



GEMS Metropole School

🇬🇧 Curriculum: UK

Overall Rating:

Acceptable



"We are keen to prepare the new generation that is ready to be creative and innovative to help us achieve our ambitions for even greater prosperity"

Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum



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School information



| General information | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Location | Motor City |
| Type of school | Private |
| Opening year of school | 2014 |
| Website | www.gemsmetropoleschool-dubai.com |
| Telephone | 045507200 |
| Address | Motor City, Dubai |
| Principal | Anthony Cashin |
| Language of instruction | English |
| Inspection dates | 20 to 23 February 2017 |

| Teachers / Support staff | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| Number of teachers | 170 |
| Largest nationality group of teachers | British |
| Number of teaching assistants | 53 |
| Teacher-student ratio | 1:15 |
| Number of guidance counsellors | 1 |
| Teacher turnover | 37% |

| Students | |
|--|----------------|
| Gender of students | Boys and girls |
| Age range | 3-16 |
| Grades or year groups | FS1-Year 10 |
| Number of students on roll | 2567 |
| Number of children in pre-kindergarten | 0 |
| Number of Emirati students | 29 |
| Number of students with SEND | 81 |
| Largest nationality group of students | Arab |

| Curriculum | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Educational permit / Licence | UK |
| Main curriculum | UK / MoE |
| External tests and examinations | GL, CAT4, WIDA |
| Accreditation | none |
| National Agenda benchmark tests | GL |



The DSIB inspection process



In order to judge the overall quality of education provided by schools, inspectors consider the six standards of performance that form the basis of the UAE School Inspection Framework (the framework). They look at children's attainment and progress in key subjects, their learning skills and their personal and social development. They judge how effective teaching and the assessment of learning are across the school. Inspectors consider how well the school's curriculum, including activities inside and outside classrooms, meet the educational needs of all students. They judge how well schools protect and support children. In addition, inspectors judge the effectiveness of leadership, which incorporates governance, management, staffing and facilities.

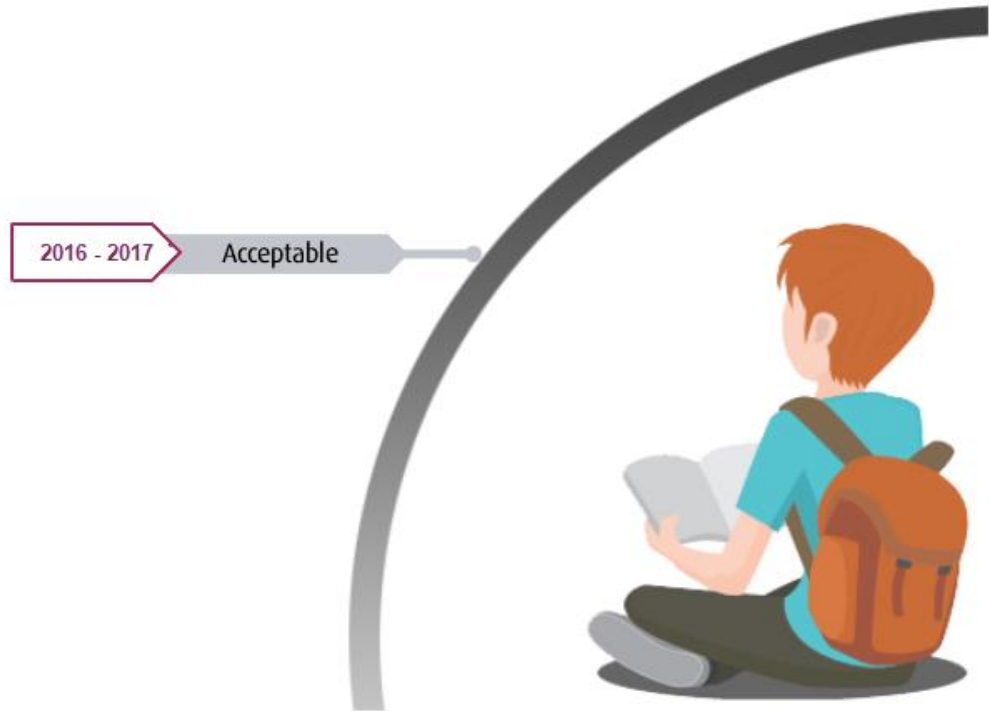
Inspection judgements are drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observation of students' learning in lessons, review of their work, discussions with students, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and review of surveys completed by parents, teachers and students.

Judgements are made on a six-point scale

DSIB inspection teams make judgements about different aspects, phases and subjects that form the work of the school, using the scale below, which is consistent with the framework.

