



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational
needs and disabilities



Innovation

Inspection Report 2015-2016

Oxford School

Curriculum: UK

Overall rating: Acceptable

Read more about the school



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



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

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School information

General information



Location	Al Muhaisnah
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	1988
Website	www.oxford.sch.ae
Telephone	04-254-3666
Address	Muhaisnah 4, PO Box 50091
Principal	Aisha Ansari
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	7 to 10 March 2016

Students



Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	4-18
Grades or year groups	Foundation Stage 2 to Year 13
Number of students on roll	1,928
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	56
Number of students with SEND	39
Largest nationality group of students	Pakistani

Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	138
Largest nationality group of teachers	Indian
Number of teaching assistants	8
Teacher-student ratio	1:15
Number of guidance counsellors	2
Teacher turnover	33%

Curriculum



Educational permit / Licence	UK
Main curriculum	UK
External tests and examinations	IGCSE, AS, A level, IBT
Accreditation	None
National Agenda benchmark tests	IBT

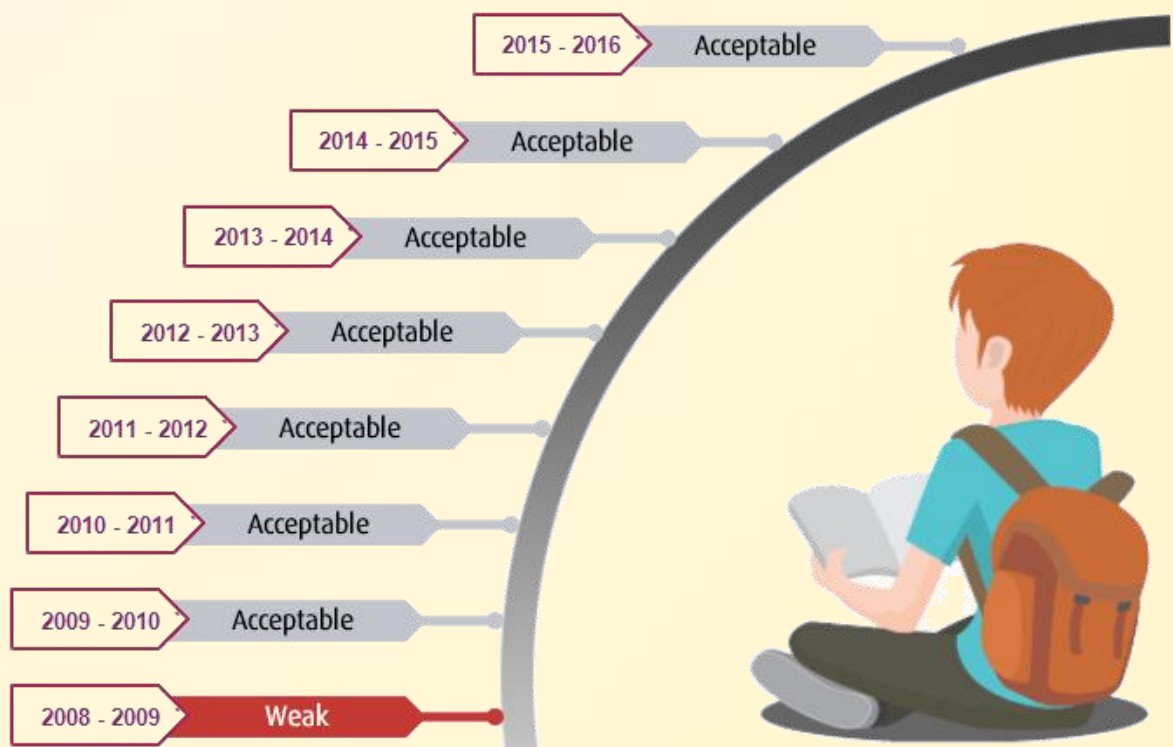


Summary for parents and the community

Oxford School was inspected by DSIB from 7 to 10 March 2016. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **acceptable**.

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

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





How well did the school perform overall?

The **Oxford School** provided an **acceptable** quality of education for its students.

