.
- The school had no current international benchmark test data. Past valid international comparisons had endorsed the accuracy of the school's assessment data. Regular and careful analysis enabled teachers and students to be fully aware of appropriate levels of progress.
- Assessment information was used effectively to track students' progress and modify the curriculum. In the FS, teachers monitored the progress children were making in their development in all areas of their learning.
- Assessment information was used very effectively in most subjects to track students' progress. This information was used, with increasing success, to provide targets for improvement, identify students falling behind in their learning, and ensuring that the curriculum remained interesting and relevant.
- Teachers, particularly in the secondary phase, provided very helpful, personalised feedback to improve their students' progress. In marking, high quality written comments on how to improve, often initiated a dialogue with students to involve them fully in improving their work. Students were keen to do well and welcomed guidance on identifying the necessary steps to improve.

#### 4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum design and implementation	Very good ↑	Good	Good

- The curriculum was broad and balanced and promoted interest and enjoyment for all students. The school's curriculum had been developed using a variety of sources. FS teachers planned each area of learning and development to match the Early Learning Goals. In Arabic as a first language, the school followed the MOE curriculum with clear purpose and continuity.
- The curriculum was well-planned to secure progression and continuity for all students throughout the key stages, particularly in English and mathematics. In science, some topics were repeated in older years to be explored in greater depth. Some science units had been recently introduced into the curriculum.
- The curriculum provided students with a small number of options in their studies. Early years children made choices during child-initiated activities such as water play. Boys in particular, enthusiastically opted to wash toy cars. Older students in humanities chose how to produce their coursework for assessment in different formats including models, diaries and cartoons.



- Lessons supported independent learning and developed critical thinking, particularly in English, while making connections to other subjects. The primary curriculum was taught through a thematic approach and the Arabic coordinator planned delivery together with class teachers. In the FS, child-initiated learning provided creative and practical experiences to reinforce and extend children's understanding and skills.
- Leaders regularly reviewed and developed the curriculum to meet students' needs. For example, as a consequence of review, the school was in the process of developing a social studies programme to enrich the existing MOE curriculum. The focus on assessment was part of a whole school review that was being managed increasingly well by senior leaders.
- UAE social studies was taught as a discrete subject. The school was in early stages of enriching the Ministry of Education curriculum standards and including some curricular connections between the UAE and the UK social studies curricula.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum adaptation	Very good ↑	Good ↑	Good ↑

- The curriculum was successfully adapted to include a range of modifications. Much work had been done in the last two years to amalgamate different curricula. The move to using IBT benchmark tests required adjustments to teaching approaches and prepared students for different styles of questions in English, mathematics and science. Significant changes in the Early Years phonics curriculum meant that focused sessions were now regularly provided.
- The curriculum was interesting, motivating and diverse. Students benefited from an enriched curriculum with specialist French, art, PE and ICT lessons, and the primary phase brought together different disciplines through cross-curricular topics. Opportunities to experience a range of social, cultural and sporting extra-curricular opportunities were evident. Students in English, humanities and science lessons were encouraged to discover learning for themselves and think critically in their learning activities.
- The curriculum included interesting programmes which developed students' knowledge and understanding of the heritage of the UAE. Numerous trips, such as to the Dubai Museum, Heritage Village and Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding, provided a diverse range of opportunities for students to appreciate Emirati culture and society. The extension of social studies ensured students continued to improve their awareness and appreciation of UAE values.
- The school provided two lessons of 40 minutes of Arabic for children in in FS1 and two, thirty-minute lessons in FS2. The FS Arabic program focused on letter recognition, delivered in the form of songs and hands-on worksheets. All students experienced the same curriculum at the same time.