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Outstanding | Quality of performance substantially exceeds the expectation of the UAE |
| Very good | Quality of performance exceeds the expectation of the UAE |
| Good | Quality of performance meets the expectation of the UAE (This is the expected level for every school in the UAE) |
| Acceptable | Quality of performance meets the minimum level of quality required in the UAE (This is the minimum level for every school in the UAE) |
| Weak | Quality of performance is below the expectation of the UAE |
| Very weak | Quality of performance is significantly below the expectation of the UAE |

Inspection journey for GEMS Metropole School-



- The school opened in 2014. The principal has been in post since August 2016. The number of students attending the school has grown significantly from 120 in 2015 to 2567 in 2017. There are 170 teachers, 72 of whom are new to the school this year, a 37 per cent increase.
- This is the first DSIB Inspection of the school.

Summary of inspection findings 2016-2017



GEMS Metropole School- was inspected by DSIB from 20 to 23 February 2017. The overall quality of education provided by the school is **acceptable**. The section below summarises the inspection findings for each of the six performance indicators described in the framework.

- Progress is acceptable in most subjects with the exception of science, in the secondary phase, where it is good, and in Arabic as a first and additional language, where it is weak in the secondary phase. Attainment is either weak or acceptable apart from in science in the secondary phase where it is good. Students' learning skills are acceptable across the school.
- Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills are good in all phases, with the exception of Foundation Stage (FS) and primary phase social responsibility and innovation, which were acceptable.
- The quality of teaching for effective learning is acceptable overall. There are examples of good and better teaching in all phases. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge through their clear and concise explanations and in their answers to students' questions. Their understanding of how students learn is less secure. The systems for assessing students' attainment and progress are underdeveloped.
- The curriculum design, and the extent to which it is adapted to meet the needs of all students, is acceptable. The curriculum is generally broad and balanced across all subjects. Tasks set in the majority of lessons are not sufficiently adapted. They do not provide sufficient challenge for the very able students, or purposefully support those who find learning difficult.
- The school takes its duty of care for students seriously, and the systems for protecting, supporting and caring for students are good. The provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is good.
- The new principal and other school leaders share a clear vision for an inclusive, innovative and happy school. They are aware that further improvements are necessary and can be made, especially with regard to the quality of teaching, the analysis of assessment data and their self- evaluation practices. They are already having a positive impact on some outcomes. They have established a positive partnership with parents. The quality of the facilities are good. Consequently they have a good capacity to take the school forward despite the limited support they have received from the governing board.

What the school does best

- Attainment and progress in science in the secondary phase.
- Students' positive attitudes and behaviour.
- The arrangements for keeping students safe and healthy, and the quality of care, guidance and support for students, particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- The very positive partnerships with parents.
- The quality of the premises.

Recommendations

- Ensure the governing board uses its extensive network, experience, expertise and resources, to provide all of the necessary support to enable school leaders to effectively carry out their work.
- Improve the quality of leadership by:
 - ensuring senior leaders use all available information to accurately evaluate the school's performance and set realistic and aspirational targets for improvement
 - providing all school leaders with the skills and time to support their teams and to hold them to account for their work.
- Accelerate progress in all subjects in order to raise attainment.
- Improve the quality of teaching in all phases by:
 - providing teachers with accurate assessment information
 - ensuring they use assessment information to plan lessons that challenge students of all abilities, including those with SEND and those who are more-able
 - sharing the best practice that exists in each phase.
- Thoroughly analyse National Agenda Parameter reports and use the findings to make adjustments to teaching practices, and to review and adapt the curriculum so that it meets the needs of all students and enables them to develop their learning skills and reach their full potential.

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 intention 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. In 2015, KHDA launched 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.

The following section focuses on the impact of the National Agenda Parameter in meeting the school's targets:

- The school does not meet expectations in the National Agenda Parameter tests in English, mathematics and science.
- The school does not fully meet the registration requirements for the National Agenda Parameter.
- The school has assessed students using GL progress tests and the CAT 4 cognitive ability tests. To date, it has GL progress test data for one year, which as yet, has not been adequately used. The school has produced an appropriate action plan and some actions have been met in full. Leaders have shared results with students in Year 9 and their parents, to inform subject and career choices.
- The school has not yet undertaken a curriculum review against National Agenda Parameter requirements. Whole staff discussions have resulted in a visual display of the actions required for successful achievement of targets. This graphical representation is prominently displayed in public areas of the school. Leaders are aware of the importance of the development of independent learning, critical thinking and problem solving. Mental mathematics is a daily embedded activity.
- Although stated in lesson plans, there is limited evidence of teachers having made adjustments to their teaching practices as a result of the National Agenda Parameter reports. The school's Integrated Learning model encourages students to be independent enquirers, and to use open-ended questions, research opportunities and problem-solving skills. At primary level students have opportunities for practical work activities related to real-life contexts.
- Home learning projects offer opportunities for students to work independently and express their opinions. They are asked to demonstrate the extent of learning, understanding and skills in a manner suited to their learning preferences. In a minority of class activities, students are asked to read, analyse, extract and present their findings.

