



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational
needs and disabilities



Innovation

Inspection Report 2015-2016

International School of Arts and

Curriculum: US

Overall rating: Acceptable

Read more about the school



www.khda.gov.ae

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



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

Contents

School information	2
Summary for parents and the community	3
Main inspection report	10
1. Students' achievement	11
2. Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills	15
3. Teaching and assessment	17
4. Curriculum	18
5. The protection, care, guidance and support of students	19
Provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)	20
6. Leadership and management	21
The views of the parents, teachers and students	24

School information

General information



Location	Al Warqaa
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2007
Website	www.isas.sch.ae
Telephone	04-2800459
Address	Al Warqa'a 1 - Dubai UAE PO Box 35901
Principal	Muhieddine Soubra, سوبره الدين محي
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	21 to 24 March 2016

Students



Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	4-18
Grades or year groups	Kindergarten 1 to Grade 12
Number of students on roll	822
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	None
Number of Emirati students	225
Number of students with SEND	20
Largest nationality group of students	Arab

Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	82
Largest nationality group of teachers	Lebanese
Number of teaching assistants	3
Teacher-student ratio	1:11
Number of guidance counsellors	1
Teacher turnover	15%

Curriculum



Educational permit / Licence	US
Main curriculum	US
External tests and examinations	IBT, SAT, PSAT
Accreditation	None
National Agenda benchmark tests	IBT

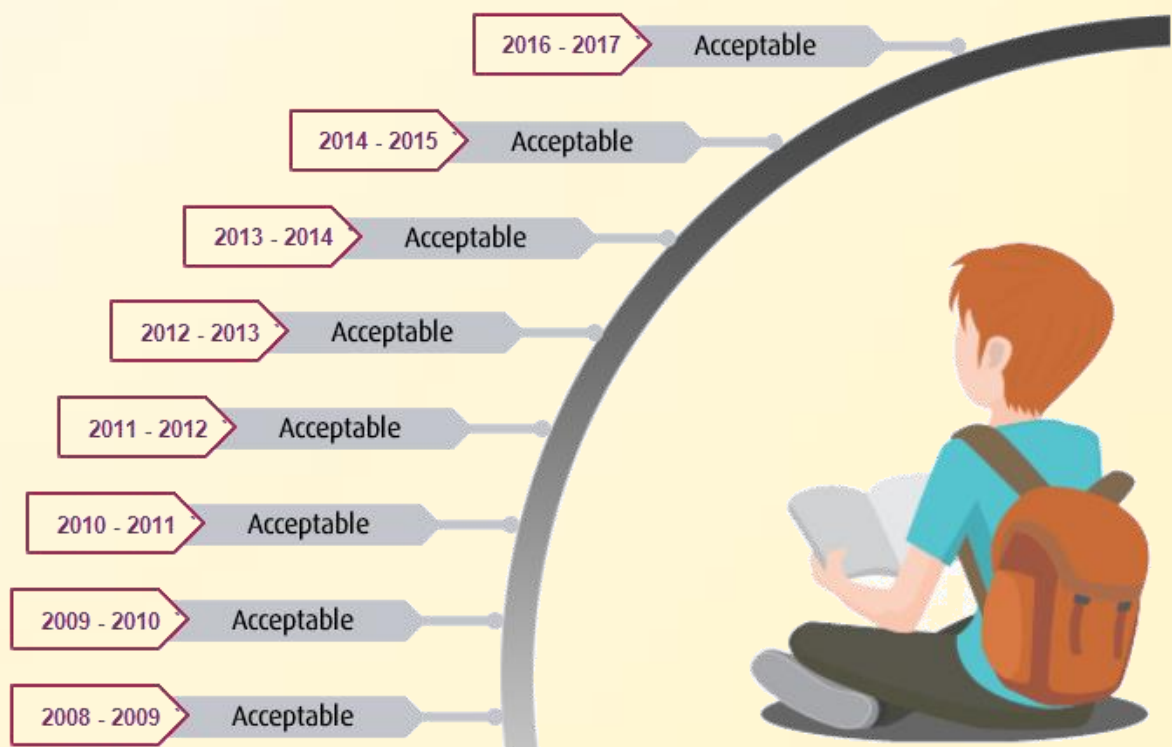


Summary for parents and the community

International School of Arts and Sciences was inspected by DSIB from 21 to 24 March 2016. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **acceptable**.

