



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational
needs and disabilities



Innovation

Inspection Report 2015-2016

GEMS Wellington Academy (Branch)

Curriculum: UK

Overall rating: Very good

Read more about the school



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“Great achievements remind us to be humble, but we should always be determined to do more”



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

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School information

General information 	Location	Dubai Silicon Oasis
	Type of school	Private
	Opening year of school	2011
	Website	www.gemswellingtonacademy-dso.com
	Telephone	04-515-9000
	Address	PO Box 49746
	Principal	Michael Gernon
	Language of instruction	English
	Inspection dates	25 to 28 January 2016
Students 	Gender of students	Boys and girls
	Age range	3-18
	Grades or year groups	Early Years Stage to Year 13
	Number of students on roll	4,107
	Number of children in pre-kindergarten	N/A
	Number of Emirati students	114
	Number of students with SEND	489
Teachers / Support staff 	Largest nationality group of students	British
	Number of teachers	298
	Largest nationality group of teachers	UK
	Number of teaching assistants	170
	Teacher-student ratio	1:14
	Number of guidance counsellors	3
Curriculum 	Teacher turnover	13%
	Educational permit / Licence	UK
	Main curriculum	UK / IBDP
	External tests and examinations	GCSE, IBDP, IBCC, BTEC
	Accreditation	BSO, IBO
	National Agenda benchmark tests	GL (PTM, PTS and PTE)

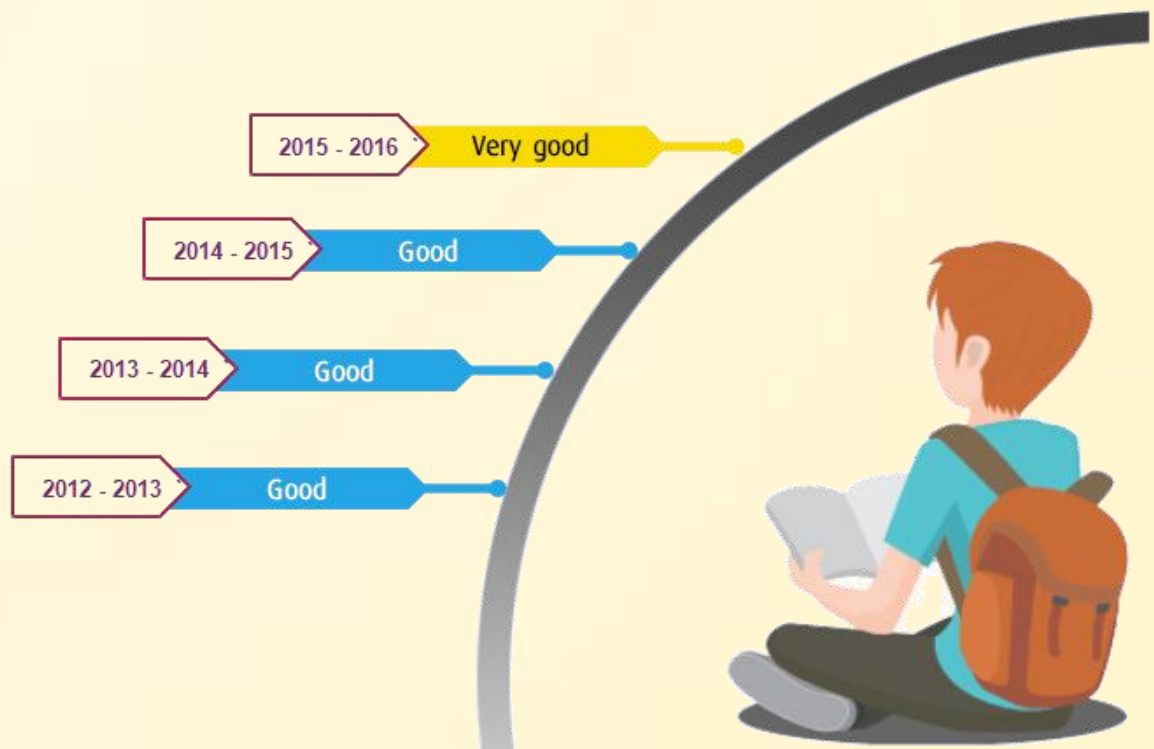


Summary for parents and the community

GEMS Wellington Academy (Branch) was inspected by DSIB from 25 to 28 January 2016. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **very good**.

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

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





How well did the school perform overall?

Overall, GEMS Wellington Academy (Branch) provided a very good quality of education for its students.