Overall, the school's improvement towards achieving its National Agenda Parameter targets is not secure.

Innovation in Education

The UAE Vision 2021 sets the aspiration 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' and provides a basis for evaluating schools in order to deliver a world-class education for all children in the UAE.









Promoting a culture of innovation:

- There is a shared understanding of what innovation means. There are some signs that innovative practices are beginning to have an impact on students' achievements. Students are developing their critical thinking skills through techniques such as 'Tug-o-War' and 'Generate, Sound, Connect, Elaborate'. Teachers use a range of strategies and technology to promote active learning. They are increasingly aware of CAT4 data and its implications for students fulfilling their potential. The school is committed to caring for the environment; students are considering new ways to conserve energy in school and at home. The school has achieved silver status in the Green Flag initiative. School leaders forge links with external organisations such as Oxford University to promote critical thinking. They use a range of learning technologies to communicate with parents.

Overall school performance

Acceptable

1 Students' achievement

| | | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary |
|---|------------|------------------|------------|------------|
| Islamic education  | Attainment | Not applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| | Progress | Not applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Arabic as a first language  | Attainment | Not applicable | Weak | Weak |
| | Progress | Not applicable | Acceptable | Weak |
| Arabic as an additional language  | Attainment | Not applicable | Acceptable | Weak |
| | Progress | Not applicable | Acceptable | Weak |
| English  | Attainment | Weak | Weak | Weak |
| | Progress | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Mathematics  | Attainment | Weak | Weak | Acceptable |
| | Progress | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Science  | Attainment | Weak | Acceptable | Good |
| | Progress | Acceptable | Acceptable | Good |

| | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary |
|-----------------|------------------|------------|------------|
| Learning skills | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

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

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

3. Teaching and assessment

| | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary |
|---------------------------------|------------------|------------|------------|
| Teaching for effective learning | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Assessment | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

4. Curriculum

| | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------|------------|
| Curriculum design and implementation | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Curriculum adaptation | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

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

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

6. Leadership and management

| | |
|---|------------|
| The effectiveness of leadership | Acceptable |
| School self-evaluation and improvement planning | Weak |
| Parents and the community | Very good |
| Governance | Weak |
| Management, staffing, facilities and resources | Good |

Main inspection report



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 | Weak | Acceptable |
| Mathematics | Weak | Acceptable |
| Science | Weak | Acceptable |

- In English, less than three quarters of children attain appropriate levels against The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum standards. Most children listen to and understand instructions. They answer questions and use extended vocabulary. They make better progress in these skills against expectations of learning English as an additional language. By FS2, the majority of children can write single words and sentences. They read three letter words but have limited ability to use phonics to help sound out new words. Most children make acceptable progress from their starting points in the school and in lessons.
- Less than three quarters of children achieve levels in line with curriculum standards in mathematics. By FS2, the majority of children can count to 100 and identify the pattern of tens. They can talk about more than and less than, and a few more confident children can add numbers within ten, independently. Most use simple geometric shapes to make patterns and can name squares, rectangles and triangles. In lessons, and from their starting points, most children make the expected progress against curriculum standards.
- Against FS curriculum standards, less than three quarters of children reach age-related expectations in science. The majority can identify the contrasts between night and day and make links with animals and birds they might see at these times. They have a simple understanding of stars and planets. A few children plant seeds and know that they need sun and water to grow into herbs and vegetables. Overall, children have limited skills in scientific enquiry and investigation. In lessons, most children make the expected progress against the lesson objectives.

| Primary | | |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Subjects | Attainment | Progress |
| Islamic education | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Arabic as a first language | Weak | Acceptable |
| Arabic as an additional language | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| English | Weak | Acceptable |
| Mathematics | Weak | Acceptable |
| Science | Acceptable | Acceptable |