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

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





How well did the school perform overall?

Overall, International School of Arts and Sciences provided **acceptable** quality of education for its students.

- Children in Kindergarten (KG) and students at the elementary phase made mainly good progress in key subjects. The one exception was science in elementary, where students' progress was acceptable. Progress in the middle and high school phases varied between acceptable and good across the key subjects.
- Attainment in key subjects varied between acceptable and good. It was good in Islamic education and Arabic in the elementary phase. Attainment in most subjects in the middle and high school phases was mainly acceptable, as were students' learning skills from elementary to high school.
- Students' personal and social development were positive, particularly in their understanding of Islamic values and their awareness of Emirati, and world, cultures.
- Teachers' planning and implementation of lessons, including the assessing of students' progress and giving them helpful feedback, varied from weak to outstanding. They were acceptable overall. Teaching was good in the KG and elementary phases, where teachers adopted a wider range of approaches, and involved students more, than in other phases.
- The curriculum was well designed and adapted to meet the learning needs of different individuals and groups of students.
- Arrangements to promote students' health and keep them safe were of the highest quality. Staff cared for students and supported them effectively.
- Most aspects of leadership and management, including partnership with parents, were done well. However, the quality of school self-evaluation and its impact were acceptable overall.



What did the school do well?

- The good quality of the curriculum and teaching in KG, which resulted in children developing effective learning skills and making mostly good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- The steady progress students made in their personal and social development and the very well developed understanding and appreciation of Islamic values, Emirati, and world, cultures, throughout the school.
- The cross-curricular links, opportunities for continuity and progression, and adaptations to meet the needs of different groups of students, in the increasingly well-designed curriculum.
- The arrangements to ensure that students were well cared for and supported. The very high caliber of health and safety procedures.
- The good subject knowledge and well planned lessons in Arabic which ensured lessons were linked to real world applications.
- The drive for improvement from the principal supported by other leaders, the school's partnership with parents, and staffing levels, which were effective in helping the school to improve.



What does the school need to do next?

- Build on the improvements to attainment and progress so that these key aspects of students' achievement are consistently good or better by:
 - improving teachers' questioning skills, so that they challenge students with open-ended questions and problems to develop critical thinking, problem-solving and practical skills
 - giving students more opportunities to explore concepts independently and use learning technology to find things out for themselves
 - building a shared understanding, among teachers, of what constitutes good practice in teaching with reference to national and international standards, and encourage the effective development of this good practice across the school.
- Sharpen the impact of school self-evaluation activities by:
 - placing more emphasis on the impact of teaching on student progress when teachers evaluate their work, when lesson observations are being carried out and when the results are recorded and fed back to teachers
 - analysing assessment information more effectively to track strengths and weaknesses in the progress and attainment of individual students and targeting strategies to overcome barriers to their learning
 - checking the effectiveness of school improvement strategies more regularly.
- Planning and implementing teaching approaches and class timetabling in Arabic as an additional language, so that they take full account of the number of years for which students have been studying the language.



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

- The overall progress of most students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) was good.
- Parents received monthly reports on their children's progress as well as termly school reports.
- The school maintained strong communication links with parents and kept them informed on a regular basis.
- Parents were very involved in the individual planning process and the choice of support options.
- The SEND department provided advice and guidance to parents on supporting their children at home and managing their behavior.

National Agenda Parameter



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

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

Main points:

- The school did not fully meet the registration requirements of the National Agenda parameter.
- The attainment data was not sufficient to make a full judgement on the school's progress towards meeting the National Agenda targets.
- The governing body was supporting senior leaders to promote the National Agenda by communicating with parents, staff and students through a good range of approaches, including meetings and newsletters. Governors had increased staffing levels in an attempt to help staff meet the National Agenda targets for student attainment.
- Teachers were making progress in aligning the English, mathematics and science curricula to the appropriate US standards and to the requirements of TIMSS and PISA tests. Cross-curricular approaches were being adopted. There was an increasing emphasis on reading for comprehension.
- Teachers were taking the first steps in developing students' critical thinking skills more effectively, for example by improving their own questioning skills.
- Students did not have sufficient opportunities to use learning technology to carry out independent research and find things out for themselves.