- Students' academic performances had improved from the previous year in many areas. This was particularly the case in the Kindergarten (KG), where the outcomes were outstanding in all key subjects, and in Arabic, where students' progress was improving in some phases. Students' learning experiences were of high quality. Students were encouraged to be critical and were confident using new technologies.
- Students had very positive and responsible attitudes towards learning. The school was a highly inclusive learning environment where all students supported one another very well. They demonstrated strong understanding of the Islamic culture and the local traditions. This was particularly the case in the KG and Post-16 phases. In all phases, students showed an excellent work ethic, cared about their environment and worked proactively to make a difference.
- The teaching was strong and focused on the needs of students with different abilities. Lessons in Arabic were of a better quality than in the previous inspection but did not always meet the needs of all students. In most subjects, the information available about students was used effectively to help them progress.
- The curriculum was rich and balanced, providing students with different learning experiences. There was a wide range of option choices available, especially in the upper years of the school. The school modified the curriculum to meet the needs of different groups of students. The enriched curriculum produced a very high degree of personalisation.
- Safety in school was high on the agenda. This was a caring school, which was highly inclusive and catered effectively for the needs of all students, particularly those students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- The leaders had a highly aspirational vision for their students. Their processes of self-evaluation were rigorous and had led to many improvements since the previous inspection. Parents' involvement made a difference in the school. They had a strong voice and influenced some aspects of school life. Governors held the leaders to account and had deployed a high volume of new resources. This had resulted in positive outcomes, particularly in Arabic. Facilities and resources in the school were of excellent quality and benefited the students' learning experiences.



What did the school do well?

- Most outcomes for students were very good or outstanding.
- Teaching and students' learning skills were of very good and outstanding quality.
- Assessment processes and strategies were strong.
- The curriculum was rich and focused on individual students' needs.
- The school provided a safe and caring learning environment where all students, including those with SEND, felt very well supported.
- The leadership team and the governors were highly reflective and ensured that the best outcomes for all students were systematically secured.



What does the school need to do next?

- Continue to raise students' attainment in Arabic and Islamic education by:
 - capitalising on the best practices available in these departments and the rest of the school
 - ensuring that teachers use the information available about their students to meet their needs more consistently.



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

- The school's wide range of data showed that students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) made excellent progress in their learning and personal development. Students with SEND were actively and fully involved in the design, implementation and review of their own education programmes. As a result, most students with SEND displayed highly impressive and responsible attitudes toward their learning and were increasingly independent and self-confident.
- Reporting systems kept parents fully informed of their children's progress. They received regular reports and feedback regarding their progress in academic, social and personal areas. In addition, the school reported on progress in relation to the targets in the individual education plans (IEPs). Although this was usually formal, parents were also pleased with the informal routes that they could use to discuss their children's progress.
- Parents agreed that their opinions were highly valued by the school. There were no barriers to communication. Class and subject teachers had detailed understanding of each child's needs, so that they could also provide feedback on the progress being made in their lessons.
- Parents made active contributions to high quality provision. They were fully involved in the development and review of their children's IEPs.
- Parents could access a wide range of high quality guidance and information within the school. This could be from the school's staff or external experts who understood their children's needs. However, some parents said that they would like the school to organise more opportunities to meet with other parents.

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. Attainment data from the National Agenda Parameter were not available to make a judgement on the progress towards meeting the National Agenda targets.
- The school had produced an excellent and clear presentation explaining the National Agenda (NA) to all stakeholders. It was a very good and informative presentation which was transmitted to parents and children. It was also sent by e-mail to all families. The principal had ensured that the Board of Governors was aware of all aspects of the National Agenda. Discussions with stakeholders confirmed that there was good knowledge of the National Agenda across all groups.
- The school had modified its curriculum effectively to include the key requirements of the National Agenda. For example, in the Foundation Stage, children were able to predict confidently prior to an inquiry. They were also able to explain why their predictions might not be correct. Data analysis, research, investigations, inquiry, problem solving and critical thinking skills were developing well across all phases.
- Most teachers had integrated critical thinking seamlessly into their lesson planning and delivery. It had been a focus within the continuous professional development programme for teachers. Teachers' questioning was frequently open-ended and it stimulated critical thinking and higher order thinking by students. In English lessons, students were regularly involved in analytical discussion of literature and critical evaluation of their writing and presentations. In science lessons, students had opportunities to examine data, evaluate it and draw conclusions.
- The school was very well resourced. Teachers used their resources effectively to enhance teaching and learning. Technology was available in all classes and most subjects. The 'blended laptop' resource was extensively used. It travelled home, allowed two-way communication, and was personalised and interactive. Research was used well to promote high quality inquiry, investigation and independent learning.