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

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

- There were effective procedures operating within the school for the safeguarding of students. All students were aware of the issues of bullying and unacceptable behaviour and older students were observed looking after the younger ones. Older students had, through training, developed an awareness of the potential dangers of the internet.
- The school provided a safe and hygienic environment for students and staff. Supervision levels across the school were outstanding throughout the day, especially at the beginning and end of the day.
- Buildings and all resources were very well maintained. New resources, such as the outdoor playground, were very well utilised. Effective timetabling ensured that the swimming pool was used to capacity.
- The school's premises were suitable for all activities and were maintained in an excellent condition. For example, the school hall was a well utilised resource where physical education skills could be developed for all students in a safe, clean environment.
- Students talked enthusiastically about their knowledge of healthy living, the benefits of a balanced diet and the importance of physical education. Their knowledge was enhanced by the work of the school nurse and teaching staff.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Care and support	Good	Good	Good

- There were very positive relationships within the school between students and all staff. Systems used to monitor students' behaviour and attitudes to learning were very effective. The management of students' behaviour throughout the school was very good in all parts of the school.
- The school was successful in promoting very good attendance. Punctuality had improved as a result of a determined approach from the leadership of the school to ensure that there were no delays either to the start of school, or to lessons.
- The management of SEND provision was good. The new special needs department leader had set about developing secure systems for the identification of students with SEND and gifted and talented students. The school ensured that the individual educational plans contained objectives against which progress could be measured accurately.
- The school provided effective support for a large majority of students with SEND, and those who were gifted and talented. Almost all parents felt fully informed about their children's needs and agreed that communication systems with the school were positive and effective in keeping them up to date with their child's progress.
- The well-being and personal development of all students, both academically and pastorally, was good. Students and parents were provided with accurate feedback and effective guidance and support for their work at the school and in the future.

## 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 recently-appointed leaders had developed the role of SEND coordinator, and of SEND coordinator for Arabic studies, with enthusiasm and commitment. Their drive was to improve the provision for students with SEND and accelerate the progress of all students in their care. They had developed new monitoring and identification procedures and were beginning the process of holding teachers to account for the progress their students made. For Arabic, this practice was still at an early stage.
- The effectiveness of early intervention and identification was good. This was exemplified by a number of students whose needs had been identified early in their school life, and had additional support, provision and resources allocated to the class. Individual education plans guided the work of students and promoted good progress for the student in meeting age-related expectations.
- Parents were, in almost all cases, very pleased with the progress their children were making. They reported that good contacts with the school had been established. They were pleased with the school and willing to support their child at home. They knew they could refer to the school for support and advice at any time because of the good communication systems in place.
- Inspectors observed many good examples of students' individual needs being addressed through modifications to the curriculum. In these good examples, additional resources were allocated, including the use of additional adult intervention, one-to-one support from the SEND coordinator and adapted curriculum materials. These students' needs were also met through the good use of individual education plans which were, in the majority of cases, sharply focused.
- In the best examples, students knew what to do to improve their work but this was not consistent across the school. There were good examples, from scrutiny of work and from analysis of progress data, to show where students had made good progress. They made acceptable progress in Arabic lessons.

## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Good

- All leaders were enthusiastic and committed to a shared vision of academic improvement, personal growth and ongoing school improvement in this community school. They communicated this vision to the staff so that all took responsibility for its implementation across the school.
- Leaders had secure knowledge of best practices in teaching and learning, and had made adjustments to the curriculum in line with national changes. The school was inclusive and effective in establishing a positive learning culture, and in achieving high standards in students' personal development.
- Relationships were professional and morale in the school was very positive. The school had delegated leadership effectively to middle managers, but some were at an early stage of understanding fully what was needed to fulfil their roles. Members of the senior leadership team were clear about their responsibilities of monitoring and evaluating students' achievements across all phases of the school, and this had brought about improvements.

- Leaders were constantly seeking ways to adapt and extend their professional skills in order to ensure that the school continued to improve. They worked together to improve systems within school and accommodated and supported all staff in order to sustain improvement.
- School leaders were committed to moving the school forward and had been successful in enhancing some aspects of the school. The recruitment of good quality teachers was a key priority. Leaders ensured that the school was compliant with all statutory and regulatory requirements.