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:

- Leaders had revised the school's mission to include creativity, with innovation opportunities, and a vision to shift the school's culture to more student-centered learning. There was on-going development in the use of Information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning and innovative opportunities, with an allocated budget for the purchase of additional resources. The school's strategic plans included embedding entrepreneurship into the curriculum to include project based learning initiatives to develop authentic learning experiences with a focus on inquiry-based instruction.

Overall school performance

Acceptable

1. Students' achievement

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Good ↑	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Personal development	Good	Good	Good	Good
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good	Good	Good

3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Good ↑	Good ↑	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

4. Curriculum

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

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
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

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

- For the majority of children, attainment in English was above the expected curriculum standards. Upon entry to school, a majority of children had limited knowledge of spoken English. They made good progress and, by KG 2, could read and write simple sentences. The majority could speak English well and express themselves clearly in conversations. Most children could recall previously learned vocabulary and share it correctly with the teacher. Children's written work showed that the majority could write legible and coherently respond to lesson prompts. A large majority of children could follow directions and work in groups, or independently, with success.
- In mathematics, the school's internal assessment results, and the lessons observed, revealed that children reached acceptable levels of attainment. They made good progress, relative to their starting points. Their good progress was evident in the work seen in their books, showing acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding by the majority of children. In lessons, the large majority of children demonstrated a good understanding of simple mathematical computation. They could count in ones and tens without assistance. Most children could accurately identify common shapes. Overall, children attained in line with expectations.
- Children's attainment and progress in science were good. Most engaged happily, discussing and naming the major parts of plants. Children enjoyed planting seeds; they used food coloring to see how the stem carried nutrients to the leaves. Most children actively participated in lessons where they could share their knowledge of the world around them. Weather observations, predictions and experiments indicated higher level thinking. Progress was good because of the investigative nature of the lessons.

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

- The majority of students in Islamic education attained levels that were above the curriculum standards. Students had a good knowledge of the five Pillars of Islam, prayer steps, and fasting rules. Students' recitation skills were less strong, and the links they made between what they learned and verses from the Holy Qur'an were limited. Students made good progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to the learning objectives in the lessons. The majority of students made rapid progress in understanding Hadeeth, Seerah, and Islamic morals and values. The progress of the different groups of students including the students with SEND was inconsistent.
- In Arabic as a first language, the majority of students demonstrated attainment above the MOE expectations. In listening, students' answers showed their understanding of teachers' questions. They could speak formal Arabic. In reading, the majority of students understood the text presented in lessons, and summarized them well in writing. All students were able to undertake creative writing, but the quality of their work needed further development.
- The majority of students achieved attainment levels in Arabic as an additional language which exceeded expectations. Students' listening skills were acceptable. The majority of students could use Arabic above curriculum expectations. For example, carrying out a simple dialogue with the teacher. However, some students used informal Arabic or English to communicate at times. Students could produce writing with support from prompts, but their creative writing skills were limited. The majority of students made better than expected progress, particularly in the higher grades for this phase, as confirmed by lesson observations and in workbooks and data.
- In English, over the past three years, attainment and progress had been broadly in line with national and international standards. This year, internal and external school benchmark data and lesson observations indicated the majority of students made better than expected progress. Their attainment was above expectations. Students in the upper grades demonstrated a skillful use of written and spoken language to solve problems, to collaborate, and to discuss literature.
- In mathematics, most students developed their knowledge, understanding and skills to expected levels. As they moved into the elementary phase, students were able to count to 20, understand addition and subtraction, and identify and describe geometric shapes. These skills were developed progressively and enhanced for the majority of students throughout the elementary phase, at a better than expected rate. By Grade 6, most students had knowledge and understanding of shapes and skills in calculation, in line with curriculum expectations.
- In science, internal and external tests showed that most students had knowledge, understanding and skills in line with expectations. In lessons, most students made expected progress and could show that their practical skills were developing in line with curriculum expectations. For example, they could carry out simple experimental procedures and record outcomes in an appropriate way. Broadly speaking, these standards had been maintained over time. Girls performed a little better than boys.