- Students' progress in Islamic education had improved to good in the Primary phase and remained good in the Post-16 phase, where their attainment also remained good. Progress in learning Arabic as an additional language had improved to good in the Primary phase. All other students' attainment and progress in these subjects remained acceptable. Students' attainment and progress were good in English in the Foundation Stage and Secondary phase, but had declined to acceptable in the Primary phase. The children's progress in mathematics and science in the Foundation Stage had improved to good. Students' attainment and progress in mathematics in secondary had declined to acceptable. Very small numbers of students in the Post-16 classes precluded attainment and progress judgements from being made. In science, across all phases, students' attainment was acceptable, as was their progress beyond the Foundation Stage. The quality of students' learning skills was strongest in the Post-16, where they were good.
- Students' personal responsibility, and their understanding of Islamic values and the culture and heritage of the UAE were good across the school. Students' social responsibility and innovation skills were best developed in the Post-16 phase, where they were very good.
- The overall quality of teaching was acceptable across the first three phases of the school, and good in the Post-16 phase. Teachers at this phase set tasks and activities that enabled students to build more effectively on what they already knew and could do. Across all phases, teachers had improved the ways they gathered reliable information on students' attainment. They had not used this information consistently in their lessons to provide tasks closely matched to the learning needs of different groups and individuals. The assessment of learning remained acceptable across all phases.
- Curriculum design remained good across all phases. Teachers had increased the amount of time given to particular subjects, and the school taught humanities, including UAE social studies. Across all phases, teachers' adaptation of the curriculum remained of acceptable quality. Teachers did not modify curricular programmes consistently to meet the needs of all groups of students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), as well as the gifted and talented students.
- Arrangements for students' health and safety remained acceptable across all phases. Arrangements for child protection and safeguarding commendably ensured that all teachers and the support staff were suitably trained. The policy was not widely available to parents, however. Building security and school transport arrangements were generally well managed, but supervision required greater consistency to ensure that recent improvements operated effectively. Support for students was good in the Foundation Stage and in the Post-16 phase.
- Leadership across the school was acceptable. The principal had successfully established new teams of senior and middle leaders. Under her direction, senior and middle leaders had laid important foundations for improved teaching, assessment and curriculum delivery. These developments were yet to consistently improve the outcomes for students. Governors had supported the school's new leaders well. The school was well-placed to improve further and faster with their continued support.



What did the school do well?

- Students' good attainment and progress in English in the Foundation Stage and Secondary phase, and their consistently strong personal and social responsibility across all phases.
- The quality of teaching, and students' learning skills, in the Post-16 phase, and the good quality of curriculum design and implementation.
- The good quality of support for children in the Foundation Stage and the Post-16 phase, and the good quality of partnerships with parents in the education of their children.



What does the school need to do next?

- In all phases of the school teachers should:
 - use what they know about their students' attainment to plan suitable activities that meet the needs of individual students
 - adapt the curriculum to meet the learning needs of identified groups of students, such as boys, girls, the gifted, talented, or those with SEND
 - use assessment findings to identify the next steps in learning for groups and individuals.
- Senior and middle leaders should:
 - review the quality of teaching, learning, attainment and progress, as frequently as possible, so that these become the focus of continuous school self-evaluation
 - plan and implement improvements to these core areas.
- Governors should:
 - address overcrowding where it exists, in order to enable more interactive teaching and learning
 - continue to improve the learning environments of the school to create stimulating and appropriately resourced places for learning in all phases of the school
 - hold senior leaders accountable for the school's improvement, so that the pace of improvement quickens.



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

- Many students with SEND made too little progress, because lessons were not planned to interest and challenge individuals. Opportunities to relate lessons to real world problems were missed, making learning more difficult to connect and remember.
- The identified students received regular and frequent updates on progress toward the targets set by the SEND department. As a result, most parents felt well informed of their children's progress.
- Parents were kept very well informed by the department and knew how to use the lines of communication. Issues and problems that arose were dealt with quickly and well.
- Most parents felt engaged in the learning process and were confident in influencing their children's education. This was due to the systems used and approachability of the SEND department staff.
- Many lessons did not support learning well enough. Aside from improvements in lessons, students with physical impairments needed resources to ensure that access was safe and that they felt fully included.