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:

- The school's mission and vision aligned closely with the national innovation agenda. The strategic plan provided clear direction for further development of this highly innovative school. Innovation was an intrinsic characteristic, promoted by all stakeholders, including innovation mentors and external partners. The building design offered diverse work areas, including open learning plazas. The learning environments included ICT that allowed students choice in both what and how they learned. Extended time blocks enabled learning that was inquiry-based, focused on thinking skills, and connected to other subjects in purposeful ways. An extensive enrichment programme provided students with variety, choices and challenge.

Overall school performance

Very good ↑

1. Students' achievement

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

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

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

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

3. Teaching and assessment

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

4. Curriculum

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

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

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

6. Leadership and management

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



Main inspection report

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

Judgements are made on a six-point scale



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

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

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

1. Students' achievement

Foundation Stage

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

- In English, all children responded well to events in stories and to their teachers' questions. Almost all children expressed themselves confidently and listened carefully to others. In Foundation Stage 2 there was evidence of the development of emergent literacy skills. Many samples of children's high quality free writing were displayed in the classrooms and corridors. The children's oral language skills were outstanding in Foundation Stage 2. They demonstrated outstanding progress in their ability to decode texts using their word recognition and phonic skills.
- In mathematics, the children had excellent understanding of number, counting reliably from one to 20. They also understood the concepts of 'less than' and 'more than.' They could carry out simple operations with numbers, and recognised and understood basic mathematical symbols. They also understood the concepts of shape and space, recognised simple two and three dimensional shapes and could describe them in simple language. They applied critical thinking in their learning, using coins to purchase toy fruit and vegetables from the 'shop' in their classrooms, in preparation for a visit to the local shop to purchase real fruit and vegetables.
- In science, the children engaged very enthusiastically in opportunities to observe and handle science materials. They demonstrated excellent knowledge and understanding of objects, materials and living things. They had explored the life cycles of some insects in the classroom and outdoor play areas, where they made caterpillar shapes from a variety of materials. The children made outstanding progress in the development of their observation and recording skills during their involvement in scientific experiments. For example, they knew about some of the properties of objects that float and sink.

Primary

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

- In Islamic education, the attainment of most students was in line with the curriculum expectations. Almost all of them understood and applied the prescribed Islamic rules, such as discipline, piety, justice and responsibility. The majority of students had age-appropriate, basic knowledge. They understood the key concepts of Islam, such as prayer. They were able to memorise and recite prescribed verses of the Holy Qur'an. In the lower grades, they were able to distinguish between honesty and lying. Their outcomes in the last examination were in line with curriculum expectations. Extra activities enriched and supported their understanding and skills but on some occasions, they were ineffective. The majority of students made slow progress in lessons.
- In Arabic as a first language, the attainment of most students was in line with the curriculum expectations. Students demonstrated adequate knowledge and understanding of the curriculum content. Their listening and comprehension skills were secure overall. Most could respond to their teachers' instructions with appropriate degrees of fluency when asked to express themselves in words or short sentences. They showed effective understanding of visual content but, amongst most cohorts, their reading of printed texts only just met the curriculum expectations. Overall, students' writing proficiency was still developing. The majority of students were making better than expected progress in lessons and over time. Their understanding and application of prescribed grammatical structures, for instance, were best when they were promoted through experiences that were rich in language practice.
- In learning Arabic as an additional language, the attainment of most students was in line with the curriculum expectations. Most beginners could respond to basic questions in familiar contexts. They could identify and name food items, means of transport and a range of sports. Intermediate students could speak with adequate fluency about their favourite dishes in short simple sentences. In the better lessons the majority of students spoke in complete sentences with varying degrees of complexity. Script shaping improved when teachers assigned adequate time to complete tasks. The majority of students made good progress in lessons, as they were exposed to a wide range of language activities. Most students depended much on visual cues, and verbal and written translation most of the time.
- In English, students' attainment was very good and above the UK National Curriculum expectations. Younger students used their phonics well to read words and could understand basic texts. The large majority of older students were fluent, independent readers, able to extract information from a variety of sources. They were able to write at varying lengths for different audiences and purposes. Their spelling, punctuation and grammar became increasingly accurate through the year groups. Students' speaking and listening skills were of a high standard and they showed considerable self-confidence when expressing their ideas.
- Students in primary mathematics were enthusiastic and focused. International benchmark tests showed very good and improving attainment in the development of mathematics knowledge, skills and understanding. Boys' attainment was better than that of the girls by Year 6. Students were very confident in discussing their work using accurate and complex mathematical terms. Relevant and interesting contexts and the use of computer technology enhanced their learning.