Middle		
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	Acceptable	Acceptable
Science	Acceptable	Acceptable


- Most students attained levels in Islamic education that were in line with the curriculum standards. Their knowledge and understanding of the Pillars of Faith, Islamic etiquettes, morals and values, compulsory and optional prayers were in line with expectations. Their recent work reflected this well and indicated good progress. Students' ability to use verses from the Holy Qur'an as evidence in their debates and discussions was weak. Students made good progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to the learning objectives in the lessons. They made good progress in understanding Seerah and Islamic principles, morals and values.
- Most students attained levels, during lessons that were in line with expectations. Most students could speak standard Arabic using short sentences and familiar vocabulary. Most students were able to read the text of the book, but they needed support to understand specific text and in developing their writing skills. Most students made progress in lessons which was in line with expectations. This was borne out by their workbooks and assessment information.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students achieved attainment levels in line with expectations. Students could listen and respond well, their answers indicating their understanding. Most could speak Arabic using short sentences and familiar words. In reading, most students understood the stories they read. All students could copy text, write from dictation, and complete short summaries of stories. Their creative writing skills were limited. Students' workbooks and assessment information showed that most students' progress was in line with expectations; this had been the case, over the past few years.
- The majority of students were able to produce work above expected levels in English. Most could speak well to communicate with fluency and confidence even though the majority were second language learners. Writing skills were less well developed, and students on occasion made mistakes in sentence structure, grammar, and usage. Over the past three years, attainment had remained broadly in line with expected standards. The school's internal assessment information showed that a majority of students made good progress in developing their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. On these formal assessments, girls scored slightly better than boys.
- Most students developed mathematical knowledge, understanding and skills to expected curriculum levels. International Benchmarking Tests (IBT) showed positive results compared to schools globally. In Grade 6, most students could use ratio and reasoning to solve real world math problems. In Grade 7, students solved multi-step mathematic problems with positive and negative rational numbers. In Grade 8, using their knowledge of geometry, students verified experimentally the properties of rotations, reflections and translations. Most students made progress in line with expectations during this phase.

- Internal tests in science indicated that about two thirds of students attained results in line with curriculum standards. IBT results were positive in comparison to other schools. In lessons, students had, in most cases, attained at a level which was in line with the expected curriculum standard. For example, most were able to distinguish correctly between speed and velocity, and understood the experimental approaches of the biologist Mendel.

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

- In Islamic education, most students had age-related knowledge and understanding of Islamic principles and laws, such as the marriage rules. This was confirmed by the work their workbooks. As in other phases, students' ability to use Hadeeth and verses from the Qur'an to support their opinions was weak. A majority of students made rapid progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to the learning objectives in the lessons. Their progress in understanding Seerah, Islamic Law and Islamic morals and values was rapid, but it was slower in recitation skills. The progress of the different groups of students was inconsistent.
- Most students in Arabic as a first language, attained levels in line with curriculum expectations. They listened well and spoke formal Arabic using short sentences and familiar vocabulary. In reading, most students read text but needed the teacher's support to understand some vocabulary. Students' creative writing skills needed improvement. The majority of students' progress in lessons was above expectations.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students made expected progress and reached expected attainment levels. Most students could speak about themselves using short sentences and familiar vocabulary. In reading, most students understood the main idea of the text, copy from written text, transcribe dictations and write short summaries of stories. Students' workbooks and assessment information confirmed their acceptable progress, currently and over time.
- In English, most students reached levels of attainment and made progress that were in line with curriculum standards. Assessment information from standardized test scores including SAT, AP, ITB and internal benchmarks supported this judgement. Students' writing was not fully up to the expectations of a variety of texts in a range of genres. Similarly, research and analysis of creative and informational texts were acceptable. Most groups made acceptable progress.
- For the majority of students, attainment and progress in mathematics were above the expected curriculum and international standards. This was confirmed by lessons observations. For example, the majority of Grade 12 students, scored above the mean SAT score. Grade 9 students, could calculate and interpret the average rate of change of a function over a specified interval. Grade 10 students, could write the equation of a circle when given its center and a point on the circle. In Grade 11, students could represent data of two quantitative variables on a scatter graph, and described the relationship between the variables. In Grade 12, students could find the equation of a tangent and normal lines to a curve at a specific point and then applied their learning to a real life scenario.