- In Islamic education lessons and in their work, most students demonstrate skills and knowledge that are in line with curriculum expectations. They can relate their knowledge to their learning in their own lives. They recognise the power of belief in Allah and they know the Pillars of Islam and in Iman. They can give examples of Islamic values such as respect through Seerah events and Hadeeth. They can memorise prescribed verses of the Holy Qur'an, but their recitation skills are underdeveloped.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students make adequate progress from their starting points. However, less than three quarters reach the expected curriculum levels. While students' internal assessment results indicate acceptable attainment, these are not an accurate reflection of the standards seen in lessons and in students' work. Students have appropriate listening skills but many do not read fluently and do not use classical Arabic adequately. Students are developing their comprehension, grammar and, to a lesser extent, reading and speaking skills. Skills of dictation and writing are underdeveloped.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students attain in line with curriculum expectations. Internal assessment results are acceptable overall and adequately reflect students' actual standards. Year 6 students, where the majority have studied Arabic for three years, can read and understand short paragraphs appropriately. Many students are not able to engage in extended conversations. They can write down some of their thoughts, but their extended essay writing for example about their personal experiences, is limited.
- In English, different groups of students, including those with SEND and those who have English as an additional language, make acceptable progress from their starting points. In lessons, they develop their reading, writing and speaking skills at an acceptable pace. By the end of the phase, the large majority of students' attain levels that are below those typical for their age when compared to the curriculum and international standards.
- In external benchmark tests in mathematics, a large majority of students do not achieve age related levels. The schools internal assessments demonstrate that a large majority of students show an understanding of numeracy that is in line with curriculum standards. However, students' attainment in lessons and in students' books is weaker and is below curriculum standards. Progress is in line with expectations. Year 6 students have most difficulty with the curriculum content of measurement and with mathematical reasoning and fluency in facts and procedures. Their skills in number work are stronger.

- In science, students demonstrate levels of knowledge and understanding that are in line with curriculum standards nationally. In Year 2, for example, students talk confidently about the reasons why specific materials are best suited for manufacturing different objects. In Year 5, most are able to clearly articulate their knowledge and understanding of the life cycle of a flowering plant. While attainment, as measured using external benchmark assessments, is below expectations, stronger attainment is evident in classwork. Most students, including those with SEND, make the expected progress in developing their skills of scientific enquiry.

|  Secondary | | |
|---|------------|------------|
| Subjects | Attainment | Progress |
| Islamic education | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Arabic as a first language | Weak | Weak |
| Arabic as an additional language | Weak | Weak |
| English | Weak | Acceptable |
| Mathematics | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Science | Good | Good |

- In Islamic education, most students attain skills and knowledge that are in line with curriculum expectations. They explain the reasons behind the prescribed Islamic laws such as Halal food and they can support their own views by linking their knowledge to the Holy Qur'an and Hadeeth. They understand the value of tolerance and they can refer to Seerah events such as the peaceful march to Makkah. Internal assessment data does not reflect the actual level of attainment due to low levels of challenge in assessment. Most students make adequate progress in relation to appropriate learning objectives. Their recitation skills are underdeveloped.
- Attainment for most students is below national curriculum expectations in Arabic as a first language and they make limited progress. Attainment is weak in lessons and in the standard of students' work. However, internal assessments inaccurately indicate that students attain at an acceptable level. Students do not read fluently or expressively or use classical Arabic and prefer to use English at times. They have difficulty comparing plot and character in two novels. Students develop basic grammar and metaphor, but they make insufficient progress in writing for multiple purposes.
- In Arabic as an additional language, students' attainment is below curriculum expectations considering their years of study. The school's internal assessment results do not reflect students' actual standards. Although a few students are able to read and write short sentences and paragraphs, the majority have weak listening, comprehension and writing skills. Students are struggling when speaking about routine events and do not respond well when questioned. Students are extending their range of vocabulary, but they do not apply new words in their writing and daily interactions.
- Students' attainment in English is weak when compared with curriculum and international standards. However the progress of different groups of students, is acceptable in lessons and over time when measured against their starting points. The few higher attaining students express themselves orally using mature vocabulary and phraseology. In some classes, students know what they want to communicate in their writing, but their punctuation, grammar and handwriting is weak.

- In mathematics, students attain at expected levels in external benchmark tests. The school's internal assessment data is unreliable. Attainment and progress are in line with age related expectations in lessons and in the standard of students' work. Year 9 students have most difficulty with statistics. However, they are stronger in algebra and probability. Students' problem solving skills require further development.
- In science, all groups of students make better than expected progress from their starting points. By Year 9, attainment as measured against the school's curriculum is above expectations and Year 10 students' attainment against international benchmarks is securely good. They are able to research independently. For example, they can evaluate and make presentations on the benefits and risks of the use of nanoparticles in a sun screen. Year 8 students are able to compare, contrast, and then confidently explain different types of plant reproduction.

| | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary |
|-----------------|------------------|------------|------------|
| Learning skills | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

- Where teaching is effective, students are keen to engage with their learning and begin to take responsibility for it. In some lessons, students are passive, and compliant. In Arabic classes, students are more engaged in the primary phase than in the secondary phase.
- When the opportunity is presented, students relish group work and collaborate well. For example, Year 7 students communicate well with each other during science investigations. However, in Arabic classes, there are insufficient opportunities for students to work together and share their ideas.
- With adult support, students apply their learning to the real world. For example, in English, they can compare the characters in Romeo and Juliet to their favourite television characters. In some lessons, connections between areas of learning, such as between Islamic education and social studies, are tenuous.
- Students' ability to think critically and to carry out investigations is developing, although they are inconsistent. Students' use of technology to enhance learning and for research is variable.