- In science, students engaged with practical work enthusiastically, especially in the laboratory setting. International benchmark tests showed development of scientific knowledge, skills and understanding. Students enjoyed investigative work. Their understanding of scientific concepts was very well developed.

Secondary






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

- In Islamic education, most students had sound knowledge of the Prophet's (PBUH) life, companions and Islamic events. Almost all students understood and applied the prescribed Islamic rules and values, such as discipline, justice, responsibility and piety. In Year 8, non-Arab students had a good understanding of the story of Ja'far Ibn Abi Talib and the King of Abyssinia. Most students were able to memorise and recite prescribed verses of the Holy Qur'an. The majority of students made better than expected progress, but this depended upon the quality of teaching. Their outcomes in the last examination were above the curriculum expectations. However, there was insufficient challenge in some lessons.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students' listening and speaking skills were acceptable. A few were able to understand, respond well and speak confidently. Their writing skills were developing in spite of difficulties with the writing rules. In the upper year groups, a few had well-developed writing skills. Students were able to analyse various complex texts well. Their outcomes in the last examinations were in line with the curriculum expectations. Lower year students progressed less well than the higher ones. A minority of students lacked basic skills in grammar and dictation.
- In learning Arabic as an additional language, the attainment of most students was in line with the curriculum expectations. Their listening and speaking skills varied between similar groups. Most beginners' listening and speaking skills were adequate. In one group, these skills were better and students spoke fluently and accurately in extended sentences, using a wide vocabulary. Their reading skills were in line with the expected outcomes across all levels. Their writing was the least developed, with a few exceptions. The majority of students made better than expected progress in lessons and over time. High attaining students could have made better progress. The quality of writing by a large majority of students required improvement.
- In English, students' attainment was outstanding and well above the IGCSE international averages. Students made excellent progress in all aspects of the subject. They were able to read and summarise the main points, both verbally and in writing, of a range of demanding texts. They were able to develop logical arguments and cite evidence to support a point of view. Their skills of literary analysis were well developed and most were able to write with grammatical accuracy. Students' oral skills were particularly well developed and in discussions they articulated their thoughts clearly and with confidence.
- Students were very keen to understand their mathematics and were very focused within lessons. In the 2015 IGCSE examinations, the results were above national and international averages. Boys performed better than girls overall. Students had developed a very good understanding of algebra, data analysis and the use of formulae in calculations. Problem solving and critical thinking were integral to most lessons.

Students could confidently explain their work using accurate mathematical vocabulary. Students with SEND were well integrated and supported. They made outstanding progress.

- Students engaged readily in collaborative work and demonstrated very good mastery of scientific concepts. All groups made very good progress from their starting points. The application of concepts to real-world situations was a strength of most students.

Post-16

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

- In Islamic education, most students understood and applied the prescribed Islamic morals and values accurately. They had acceptable knowledge and understanding of key Islamic aspects. For example, they knew that the message of Islam was human happiness. Most students made expected progress, although the progress made by non-Arabs was better. Their outcomes in the last examination were in line with the curriculum expectations.
- In Arabic as a first language, the attainment of most students was in line with the curriculum standards, although a minority demonstrated extended language skills. Their speaking skills were developing well and they were able to express their ideas clearly. The majority of students made better than expected progress in reading and were developing good critical analysis skills when presented with familiar texts. They were able to write independently and accurately. Some students had produced well-constructed articles and poems.
- Students' attainment in English was outstanding and well above the International Baccalaureate (IB) averages. Students had very well-developed skills of reflection and analysis. They articulated their views confidently. Virtually all students were able to extract information from challenging texts. They were able to compare and contrast the work of different authors and used persuasive analyses to support reasoned points of view. Appropriate use was made of references to quotations and sources of evidence. They understood how variations in language, form and context can shape meanings in speech and writing. On extended writing tasks, most students made accurate reference to texts and sources. They drafted, edited and evaluated the effectiveness of their own writing, guided by their understanding of the assessment criteria. Students made outstanding progress.
- In mathematics, the majority of students made better than expected progress, although attainment levels of most students in external examinations were only in line with expected national and international expectations. There were regular opportunities to develop inquiry, investigation, critical thinking, discussion and problem solving skills. Students enjoyed manipulating advanced mathematics. They were also engaged in higher order thinking and reasoning within supportive environments. The competent and effective use of technology, including graphic calculators, was a strong learning skill. In lessons and their recent work, such as the IB internal assessments, all groups of students made good progress in achieving the learning objectives.