- In science, internal and external assessments indicated less than three quarters of students managed to show attainment at a level which was expected by the school's curriculum, and this trend had been sustained over time. An exception to this was Advanced Placement (AP) Biology, where almost all students scored above the expected level. In lessons, most were able to show a level of understanding and a degree of progress which was broadly in line with the curriculum standard. As an example, AP Chemistry students could discuss with confidence the structure of organic compounds.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Good 	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- When given the opportunity, many students engaged with their learning, especially in the middle school and in mathematics, Islamic education and Arabic. Generally, they took responsibility for their own learning and did what was expected of them. Overall though, students tended to be passive listeners or observers, commonly because lessons did not sufficiently challenge or support them. The majority of students did not show that they were aware of what was required to improve their learning.
- Most students relished the chance to work together in groups and were able to do so productively, often sharing ideas clearly. This was especially true of KG, elementary and middle schools. In the high school, some students adopted a more passive role, and, as a consequence, less positive interaction was observed.
- When opportunities were presented, students were able to make connections between their studies and the real world. A good example of this was the use of a technology application which allowed verses of the Holy Qur'an to be viewed, together with the English and Arabic interpretations. Connections with the real world were observed in other subjects, but were less evident.
- There was little evidence of independent research being undertaken in lessons, or of technology being used to aid this process. Similarly, little critical thinking was observed; where students engaged in evaluative, analytical activities. Students had few opportunities for learning to be furthered through open-ended, problem-solving activities.

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Personal development	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Across all phases, students demonstrated a positive sense of personal responsibility to the school's ethos. They had good attitudes towards their own learning. They responded well to feedback from their peers and adults.
- Students were caring and respectful, responding well to their classmates, teachers and other staff. They demonstrated strong concern and sensitivity to the needs of their friends and others. Instances of bullying were rare, and the school dealt with any which did occur in an appropriate manner.

- Students enjoyed respectful relationships between themselves and adults and with others of different national backgrounds. They were always willing to help others. They particularly enjoyed developing relationships with their teachers and the school community.
- Children in KG were keen to follow their teachers' advice on healthy living practices as part of their daily lives. The school promoted safe and healthy lifestyles in other phases via a reasonable range of activities and initiatives. Students did not always choose healthy food options.
- Attendance was acceptable in KG and very good in other phases. The school was trying to improve student punctuality. A few students were not punctual in arriving at school and to lessons throughout the school day.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- Children in KG and students in other phases had a strong understanding of Islamic values. They were able to share, in detail and age-appropriately, their understanding of the impact of Islam on modern society in Dubai and its development, including building features, Islamic finance and social life.
- Students had a strong knowledge about the UAE culture, heritage and traditions. They could make comparisons between some social events and celebrations. They demonstrated high respect and appreciation of the Emirati culture and history.
- Students, particularly those from the elementary to high school phases, talked proudly about their own cultures. They expressed their appreciation of the school's multi-cultural society. Understanding of the world's wider cultures outside the school was developing.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Students had a strong sense of social responsibility. They were keen to take on important roles in school and in society in the future. They participated in after-school clubs and special projects designed to help them contribute to the community and to the world as far away as Nepal. They were confident their voices would be heard as they proposed changes to the school.
- Students had positive relationships with their teachers who urged them to try out new ideas and be creative. There was further scope for students to initiate and develop their own projects more often. Some participated in competitions designed to promote enterprise and innovation, and many took pride in the school's accomplishments.
- Students had a good understanding of environmental issues in the UAE and abroad. They believed they could have a positive impact on the world and understood that their generation could have a huge impact on the world's ability to live within its resources.