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

| | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary |
|----------------------|------------------|---------|-----------|
| Personal development | Good | Good | Good |

- Students demonstrate positive attitudes and self-reliance in their learning. For example, secondary students work diligently when researching in the library. They are responsible when working with younger children in their classes and sensitive to their needs. FS children are growing in self-confidence as they organise independent play.
- Most students behave appropriately and are polite and courteous to adults. They follow school rules and almost all adhere to the expected codes of conduct. A small minority are less well behaved. For example in some Arabic lessons, students do not always show appropriate behaviour or respect to others.

- Students have a positive understanding of the different cultures and backgrounds of their fellow students and show appreciation of the rich diversity. They have supportive relationships with teachers and each other and respond well to teachers' encouragement. More able students readily help others in lessons.
- Students report that they feel safe in school. Across the school, they cooperate well in and out of class. They enjoy games and taking exercise. Most respond well to the school's encouragement to bring healthy snacks, including fruit. FS children enjoy the competition to bring different types of fruit for lunch and snack. The canteen serves a selection of healthy options.
- Attendance is good overall. However, across the school, and especially in FS, a significant number of students arrive late in the morning. In primary and secondary phases, students are not always punctual for the start of lessons.

| | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary |
|--|------------------|---------|-----------|
| Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures | Good | Good | Good |

- Students across all phases have secure and age-appropriate knowledge of Islamic practice such as the Five Pillars of Islam and Ramadan. They appreciate Islamic values such as kindness, family values, friendship, and respect. Senior students can discuss a variety of issues regarding the values of Islam in UAE contemporary society.
- Students participate in a range of cultural activities such as National Day celebration and charity events. They initiate activities on occasion. They appreciate the UAE heritage and recognise important and modern landmarks in the UAE and especially in Dubai. Displays around the school, especially in the FS and in the Arabic and Islamic education departments, show a rich knowledge about heritage. Students' awareness of the leadership of the UAE, their understanding of its initiatives and the vision for the future, is less evident.
- Students understand and appreciate their own and other world cultures and can describe some similarities and differences. They appreciate the multicultural environment of the school and they can name many nationalities. They feel proud of their own heritage and show respect for their peers' cultures. They are respectful of the UAE National Anthem.

| | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary |
|--|------------------|------------|-----------|
| Social responsibility and innovation skills | Acceptable | Acceptable | Good |

- Students have an appropriate understanding of their responsibilities as members of the school. Some students take on key roles such as prefects, as peer tutors and as organisers and participants in the collections for charities. Senior students volunteer in helping and supporting the poor and needy. FS children learn how to organise themselves and to care for their environment adequately.
- Students enjoy their work and are happy to be involved in the different school activities. Secondary students take good advantage of the opportunities to lead ventures such as weekly leadership sessions and drama productions. Year 10 students are involved in enterprise projects where many make profits. However, the opportunities for younger students to develop their entrepreneurial skills are limited.

- Students and children take care of their immediate surroundings and participate in activities to improve their environment. Senior students are involved in beach clean-ups in Dubai, with some participating in forest clean-ups in other countries. Many understand the importance of recycling. Environmental awareness in FS is not yet well developed.

3. Teaching and assessment

| | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary |
|--|------------------|------------|------------|
| Teaching for effective learning | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge through their clear and concise explanations and in their answers to students' questions. Their understanding of how students learn is less secure. Most teachers apply their knowledge consistently. In Arabic as a first language, a minority of teachers do not always model classical Arabic. Most lessons are well planned and include a variety of activities. Teachers create positive learning environments and make resources available to students to enhance learning. They usually make good use of time but occasionally the pace of lessons is too slow. Interactions between students and teachers are generally respectful. In the better lessons, there is more open questioning, which allows for more thoughtful, deeper responses from students. In many classes, teachers talk too much and there is insufficient opportunity for student-led discussions. In Arabic, questions tend to be too superficial and require minimal thinking. Lesson plans often identify different expectations for students of varying abilities. In practice, teachers do not always implement their plans as intended. For example, when students find learning too difficult or too easy, teachers do not modify their strategies or vary their approaches. Plans identify opportunities to develop students' critical thinking and problem-solving. In reality, students do not have sufficient time to reflect and so the opportunities are missed. Independent learning skills, especially research, are a developing feature. | | | |
| | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary |
| Assessment | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