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.
- Progress towards meeting the National Agenda targets was not secure.
- Although the National Agenda had been promoted among all stakeholders, their understanding of the implications and adjustments to teaching and the curriculum was less consistent. There was awareness of the need for tests which benchmarked students' achievements against international standards. Teachers had received training about these assessments. Students learned about the National Agenda targets in social studies lessons and assemblies.
- Adjustments had been made to the curriculum to align it to the requirements of the TIMSS and PISA tests. Mental mathematics had been introduced in all numeracy lessons following the analysis of International Benchmarking Test (IBT) results. Although plans had been developed to introduce problem solving, understanding of what problem solving in different subjects might look like was less developed.
- Whilst opportunities for critical thinking were identified in the curriculum and lesson plans, whole school understanding of it was less evident. Questioning by teachers often elicited whole class answers rather than encouraging critical thinking. The collaborative tasks were best when they were less teacher directed and encouraged students to learn from each other.
- Learning technologies were mainly used to complete quizzes in classrooms. Opportunities to use them for research and independent work were limited. Projects were allocated to students, but they mainly took the form of extended work sheets, such as a mathematics project on calorie intake. Students were unclear in understanding how such tasks developed their research skills.

Innovation in education

The *UAE Vision 2021* sets out the National Agenda for the UAE to be among the most innovative nations in the world. The National Innovation Strategy sets the context for ‘innovation’ and ‘innovative leadership’. It provides a basis for evaluating public and private schools in order to deliver a world-class education for all children in the UAE.

Innovation is driven by a commitment to excellence and continuous improvement. It is based on curiosity, the willingness to take risks, to experiment and to test assumptions as well as questioning and challenging the status quo. Being innovative is about looking beyond what we currently do well, identifying the great ideas of tomorrow and putting them into practice.



Promoting a culture of innovation:

- Leaders were committed to promoting a culture of innovation. However, the school's strategic plan had not detailed how this might be achieved. Enthusiasm had been generated, but key personnel had not been identified to promote the innovation agenda. Consideration of how the premises and online learning environments could support innovative practices was at its early stages. Students had created an outdoor collage that invited the school community to be innovative. Although teachers in some lessons had provided 'innovation time' to help students think differently, the curriculum had not been adapted to support innovation across the school.

Overall school performance

Acceptable

1. Students' achievement

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Learning skills	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

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

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

3. Teaching and assessment

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

4. Curriculum

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

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

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

6. Leadership and management

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



Main inspection report

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

Judgements are made on a six-point scale



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

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

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

1. Students' achievement

Foundation Stage

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

- The majority of children in Foundation Stage attained above curriculum expectations and made good progress. They responded to stories by anticipating events and most asked relevant questions. They listened to others and responded to their comments and instructions. Most children communicated effectively, using past, present and the future tenses accurately. Most read and understood simple sentences. They used their understanding of the sounds of letters to decode new and familiar words. They also used phonic knowledge to write simple words and in some cases simple sentences.
- In mathematics most children attained levels that were in line with curriculum standards. They could count from one to 20. They added and subtracted two numbers from 1 to 9 when using objects such as counters. They added and subtracted numbers by counting backwards and forwards to find an answer, up to 20. The majority of children made good progress. They recognised shapes and used accurate mathematical language to describe them. They also analysed and constructed simple patterns with suitable moveable objects. Structured play settings did not offer enough challenging learning experiences for the children to apply and practice what they had newly learned.
- In science, most children attained at the levels of the curriculum standards. They had started to understand the world and recognised that there were differences and similarities between themselves and others. They understood the cultural differences in their own school and knew about different traditions and customs. They made good progress. Children were able to categorise different types of plants and animals into the themes they studied. For example, they sorted jungle animals into plant-eaters and meat-eaters. Children understood the uses of different technologies at school and in the home, through their use of computers in both places. They understood how these technologies are used in society.