3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Good ↑	Good ↑	Acceptable	Acceptable

- In most classes, teachers demonstrated secure knowledge of their subject. However, this was less evident, especially in the middle and high school phases, where they were not able to apply this knowledge in a way which took full account of how students best acquire knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Teachers' lessons were nearly always planned effectively. The plans were not usually different, from one class to another, even though the needs of the student were different. Learning environments supported learning and resources were generally available. Lessons proceeded at a suitable pace for much of the time.
- Interactions between students and teachers were positive for the most part, as were those between students. As a consequence, engagement with learning and subsequent progress was positive, especially in KG and the elementary phase. Good teacher questioning moved learning along with purpose, especially in KG and the elementary phase, resulting in productive dialogue.
- Teachers used a range of approaches to challenge and support students. These approaches were not usually geared to the specific needs of individual students, they were generic usually tailored to the learning needs of small groups.
- Opportunities to develop critical thinking were infrequent. Teachers did not plan effectively to develop students' skills in analysis, evaluation, hypothesising or independent thinking. As a consequence, students rarely gained a deep understanding of concepts or high-level investigative skills.
- Teaching in Arabic was generally good, particularly in the elementary phase. Teachers had good subject knowledge and planned lessons to ensure that all students were involved. They used ICT well and usually managed to link their lessons to real world applications. Development of critical thinking and independent learning skills in students was less effective.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- The school's internal assessment policies were broadly appropriate and generally well suited to the curriculum. Most teachers applied the policies consistently and used a variety of assessment strategies to identify strengths and weaknesses in students' learning.
- The school demonstrated a clear commitment to international benchmarking. Staff utilized a range of external assessments to measure students' progress against international expectations. Results of internal and external assessments had not yet been fully benchmarked to ensure that they resulted in consistent measurements of the attainment and progress of students.
- Staff analyzed assessment data from external and internal tests. The measurements of progress of individual students over time, were less effective than judgements on students' attainment at assessment collection points.

- Internal and external assessment data were analyzed by the school in some depth, but the school had not used this information consistently to modify the curriculum and influence teaching. Lesson plans did not take full account of the recent performance of groups or individuals to inform future learning.
- Teachers had good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of individual students in their classes. In better lessons, they used their knowledge to provide challenge, supportive feedback and advice to students on their next steps in learning. Their lessons sometimes included student peer and self-assessment. These good practices were not implemented consistently.

4. Curriculum

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

- The school's movement to a US Common Core Curriculum promoted substantial changes across all grades. Overall, changes were going well, though work remained to embed them. The new curriculum was built upon a clear rationale, and it was focused on the developmental needs of students in each level. Built-in progression increasingly assured that students were well prepared for transition from one grade to the next.
- All curriculum documents demonstrated clear alignment to required standards. However, there remained too much emphasis on developing students' knowledge rather than their skills and conceptual understanding. The school was compliant with MOE requirements in terms of the time required for teaching Arabic and Islamic education. The alternative opportunities for students who did not participate in Islamic Education were not well designed.
- Extra-curricular and curricular provision gave students a broad range of learning experiences to meet their needs. The broad range of electives at the high school were highly valued by students and prepared them for a variety of universities and careers.
- Cross-curricular strategies were improving. Teachers were increasingly planning lessons which involved cross-curricular aspects and were trying to integrate them fully into classwork.
- Staff reviewed the curriculum formally on an annual basis. Teachers were not fully involved in this process. As a result, they had not developed a shared understanding of what curriculum design should accomplish.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum adaptation	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good

- Most lesson plans included modifications for students with SEND who required aspects of the curriculum to be adapted. Teacher capacity in implementing these modifications had improved through professional development activities and support from the SEND department. Students with significant needs attended intensive subject support sessions, which generally contained the most successful curriculum modification.
- A broad and interesting curriculum was supplemented by a wide range of enrichment activities and student clubs. Motivated students took part in a wide range of activities which provided opportunities for innovation and enterprise, and fostered creativity. Advanced placement classes, had improved the options for high school students, with classes such as pre-engineering, robotics, music composition and pre-medical studies.
- Appropriate links with Emirati culture and UAE society were a feature of many lessons. This was particularly true in KG and throughout the school in social studies, Arabic and Islamic education classes, where teachers effectively took advantage of the experiences of the Emirati students and their peers to enhance the lessons.
- Specialist teachers provided Arabic language instruction daily to children in the KG classes. They followed a designed programme similar to Grade 1 in the MOE curriculum. All children learned Arabic in dedicated classes.