- The school's internal assessment processes are robust, coherent and consistent. They are linked to the school's curriculum standards. The school is using a commercial system to store and manipulate its data. In some subjects, differing and contradictory data sets are produced. As yet, the school does not provide consistent or reliable information from which to judge whether students are making the expected or better progress.
- The school enters students for international benchmark attainment tests and a cognitive ability test. Current internal assessments are high in comparison to external benchmarked student performance. The school maintains that this is because of low literacy levels and students' unfamiliarity with online assessment procedures. Some teachers are not fully aware of international attainment tests and their implications. The school has begun to use cognitive ability tests to identify students with SEND and those with gifts and talents.

- Assessment data is analysed but information about students' progress, as individuals and as groups, is not sufficiently developed across all subject areas or phases. Some teachers are not sufficiently secure in their assessment capability. This impairs accurate judgements both of attainment levels and progress rates.
- The school does not yet use internal and external data adequately to influence teaching or to adapt curriculum planning. Only a minority of teachers have sufficiently adapted their plans to take account of their students' learning needs. This is limiting student progress and attainment.
- Limited understanding of assessment techniques and results has restricted teachers' knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their students. There is variability across phases and subjects. In some subjects, for example science, teachers generally provide challenge, support and feedback, and informative marking, all of which helps students to move forward. Elsewhere, marking policies are not adhered to, with some books rarely marked and feedback to students insufficiently focused. Meaningful involvement of students in their own assessment of progress is developing.

4. Curriculum

| | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary |
|---|------------------|------------|------------|
| Curriculum design and implementation | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

- The curriculum is based on a clear rationale. It is generally broad and balanced across all subjects, and within each of its various elements. It follows the requirements of the National Curriculum for England. It mainly meets local statutory requirements.
- Primary students are given a choice about the modern language they wish to study and about the content of topics. The range of subjects offered to older students allows a sufficiently broad choice for most to study the subjects that interest them and in which they can succeed. Most students are successful in having their choices met in the school's increasing range of subjects.
- Themes in the primary phase are carefully planned to make meaningful links between subjects including English, science and mathematics. Valuable links with enterprise and opportunities to develop leadership skills enrich secondary provision well.
- Much successful work has been completed to establish a curriculum that meets the students' diverse needs, in particular those for whom English is not their first language. Information from assessments is being used to develop the FS curriculum. The use of external international benchmarking to support curriculum development is underdeveloped.
- The school meets the requirement to teach the UAE social studies curriculum. It is taught in the FS and primary phases, where there are weekly discrete lessons. From Years 2 to 10, it is integrated with other subjects, as well as taught as a discrete subject. Teachers effectively engage students in their learning, for example when using technology for research. Students typically focus well on their learning and are able to reflect and to discuss what they are doing. Assessments are made against age-related curriculum criteria, but results are not systematically recorded.

| | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------|------------|
| Curriculum adaptation | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

- The adaptation of the curriculum is variable across the school. The tasks set in the majority of lessons do not provide sufficient challenge for very able students, or purposeful support for those who find learning difficult. For the few students who are given one to one support in the Small Steps Centre, the curriculum is adapted well to meet their individual needs.
- The curriculum provides a developing range of opportunities for students, especially in the secondary phase, and encourages them to undertake purposeful and interesting ventures. For example, an enterprising charity drive by students focuses on buying learning materials for a new school being built in Kenya. Learning is also enhanced by a range of visitors and visits out of school.
- A range of learning experiences, such as visits to places of interest, and the celebration of UAE National Day and similar festivals, enhance students understanding of the traditions and history of the UAE. Age appropriate and enjoyable experiences are provided in FS for children to learn about aspects of UAE culture, such as finding out about camels and other wildlife.

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

| | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary |
|--|------------------|---------|-----------|
| Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding | Good | Good | Good |

- The school implements effective procedures to safeguard children. There is an accurate register of all thoroughly-vetted, permanent staff. The school holds a separate register of identity-checked volunteers, almost all of whom are supervised at all times with students. The school has effective procedures in place to protect students from abuse, including bullying and via the internet.
- An efficient and very well-led team of staff carry out thorough daily checks of safety, security and the condition of the building. They respond quickly and effectively to staff requests for maintenance. They prioritise well and respond quickly. Consequently, the school is clean and well presented; it is both very safe and secure. The supervision of students is highly effective at all times.
- The maintenance and tracking of health and safety incidents is managed well using a cloud-based risk management platform. The leadership team maintain secure and accurate records, including incidents and subsequent responses. The building is in a good state of repair.
- This relatively new building is well designed and affords the school an environment that supports students' learning well. Although there is only a single lift facility at one end of the site, nevertheless the building is both accessible to and safe for all, including for students who are disabled and for those who have special educational needs.
- The school promotes the notion that students are empowered to make good or bad decisions, including choices that they might make in relation to safe behaviours and healthy living. The school's promotion of healthy lifestyles is prioritised through the core and extended curriculum, the guidance given to parents, and the provision of healthy food options and extensive sports.

| | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary |
|------------------|------------------|---------|-----------|
| Care and support | Good | Good | Good |

- Relationships at all levels in the school are positive. Students are confident that they can confide their concerns in the adults who care for them, including the counsellor, and are assured of their support. The school behaviour policy is shared well with all students and co-ordinated efficiently by pastoral staff.
- Absences from school are monitored closely. Procedures, to deal with late arrivals at school lack rigour, including in FS where children frequently miss registration. Late arrival at the start of the day and to lessons interrupts the learning of others, and is not always dealt with as efficiently as it should be to discourage lateness.
- The school has very effective systems to quickly identify students with SEND. Training has been given to teachers to help detect needs at an early stage. Concerns are processed professionally by SEND staff and individual support is put in place efficiently to meet individual needs. The identification of students with academic and sporting talents is improving.
- Clear individual education plans (IEP) provide helpful guidance for teachers to support students in class and monitoring of their use in class by SEND staff is developing rapidly. However, these IEPs are not used consistently across all subjects and year groups. Students and their parents are invited to join staff in setting, and regularly reviewing targets and parents value this level of involvement.
- The pastoral and academic guidance of all students is of a good quality. Students' personal development is monitored well and guidance or professional counselling is readily available when required. The level of academic and pastoral support available to students and their families as they move to the next phase of their education in school is developing effectively.

Inclusion

Provision and outcomes for students with SEND

Good

- The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCo), Inclusion Leader and Inclusion staff provide a good level of care and support for students with special educational needs. Efficient professional links have been made with English Language Learners (ELL) support staff and also with the specialist staff in the Small Steps Centre.
- Students' learning needs are identified quickly by teaching staff and, following professional assessment, effective, well-planned support is initiated. IEPs are shared with teaching staff and give clear and helpful guidance on how a student may be most effectively supported in class.
- The support provided for parents is good and is expanding with a programme of social and information-sharing meetings. All parents are encouraged to be involved with their children's individual learning plans and help to set the targets for their continued development. Parents are appreciative of the level of support they receive from the SEND department and the improved communications between home and school.

- Modification of work in lessons, to ensure that the tasks for students with SEND and those who have special gifts and talents matches their learning needs is inconsistent. Regular, rigorous monitoring of lessons by SEND staff is not fully in place to quickly identify where improvement is needed.
- The progress made by students with SEND is monitored well and most are making good progress when measured against their different starting points. Account is taken of the progress that students make in meeting their personal targets when monitoring their progress.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Acceptable

- The school senior leadership team (SLT) share a clear vision for an inclusive, innovative and happy school. They are determined to provide the best possible experience and support for the school's diverse and ever-growing population. They are committed to the National Agenda priorities.
- The new principal brings a wealth of expertise from his experience in education. He is supported by senior leaders with a range of expertise. Their first priority is students' health, safety, wellbeing, and personal development. Some of the recent additions to the SLT are new to the role and are still developing their skills and abilities in raising teachers' expectations of what students can achieve.
- The SLT have clearly defined roles and are aware of their responsibilities for school improvement. Relationships are positive and professional and teachers appreciate the support they receive. Consequently, morale is high.
- The SLT and middle leaders at all levels, and in most subjects, know that further improvements are necessary and can be made, and some are already having a positive impact on student progress. As a group, they have done well to manage the significant growth in the number of students and teachers and demonstrate a good capacity for further improvement.
- The SLT have already been successful in developing some aspects of the school against the background of significant change. They ensure that the school is compliant, and are aware that the recently-amended timetable for Arabic must be adhered to.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Weak

- Self-evaluation is underdeveloped. A wealth of internal and external data is available to the school, but it is not used effectively to give an accurate picture of the school's academic performance.
- The SLT regularly monitor the quality of teaching and learning and provide constructive feedback, support and professional development. However, insufficient account is taken of the progress made by students in lessons.
- The school's improvement plan identifies some key priorities and appropriate actions based on some internal evaluation. However, since the evaluation of performance is not sufficiently rigorous or accurate, the goals for improvement are not based on any solid premise, particularly with regard to the UAE National Agenda priorities.