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

- In Islamic education, most students attained acceptable standards as measured against the authorised curriculum. However, in lessons and their recent work, the majority of students made better than the expected progress as measured against the learning objectives. Students were able to memorise a number of short Surahs and variety of Duhas. Students knew how to perform prayers and explain the ideas conveyed in the prescribed verses of the Holy Qur'an. Students showed good understanding and appreciation of Islamic morals and values, such as being grateful to Allah. The progress made by Arab students in Islamic education was not as strong as those made by non-Arab students.
- In lessons and in their recent work in Arabic as a first language, most students demonstrated levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that were in line with the curriculum standards. The majority of students listened attentively and could understand the extended and complex meanings of what they heard. The writing skills of most students were in line with expectations, but there were too few opportunities for them to develop their independent writing. Progress from their starting points at the beginning of the year was acceptable. Most students in the primary years were in line with expectations for their listening and reading skills. Older Primary students showed better progress in most of the four language aspects than their younger peers.
- In lessons and in their recent work in Arabic as an additional language, most students demonstrated levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that were in line with the curriculum standards. Children listened well and easily understood most of what their teachers said. A majority of students were confident readers and had acceptable comprehension skills. Most students made good progress in the lessons observed and met most of the objectives by the end of a lesson. There was clear progress in the development of listening and reading skills across the Primary phase. Students were developing their abilities to write at length.
- Students' attainment in English varied across the primary years; overall, it was close to, but below the curriculum's expectations. Their attainment on external assessments was reflected in students' speaking, listening and writing. Most students read with increasing confidence and expression. The youngest built well on their knowledge of the sounds letters made and enjoyed listening to stories. Progress across the primary years varied. Older students recognised that a persuasive style of writing could be used for different purposes. By Year 6 most students had built well upon what they already knew and had reached the levels expected in the curriculum.
- The achievements of students in mathematics were broadly in line with both the curriculum expectations and international standards. Whilst their use of shape, space and data handling were good, their overall understanding of number systems, including place values, was not secure. The best learning took place when lessons moved at a brisk pace. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on collecting data, students had to work collaboratively to complete a time limited challenge. Generally, lack of different tasks and low challenge slowed the pace of learning by different groups of students.

- In science, checkpoint tests indicated that most students attained below the curriculum standards. External tests, such as the IBT, indicated similar outcomes. The majority of students had a reasonable grasp of key ideas; for example, they could classify magnetic and non-magnetic materials and discuss factors affecting seed germination. Their practical skills were developing. This level of attainment was maintained over time. Teachers' low expectations resulted in tasks that were often too easy. As a result, progress by students was constrained. Equally, as there was often low challenge for the more able, and a lack of support for students with SEND, these students made little progress.

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

- In Islamic education, most students were working at levels that were in line with the curriculum standards. Most students made the expected progress in relation to appropriate learning objectives in lessons and their recent work. Girls made better progress than boys. Students made the expected progress in gaining knowledge about Islamic concepts and laws, such as marriage in Islam and the consequences of backbiting and gossiping. Their ability to make connections to their lives or cross-curricular links was limited. From their starting points most students reached the predicted levels, however the most able students were not sufficiently challenged.
- In lessons and in their recent work in Arabic, most students demonstrated levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that were in line with the curriculum standards. Listening was the strongest skill amongst the students, as most of them were able to understand the extended and complex meanings of what they heard. When speaking, most could express basic ideas using a reasonable range of words. However, there was only limited use of standard Arabic and therefore students lacked confidence. Most students' writing skills were in line with the expectations. There were too few opportunities for them to develop independent writing skills. Most students were making acceptable progress in their listening and reading skills.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students were working at levels in line with the curriculum standards. In lessons and their recent work, most students made the expected progress as measured against the learning objectives. Students had good listening skills and were able to understand their teachers' instructions without any translation. They were able to express opinions using a wide range of vocabulary. However, their progress in reading comprehension was limited and their writing was inconsistent. Students were not provided with enough opportunities to write at length for different purposes.

- In English, the majority of students attained above the curriculum standards, although recent results in international benchmark tests were less positive. Within lessons, students carried out research well to find out information, for example about the lives of the famous writers they studied. They analysed poems systematically and expressed their messages in more modern ways. Overall, they made better than expected progress from their starting points at the end of Year 6. Most students reached the goals set for them at the start of lessons. Many built well upon their speaking skills. For example, in a girls' class they confidently debated issues relating to International Women's Day.
- When measured against international and curriculum standards, students' achievements in mathematics were acceptable. While some students performed strongly on the IGCSE exams, the IBT results highlighted inconsistent achievements in the different areas of mathematics. Most students understood and applied space, shape and data, but their understanding of algebraic functions was less secure. In Year 8 students worked out the area of a trapezium and technology was used to challenge their thinking. Girls progressed better than boys in lessons.
- In science, internal and external testing indicated that under three quarters of students met the international standards, and that this was the case over time. Students with SEND and the more able were progressing slowly. Some lower secondary lessons were insufficiently challenging for progress to be suitably brisk. As students moved through the secondary phase, opportunities for group and experimental work increased and this led to a deeper understanding of scientific concepts. An example of this was a lesson about sound energy. There was an increase in the development of many important skills, such as inferring, analysing, hypothesising and evaluating up through the year groups.