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

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

- Very effective procedures for the care and protection of all students were in place and shared with all stakeholders. Arrival and dismissal procedures were highly effective. A child protection policy was in place and shared with families and staff. Appropriate steps had been taken to protect students from abuse, including bullying in school and online.
- The two school clinics were well staffed and addressed the needs of all students. All necessary records were kept, and medications secured. The school appropriately involved parents in the welfare of their children. The school was well maintained, and play and outdoor areas were clean and safe.
- The building was clean and well-maintained. All appropriate contracts were signed to provide a safe and inviting learning environment. Accurate discipline records were maintained and necessary follow-up procedures were in place.
- Classrooms were of appropriate size. Specialist areas such as laboratories, and art and music studios were well equipped and designed to enable effective lessons, expanding curricular options for students. Learning spaces, especially in KG were specifically designed to support young learners. Ramps and a lift were present providing access throughout the school for all students.
- The cafeteria was clean and well-designed, providing high quality, healthy meal options for students. The school health staff gave presentations on healthy lifestyles for students. Assemblies addressed the importance of regular exercise and a healthy diet. Students' weights were tracked and information shared with their families. Immunizations were administered in the clinics with parental approval.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Care and support	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Staff-student relationships were very positive throughout the school. Heads of sections and teachers played a significant pastoral role and, through their detailed knowledge of students, had fostered a caring environment. The school's policy promoted positive behavior across all phases and facilitated the development of personal responsibility among students.
- Attendance and punctuality to school were accurately recorded and monitored by the heads of each section using on the online system. The school worked diligently with parents to achieve good student attendance and punctuality. While brief statements had been written to list the sanctions, there was no overall policy document to detail the procedures in place to support this area.
- The school was inclusive and had established effective procedures to identify students with SEND. Information available in professional reports was not being used fully to identify the specific needs of students and to inform planning. Although, a target for development in the school's action plan, there were no procedures for the identification of students who were gifted or talented.
- Students with SEND were well supported by a range of provisions including curriculum modifications and individualized instruction. Students, who experienced difficulty with the English language, received intensive English lessons. Although, teachers were expected to provide challenge and differentiate their lessons to meet the needs of the more able students, there were no formal processes in place for the support of students who were gifted or talented.
- Every class teacher and head of section had a pastoral role regarding the welfare and support of students. There was a full-time guidance counselor who worked with the high school students to provide information and support in choosing electives and advance programs. Advice and support regarding university applications and careers were also provided.

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

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


Good 

- Senior leaders demonstrated support for inclusion and targeted the continued development of the provision for all students with SEND. The SEND coordinator provided strong leadership and on-going support for teachers. The school was inclusive in its enrollment practices and in the support for students, but this positivity was not reflected in the admissions policy.
- A well-developed referral system supported by observations, parent discussions and an analysis of professional reports effectively identified all students with learning needs. Procedures did not consistently identify the specific needs of students and inform appropriate interventions. Important information within reports from other professionals was not always used effectively.
- There was on-going communication between the school and parents. Parents received progress reports and guidance on how to support their children's learning and behavior needs at home. They attended meetings in the SEND department and took part in the development and review of their children's individual education plan (IEP). They were involved in all decisions regarding the provision of support.

- The provision for students with SEND included individualized subject support and the pursuit of IEP targets. Curriculum modifications featured in lesson plans and their implementation was monitored by the SEND coordinator. Sometimes, the modifications were inappropriate for the student's specific needs. The better teachers effectively differentiated questions, instructions and tasks to ensure each student's access to the curriculum.
- The overall progress of most students with SEND was good. This was a result of the inclusive ethos of the school, the implementation of accommodations and differentiated instruction, and personalized support. A range of processes were in place to monitor student progress. However, IEP targets were not used effectively to facilitate their use in measuring progress.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Good 