- The actions taken for improvement have some impact on students' achievements. As an example, students' personal development and their attitudes to learning are good, and attainment and progress in secondary science are also good. However, in other respects, the impact is variable and insufficient.

Partnerships with parents and the community

Very good

- The school recognises and values the role of parents as first educators of their children. School leaders have successfully engaged them in a positive partnership in support of the children. The shared learning sessions, for example, are very much appreciated and valued by all participants. Parents' views are sought and welcomed, not least of all through the Parents' Council and, where appropriate, they are implemented.
- Parents also appreciate the systems for communicating and sharing information. The dojo system is particularly effective in providing them with instant information about their children's achievements. Parents of students with SEND also value the sensitive approach and the genuine partnership in support of their children.
- Reports on students' progress and personal development are comprehensive and well received. The less formal, incidental conversations and communications further increase parents' satisfaction with what the school provides for their children.
- The school is increasingly at the heart of the local community. It participates in various inter-school sports activities and has forged links with various organisations such as Oxford University to develop student critical thinking, and the Rocket Car Challenge to enhance their skills in design and technology. They also provide charitable support for organisations in Africa.

Governance

Weak

- The governing board, comprising a number of corporate representatives, acknowledges the importance of parents' views in the development and direction of the school. It seeks their views through the Parents' Council. Consequently, parents are increasingly influential and are both critical and supportive in equal measure.
- Governors set performance targets for the SLT. They acknowledge that they need time to achieve them and for systems to become embedded, especially given the rapid growth in student numbers and change in the relatively short time since the school opened.
- Governors provide appropriate staffing levels, resources and facilities to enhance learning. The appointment of a very experienced principal to take the school through its next stage of development has been their key priority.
- With the new principal, the SLT are working extremely hard and demonstrate loyalty and commitment to the governing board, to the school, to its parents and most importantly to its students. However, there has been insufficient support provided to them in their inspection preparation.

Management, staffing, facilities and resources




Good

- Most aspects of school's daily life are well-managed and procedures are in place to ensure the smooth running of the school. Systems and protocols are developing, which support both established and newly appointed staff. Routines are becoming established and this aids the management of a rapidly growing student body.
- The school has sufficient suitably qualified staff. They are deployed so as to meet the needs of the students. The teaching cohort is growing rapidly and the challenges this brings are usually managed effectively. There is ongoing professional development for staff, which is linked to these needs, and also to those of the school as a whole.
- The premises are of an excellent standard, with light, spacious learning areas. Laboratories are well-stocked with appropriate equipment and materials. Specialist facilities, such as the developing libraries, the large and smaller sports halls and the swimming pool, together with prayer rooms and the art and design media suites, foster an atmosphere which is conducive to learning.
- All classrooms have large, interactive screens, which are occasionally used imaginatively. There is, additionally, a wide range of appropriate specialist equipment in FS, art, design media suites, with green screen capability, and laboratories. Students may bring their own technology device for use in lessons, which increases the likelihood of effective independent research being undertaken.

The views of parents, teachers and senior students

The views of parents, teachers and senior 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* | 2016-2017 | 1042 |
| | | 0 |
|  Teachers | 127 | |
|  Students | 177 | |

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

- Most parents who responded to the survey are positive and appreciative of the school's support for their children. Amongst other things, they appreciate the efforts made by the school to improve Islamic education and Arabic, the communication systems and the inclusive ethos of the school.
- A large majority of parents do not think the school fosters a love of reading Arabic.
- A minority have concerns about: their children's understanding of Islamic values; the quality of counselling to support children's social and emotional needs; the extent to which the school fosters a love of reading for pleasure at home; the range of extra-curricular activities, and the quality of careers and academic guidance.
- A few parents also have concerns about: the lack of information regarding children's progress; the quality of support and feedback to help their children improve; bullying and how the school deals with it; the school not listening to their views and how well their children are supported to become independent learners.
- Some parents also comment on: the quality of provision for Islamic education, Arabic and mathematics; behaviour, especially on buses; security at the front gate; class size and the schools emphasis on technology.
- Teachers who responded are very positive with almost all aspects of the school. A few have concerns about the quality of provision for Islamic education and about bullying.
- Those students that responded to the survey are mostly positive about the school. They have concerns about: their ability to read Arabic; being happy at school and having a sense of belonging; being treated fairly; insufficient time to get to lessons; the range of healthy food and drinks on offer; their limited involvement in decision-making and their limited understanding of the Emirati heritage.

What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the inspection report. This should address:

- recommendations from DSIB
- areas identified by the school as requiring improvement
- other external reports or sources of information that comment on the work of the school
- priorities arising from the school's unique characteristics.

The next school inspection will report on changes made by the school.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau
Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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