- In science, students' mastery of scientific concepts was very good across the curriculum standards. Students engaged in higher order thinking and reasoning within supportive environments. This was particularly the case in the laboratories during practical work. All groups of students made very good progress in their abilities to apply newly acquired knowledge and understanding.

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

- Students were highly motivated and enthusiastic about their learning in all phases. In the Foundation Stage, children quickly learned to work and play constructively without constant adult supervision. The ability of students to take responsibility and work independently was a strength, especially in the Foundation Stage and the post-16 phase. In virtually all lessons, students were given time to reflect upon their learning. They focused well and were able to evaluate their strengths and identify what they needed to do to improve. As a result, they were very aware of the progress they were making.
- Across all year groups, students collaborated very well with each other. Whether in pairs or small groups, they worked very effectively together, sharing their ideas and learning from each other. The quality of discussion and students' abilities to challenge one another's thinking developed strongly as students progressed through the school. This was a significant feature of learning in the upper secondary and post-16 phases, and contributed particularly well to students' rapid progress.
- In most lessons, students made meaningful connections to the real world. Children in the Foundation Stage, for example, applied their numerical skills when buying items in a visit to a local 'shop.' In mathematics, students enjoyed solving problems that reflected real-life situations. Most students were confident and responsible learners, fully able to make connections between their learning in different parts of the curriculum.
- Students demonstrated the ability to apply their critical thinking and enquiry skills in almost all subjects. They developed these skills systematically as they progressed through the school. From an early age, they could predict and evaluate the most suitable way of completing a task. They were very competent in the use of ICT. Post-16 students were very well prepared to meet the learning challenges of the next stages of their education.

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

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

- Students showed very positive and responsible attitudes toward school life and had a highly disciplined work ethic. They enjoyed school assemblies and demonstrated high levels of confidence when they performed or shared their thoughts about the topics discussed.
- Students demonstrated exemplary behaviour across the school. They were courteous, and respectful toward one another and adults. Students required only limited supervision as they were very self-disciplined.

- Students showed commendable sensitivity towards others. They frequently collaborated and extended help to their classmates. Their relationships with their teachers and other school staff members were exemplary.
- Students consistently maintained safe and healthy lifestyles. No bullying incidents were reported. Students understood the implications of bullying for their safety and that of others. They discussed, influenced and decided on the changes they wanted to make to the school canteen. They made wise choices for healthy eating and actively took part in the fitness and sporting activities on offer at the school and outside it.
- Students' rates of attendance were very good overall and students were generally punctual to lessons, with some delays resulting from commuting to distant classrooms.

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

- Students across all phases had secure insight into the values of Islam and of its role and impact on society in the UAE. They had a very good understanding of the significance of the mosque and the worship related to it. They could explain why Emirati society had certain expectations of men and women in public places. They enjoyed taking part in celebrating Eid and decorating their classroom doors and hallways with relevant thematic artwork.
- Students were very knowledgeable about the UAE and Dubai in particular. They said it was a safe and peaceful city. Students also recognised the UAE's past, and how it evolved from a simple Bedouin tribal life of pearl diving and fishing to one of the most competitive economies in the region. They also knew the National Agenda targets set out by the government to achieve excellence in education by 2021. Students actively celebrated a wide range of the UAE's cultural events, such as Flag Day and National Day, whereby traditional food and folklore were shared among all students.
- Students were proud of their own cultures. They admired the multicultural character of their school and the valuable opportunities to make friends with people of different nationalities. They spoke highly of the International Day held annually at school when they could celebrate and share with others their music, art and traditional food. However, there was still scope for students to be more proactive in raising cultural awareness.

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

- Students were proactive members of their school and local communities. They took pride in initiating and participating in a range of worthwhile charitable schemes, both locally and internationally. Through initiatives such as 'Swag Bag,' 'SEWA Week' and 'Make a Change,' students made generous contributions to those in need of special care, those behind the scenes and those affected by war.

- Students demonstrated an excellent work ethic. They were well aware of what they had to do in order to succeed in school and in life. They talked of commitment and hard work as essential conditions for success. Students' voices were heard and respected and many were encouraged to play leadership roles in different aspects of school life.
- Students were confident that their school promoted an eco-friendly life. They took good care of its environment. They initiated and participated actively in a variety of environmental schemes. They could talk confidently about the world's major ecological concerns. They were genuinely concerned about the threats that may result from failing to preserve the environment.