- Governors and the principal had a clear vision for the school, which appropriately involved delivering a genuine US- curriculum, improving provision, and contributing to the implementation of the UAE National Agenda. Helped by heads of section and subject coordinators, who showed good leadership overall, they shared this vision with other teachers in a variety of ways, including through the school improvement plan.
- Senior leaders had been effective in overseeing improvements in a range of important aspects of the school's work. Their knowledge of best practice in teaching, learning and assessment had not been sufficiently developed, or conveyed to teachers, to support consistently high standards in students' learning.
- Relationships among staff were positive, and communication was carried out effectively. Staff morale was positive, and teams worked well together.
- Senior leaders were increasingly demonstrating innovative approaches to improving the school. They had shown creativity in designing the well-established elective structure in the high school phase and a cross-curricular project in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). They were planning to implement performance-related pay for teachers.
- Leaders had been successful in improving several key aspects of the school, including the quality of the curriculum and some aspects of students' attainment and progress.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Acceptable

- Staff used a range of processes for gathering information on the quality of the school's work, and used this information to draw up school improvement plans. Senior leaders had a broadly accurate view of the school's improvement priorities, but analysis of data and information was not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that strengths and weaknesses were identified fully and accurately.
- Senior staff, and others, carried out lessons observations and gave feedback to teachers. The observations, and analysis of assessment data, did not fully focus on the progress made by individual students.

- The school's improvement plans were of acceptable quality and contained appropriate goals. They had been implemented in a way which had achieved improvement in a range of aspects of school's work. Although some aspects of students' achievement had been improved, several remained at an acceptable level.
- Senior leaders had achieved some success in addressing most of the recommendations of the previous inspection report. While the quality of teaching in KG and the elementary phase had improved, the overall quality of teaching and assessment had remained broadly the same as in the previous inspection.

Partnerships with parents and the community

Good

- Parents benefited from a wide range of opportunities to be involved as partners in school life. There was no parent association, but senior leaders considered parents' views when deciding about the structure and content of the school improvement plan.
- Staff and parents used the wide range of communication channels available to them. Parents were kept up-to-date with school activities, and communications were targeted well on individuals, groups and classes. Parents, particularly those who had children with SEND, were empowered as partners.
- Parents received regular and frequent reports about their children's academic progress and personal development. Next steps in learning were not always set out fully in the reports.
- The school benefited from a wide range of local and wider partnerships. These partnerships had not yet resulted in significant improvements in key aspects such as teaching and achievement.

Governance




Good ↑

- The governing board included the school's owners. There was no formal representation of parents, but governors took account of parents' views through surveys and other means.
- Governors monitored the school's work and held the school accountable for the quality of its work. The governors carried out their own quality assurance visits to the school and received reports from senior leaders at various points in the school year.
- The governing body had a positive influence on the school and, working with senior leaders, had overseen improvements in various aspects of its work.

Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most aspects of the school's day-to-day work were organised well. Timetables were well thought out, allowing lessons to proceed appropriately. Procedures and routines ran smoothly overall. • Senior leaders and governors had increased the number of teachers and, as a result, the school was able to target support for student groups within classes effectively, in a number of key subjects. Most teachers were well qualified in their subjects, but a significant number did not have a full understanding of best practice in teaching and how students learn best. • The premises were of good quality overall and were well maintained. They included several specialist areas, including rooms equipped for classes in robotics, a swimming pool as well as music and computing rooms. • Resources were generally in good supply. Senior leaders were planning to augment the school's stock of hand-held technology, but the level of current stock hampered efforts to engage students in independent research on a regular basis. Some aspects of resourcing needed to be improved, for example the school's stock of manipulatives in mathematics. 	

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	53
	2014-2015	72
 Teachers	58	
 Students	112	

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

- A majority of teachers and students, but only a few parents responded to the questionnaire.
- Almost all parents and most students who responded were satisfied with the quality of education available at the school. The majority of parents felt that inspection reports helped them to understand the quality of education.
- Parents had positive views about the progress their children were making in the key subjects. They had very positive views about almost all aspects of the curriculum, teaching, assessment and the care and support for their children.
- Most students had positive views about the skills and qualifications of their teachers. Only around half of students thought that homework helped them to learn. A large minority of students received private tutoring outside school.
- Almost all parents who responded thought that the school was well led and that senior leaders listened to, and acted upon, their views. Most students thought that the school was well led, but only around half thought that the school listened to their views.
- Teachers had positive views about the extent to which they were included in reviewing the curriculum and in the processes of school self-evaluation. They felt that they received regular feedback on the quality of their work from their line managers. Teachers had positive views about the school's leadership and the extent to which leaders listened to and acted upon their views.

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