#### School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Good

- Self-evaluation, using both internal and external data, was increasingly, but still inconsistently used in school improvement planning. Even though heads of department were aware of the strengths and areas for improvement of the school, some, particularly in Arabic and Islamic Education, were not secure about how the school's data could be used to inform planning.
- School leaders ensured that the quality of teaching, and its impact on learning was effectively monitored. Performance management procedures were in place to ensure that all staff met the school's expectations for teaching and the consequent impact on attainment and progress in most subjects. However, targets set were not sufficiently linked to the extent of progress made by students.
- School improvement plans addressed the recommendations from the previous inspection report but the criteria that were used were not always clear enough to accurately measure success. Short-term action plans were relevant and useful, but there was a lack of longer-term strategic planning to understand what direction the school was taking.
- Most staff were actively involved in implementing strategies for improvement. A number of middle leaders were new in post and were making progress in developing their roles and making improvements. As a result there had been some progress in addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection.

#### Partnerships with parents and the community

Very good ↑

- There were regular opportunities for parents to be actively involved in the life of the school and to be partners in their children's learning. They supported fundraising events and contributed to school governance. Parents of younger children were provided with training to help their children with phonic skills. Parent volunteers helped with reading skill development and took part in out-of-school activities as well as planning and judging competitions.
- Parents were very well informed about their children's learning and responded extremely positively to the parents' survey. The use of e-mails and newsletters helped to keep the school community well informed about forthcoming events and their children's achievements. Parents were welcomed into school and the school acted upon any concerns that they had.
- Parents were given weekly updates on their children's progress and what they could do to help them. Teachers' comments included 'next steps' so that students were guided in the right direction. Teachers' e-mails usually included websites to allow for independent learning.

- The school had links with other schools in Dubai and in different parts of the world through the 'connecting classrooms' initiative, where students studied the same topic with students of another country. Members of the community, including the Dubai Police, were invited into school to hold workshops for the students. The school made regular donations to 'Dubai Cares' and shoebox appeals, and conducted volunteer work regularly through the 'Principal's Challenge'.

## Governance

Good

- Governance included representation from the parent body as well as a number of members from the staff and local community. There were systems to gather the views of stakeholders, as part of the decision making process.
- The governing body regularly monitored the work of the school but relied more on the school's own account of its performance and quality of achievements. As a result, governors did not always have an in-depth knowledge of the school. There were no written targets to hold the principal accountable.
- Governors had a good overview of the school and actively guided and supported leaders. They ensured that appropriate staffing and resources were available to address weaknesses and that all statutory requirements were met.

## Management, staffing, facilities and resources




Good

- The day-to-day operations of the school were smooth and efficient. The timetable was effective in ensuring maximum use of time and space. Staff and students were aware of school routines and no time was lost in moving from one class to another during the school day.
- All staff were suitably qualified for the positions they held and had benefitted from regular professional development that was matched to the school's priorities. This helped ensure that students benefitted from teaching and support that better met their needs.
- The school premises were safe and secure and included interactive whiteboards in classrooms. The facilities for learning technologies were used only occasionally by class groups. As a result, students particularly in secondary, were not able to apply the use of learning technologies in all areas of the curriculum.
- Resources were well matched to the educational needs of students and were in good condition. Investment had led to a variety and breadth in materials, particularly in the FS. This helped students engage in their learning as well as provide curriculum breadth.



## 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	157
	2014-2015	123
<b>Teachers</b> 	38	
<b>Students</b> 	0	

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

- Most parents agreed that their child was making good progress overall.
- Almost all parents agreed that students made the best progress in mathematics.
- The weakest subjects were Islamic Education and Arabic where a significant number of parents did not know whether their child made good progress.
- Almost all parents and teachers believed that children enjoyed school and developed a good awareness of other cultures. However, a large majority of parents did not know whether there were opportunities for their children to learn about the community and environmental responsibilities, or whether their child would receive a recognised qualification at the end of further schooling.
- Most parents stated that school leaders listened to parents, acted on their views and prepared children for the next stage of learning.
- Almost all parents stated that the school was well led and that reports and meetings with teachers kept them informed about how their child was progressing.

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)