3. Teaching and assessment

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

- Teachers demonstrated strong subject knowledge and understanding of how their students learn. In almost all lessons, teachers made very good use of their knowledge to provide students with work that enabled them to understand difficult concepts. This was particularly noticeable in the Foundation Stage, where children made accelerated gains in learning.
- Lessons were consistently well planned and successfully taught in stimulating learning environments. Full use was made of attractive displays on 'working walls' to support the attainment of learning targets. Teachers used the available resources very well to make learning exciting and promote high levels of achievement. Most teachers made effective use of information technology to support learning.
- Excellent relationships were the basis of the purposeful class management seen in almost all lessons. Across all phases, teachers used questions effectively to probe and challenge students' knowledge and understanding. Small group discussions, in which students were encouraged to share their ideas and learn from each other, were features of most lessons. They were a strong feature in English, mathematics and science lessons and a developing feature in Arabic lessons.
- Teaching strategies to meet the needs of different groups of students were effective in the large majority of lessons. Teachers had secure knowledge of the diverse range of students' abilities and matched the work to their particular needs. Teachers' expectations of students were consistently high. Teachers planned the work carefully to provide appropriate levels of challenge to students of all abilities.
- The development of critical and analytical thinking was a central and successful feature of teaching and learning in all years. Students rose to the challenge of taking responsibility for their own learning. They demonstrated the capacity for independent learning in most lessons. Across the school, teachers interwove examples from the real world into their lessons to place learning in a socially relevant context.
- The quality of teaching of Arabic had improved since the last inspection. Teachers' planning was more focused on active learning to engage more students. Nevertheless, teachers did not consistently meet the needs of all students.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Assessment	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- The school's internal assessment processes were detailed and coherent. Teachers had very good knowledge and understanding of their students' progress. This applied to their personal, social and pastoral needs as well as their academic levels. The planning for individual and group needs was strong.
- The school used a wide range of national, international and other external systems to monitor the progress of students against a wide range of expectations. Among other new systems, the school had recently introduced an electronic portfolio system in the Foundation Stage, so that children could be compared against the Early Learning goals in England. However, the school did not have a robust system of exams to assess the learning of Arabic as a second language.
- The data collected through the whole-school systems were monitored well. Teachers were able to input data to the system based on the formative assessments taking place in lessons. Leaders analysed these data effectively to identify patterns and trends, for individuals, various cohorts and groups. Teachers and subject leaders used this information to modify the curriculum and their lesson plans accordingly.
- Teachers used assessment information skilfully to influence their planning and teaching. Consequently, the large majority of lessons effectively met the needs of all individual, cohorts and groups of students. Consequently, students made optimal progress in most of their lessons. The support for individuals and groups of learners was strong. Teachers had very detailed knowledge of their students.
- Teachers used their knowledge of individual and cohorts of students to support their planning. They demonstrated strong knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of students. As a result, they were able to provide effective personal and academic support and challenge. Formative assessments were highly effective and comprehensive, although there were some individual teachers who needed to improve this aspect of their work.

4. Curriculum

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

- The school's curriculum was wide-ranging and covered all aspects. It was firmly rooted in a competency-based curriculum and met the needs of both the English National Curriculum and that of the International Baccalaureate. The school was fully compliant with the requirements of its license.
- Meetings between subject and phase leaders ensured that students' needs were met and anticipated. There was a very high degree of enrichment in the curriculum, based on students' needs. This included enrichment to supplement prior knowledge and enrichment to provide new experiences. Students moved seamlessly from phase to phase, such was the degree of continuity. The curriculum was relevant and met the needs of students to become confident citizens, whilst opening doors to future careers and institutions of further learning.
- There was a wide range of option choices available, especially in the upper years of the school. The curriculum provided for a very high degree of personalisation.

- The curriculum was comprehensively planned and well mapped in order to maximise opportunities for cross-subject connections.
- The curriculum was under constant and comprehensive review, taking full account of Emirati and other priorities including, amongst other things, students' aspirations and attainment levels.
- The school had mapped the requirements of the MoE social studies curriculum against the current school curriculum. Mapping showed good coverage in the Foundation Stage and primary phase with a few gaps in the secondary and post-16 phases. The UAE's national identity, traditions and citizenship were taught thorough a spiral thematic approach built around the PSHCE curriculum. The promotion of Islamic values was consistent with the ethos and values of the school, and realised daily.

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

- The school modified the curriculum to meet the needs of different groups of students. This ranged from class-based differentiation to a wide range of alternative curriculum choices.
- The timings of the school day were changed in order to accommodate a wide-ranging enrichment programme. This not only offered new experiences, but allowed for further development of students' existing knowledge and skills. All curriculum areas routinely embedded opportunities for innovation, creativity and enterprise.
- All curriculum areas provided opportunities for students to appreciate and deepen their understanding of the UAE's culture and society.
- The school provided a weekly 30-minute session of general initiation to the Arabic language to all 328 children in Foundation Stage 2.

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

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

- The school had high quality systems in place to ensure that child protection was implemented very effectively and that only appropriate persons gained access to the school campus. These measures were rigorous and included families being issued with identification passes to allow them access to the school, as appropriate. The school was highly effective in protecting students from abuse, including bullying and cyber-bullying through social media.
- The supervision of students was very effective. The school premises were completely safe, secure and provided a hygienic environment for all students and the staff. Rigorous security checks and the highly efficient management of the school environment ensured that all students and school personnel were safe at all times.


- The buildings and equipment were maintained to the highest possible levels. The school investigated all incidents that occurred on the premises, and any that took place when students were travelling on the school buses. The school maintained very detailed records of incidents and follow-up actions were taken. All records were maintained securely.
- The school premises, and particularly the outdoor facilities in Foundation Stage, provided exceptional opportunities for innovative learning to take place. The quality of the facilities and specialist areas, including the auditorium, contributed to high quality learning and met the needs of all students.
- The school's promotion of safe and healthy living was very successful. In partnership with parents, and through the provision of healthy options in the canteens the school had embedded in the curriculum a programme to raise awareness of healthy living and lifestyles. Collaboration between teachers, parents and the medical staff ensured that students were fully aware of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.

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

- Although there were strong systems to promote positive behaviour, the ethos of the school was the main reason for the outstanding behaviour evident. The house system and levels of respect in all lessons and around the school were exemplary. The house system enabled older students to be positive role models for younger students.
- Students' attendance rates and punctuality to lessons were high because the school made them priorities. Tutors and the heads of houses monitored attendance closely. Positive reinforcement and celebrations of strong attendance were used to educate students on the importance of high levels of attendance. The school ensured that parents were aware of the link between poor attendance and lower attainment levels.
- The school had outstanding systems in place for the identification of students with SEND and those students who were gifted and talented. Teachers were well-trained to identify any possible signs of students with SEND. This training had led to the school being able to cater for a wide range of needs.
- Teachers knew the personal and academic needs of the students they taught. This was true for all groups of students. Accurate and rapid identification of any additional needs, or gifted and talented students, had led to outstanding levels of support that were appropriate to each student's needs. This resulted in students making significant progress.
- Students received extremely high levels of guidance and support in all areas of their school work. The detailed tracking systems enabled the school to monitor the well-being and personal development of all students to a high level. The school personalised support to meet the needs of all students. Careers guidance was provided so that students were extremely well-informed when they made decisions about their futures.

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

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

Outstanding 

- There were strong systems in place to meet the needs of students with SEND. These systems were consistently applied, highly inclusive and responsive to the individual needs of students, including those with the most complex needs. The support team was highly skilled through the focused professional development procedures, which enabled them to understand the needs present in the school.
- The school was very sensitive to the needs of all students. Teachers were very well trained and so they were alert to any signs of unidentified SENDs. The school responded in exemplary ways to the ever-changing profile of needs and support was outstanding. The school promoted a positive, risk-taking ethos whereby new and innovative strategies were used to support students. This included modification of the curriculum to provide a suite of non-academic options to students with SEND.
- Regular reports kept parents fully informed on all aspects of their children's progress. The school valued and took account of parents' views. They were fully involved in the development and review of individual education plans and could access a wide range of guidance and information within the school.
- Outstanding curriculum design and detailed modifications for students with SEND ensured that students made excellent progress across a range of subjects. Alternative curricula were in place to provide options that would enable students to prepare for the next stages in their lives. Interventions and support for learning were highly tailored and exceptionally well-targeted to meet the needs of each student.
- The school's wide range of data showed that students with SEND made excellent progress in all areas of learning and personal development. Students with SEND were fully involved in all aspects of their own education programmes. As a result, most students with SEND displayed highly impressive and responsible attitudes toward learning and were increasingly independent and self-confident.

6. Leadership and management


The effectiveness of leadership

Outstanding

- The leaders of the school promoted an ambitious vision that was shared by the school community. Expectations were very high and the school was committed to meeting the UAE's national and the Emirate of Dubai's priorities.
- The leaders capitalised well on the best practices in teaching and they enriched the curriculum effectively to secure the best outcomes for their students. This was particularly the case for the SEND students, who were very well catered for and grew in challenging but very supportive learning environments.
- The school communicated very well with all stakeholders and at all levels of the leadership team. A robust horizontal and vertical alignment enabled highly effective monitoring. Leaders were dynamic and open to growth and change.
- Leaders knew their school very well. They were quick to identify areas for development and to improve further. The school supported new leaders very well and deployed them strategically within the leadership team.

- Accountability levels were very high in all aspects of the school's life. The school systematically reviewed its own performance. This resulted in a school that continued to deliver positive outcomes for its students and improve various aspects of its provision.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Very good 


- The leadership team knew the school's strengths and areas of development very well at all levels. The school used information about students effectively to influence the direction of the school's improvement planning.
- Lesson observations were frequent, purposeful and the information that was gathered was generally accurate. Observations focused on the students' learning and the progress they made during lessons and over time. This informed teachers' target setting and their professional development activities.
- The school's self-evaluation tools allowed for an extensive analysis of performance. Action plans were vertically aligned and monitored at all levels of the leadership team. They promoted the school's and the UAE's national priorities. This resulted in positive trends in students' achievement, particularly in the weaker subjects.
- The recommendations from the previous inspection report had been addressed effectively. This resulted in the school's overall performance improving to 'very good'.

Partnerships with parents and the community

Outstanding

- Parents played central roles in their children's school lives. They were involved in many activities which enabled them to share their views and shape various initiatives.
- Communication was highly effective and parents received regular updates on their children's progress and well-being in school. For example, in the Foundation Stage, the reporting system included snapshots of individual children reaching their targets through various activities they had completed.
- Reporting on students' academic progress was regular and very informative. It enabled parents to understand how their children learn and how to support them in order to improve. This included guidelines on how to understand the benchmarks used by teachers.
- Various initiatives and strong links with different partners ensured that students interacted within local, national and international dimensions, leading to rich learning experiences.

Governance

Outstanding 

- The governing board included a wide range of stakeholders and sought the views of parents and students. This enabled them to measure the impact of the school's performance against key performance indicators, and engage with parents and students to influence many aspects of the school. For example, some parents took part in learning walks with senior leaders.
- A thorough system of Key Performance Indicators ensured a close monitoring of the school performance and secured the best outcomes for students. Meetings with key leaders and governors were regular, and

external stakeholders were called upon when necessary to reinforce key areas of school, such as the SEND department and in Arabic.

- The governors' contributions and persistence had been significant in improving the outcomes of the school. This was particularly the case regarding the Arabic department, when governors and senior leaders listened to parents and students and then improved the available resources. This had resulted in sustained growth in students' achievements from the previous inspection.




Management, staffing, facilities and resources

Outstanding

- The daily management of the school was very effective. Students were well supported by the efficient routines and procedures. Information and display boards were regularly updated and were used creatively to support and showcase students' work and achievements.
- Most teachers were suitably qualified and deployed. Teaching assistants were present in all primary years. In each department in the secondary phase, assistants were deployed as needed by the subject leaders. Teachers of students with SEND supported both students and teachers well within their classrooms. Teaching assistants were deployed effectively. The staff enjoyed a comprehensive, regular and focused continuing professional development programme.
- The purpose-built facilities provided excellent spaces to enhance teaching and learning. The environment was safe, cheerful and welcoming and supported both curricular and extra-curricular activities. Classrooms were large and arranged for effective learning, with adequate storage and display facilities. All areas were well-maintained with good access through strategically placed lifts and ramps.
- The school was very well-resourced in all areas. Technology was available in all classrooms and specialist areas to support teaching and learning. The effective use of resources by teachers and students enabled learning at all stages. Resources were well-matched to the demands of the curriculum and the national priorities.

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	374
	2014-2015	415
Teachers 	150	
Students 	296	

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

- Parents believed that their children were learning in a very caring and supportive environment.
- They indicated that their children had access to a broad curriculum and facilities of excellent quality.
- Parents and students believed that the quality of teaching was good but that in Arabic and Islamic education students' progress was slower than in other subjects.
- Most stakeholders believed that the school was well led and that communication was effective.
- Teachers indicated that they were well supported and listened to.

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