Post-16

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students' demonstrated knowledge, skills and understanding that were above the curriculum standards. Students made better than expected progress in gaining knowledge about Islamic concepts and principles, such as the difference between Islam and Iman. Their abilities to derive judgments from sources such as the Holy Qur'an and Hadeeth, or establish stronger links with real life situations were limited. In addition, the progress made by Arab students in Islamic education was not as strong as that by non-Arabs. The most able students were not challenged sufficiently.
- In Arabic as a first language lessons and in their recent work, most students demonstrated levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that were in line with the curriculum standards. Students' listening, speaking and reading skills were secure. Their writing was less well developed. Students could listen well for different purposes. When speaking, the majority of students could express basic ideas well. However, they had too few opportunities for extended speaking. When writing, students' creative expression was limited. Their progress from the beginning of the year was acceptable in listening, speaking and reading skills. Progress in developing writing skills was slower. A significant minority were unable to demonstrate basic competency in the language.

- Internal and external science tests showed that, at the AS level, fewer than half of the students attained at a level which was above the international average; the A2 data were more positive than the AS data, although the cohort size was smaller. This attainment was being broadly maintained over time. Stimulating group work such as debating was leading to greater knowledge and understanding of key scientific concepts, such as magnetic resonance imaging and genetically modified organisms. Students made better than expected progress, as their independent study skills were becoming increasingly well developed and there were more opportunities for higher order thinking and problem-solving.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Learning skills	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

- Students across the school nearly always enjoyed their lessons and concentrated well for short periods of time. Generally, they recognised what they had to do to meet the expectations of their teachers. They were increasingly aware of what they needed to improve, but were not always clear about how to do so.
- When they were given appropriate opportunities, students worked effectively in pairs and in small groups. They shared their ideas constructively. They were beginning to decide for themselves what and how they would like to learn, a skill best developed by the Post-16 students.
- Across the school but particularly amongst the oldest, students had a growing understanding of how topics and concepts in one area complemented and supported ideas in other subjects. There were examples of students' increasingly articulate debating skills using English, for example, when investigating the effects of global warming during a science lesson.
- Most students readily used online sources to find additional information. The oldest students used a range of electronic means to handle data quickly and efficiently. They discussed their findings critically. Science lessons for the oldest students enabled them to formulate and test hypotheses. Recent initiatives increasingly helped students to assess their own work and that of others accurately and constructively.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Personal development	Good	Good	Good	Good ↓

- Children in the Foundation Stage and students across the school had positive and responsible attitudes toward learning. They were increasingly self reliant and responded well to critical feedback.
- Most students across the school behaved well. They were polite toward each other, their teachers and other adults. Their behaviour in lessons was positive, particularly when learning activities that engaged the attention of all students.
- Good relationships with students and between their teachers were evident. Mutual trust and respect for others were attributes demonstrated by students. In addition, most students were spontaneously helpful to each other.

- Students across the school increasingly grew in their understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They followed the school's advice towards healthy life styles.
- The students' attendance rates over the last full term and during the time of the inspection were good. However, during the inspection, in the Post-16 phase attendance was very weak at only 65 percent. The school was supporting these students to understand the importance of good attendance and how it affected their achievements. There was scope for attendance rates to improve.

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

- Students demonstrated clear understanding of Islamic values and their impact on contemporary society in Dubai and the wider world. They could explain how Dubai provided aid to the less developed nations, for example, in parts of Africa and Asia. Students also understood the positive impact of life in Dubai. They believed that safety in Dubai was achieved mainly because of the Islamic nature of the country.
- Students had clear understanding of the traditions and culture of Dubai. They described some of the main sporting activities such as camel and horse racing and falconry. Moreover, they had good knowledge about local food and traditional clothes.
- Students could talk about and describe their own cultures, providing detailed examples. However, the same students had only basic knowledge about other world cultures. They needed to increase their awareness of some of the UAE's heritage and culture more deeply, particularly Arab cultures in the Middle East.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good	Good	Very good ↓

- Students understood well their roles in the community. They volunteered in various activities in the wider community, participating in 'appreciation' days, for example, to show gratitude to different people. Moreover, the Post-16 students actively participated in assisting younger students. They also took responsibility for monitoring other students. They also visited a seniors' home to distribute gifts.
- Students had a positive work ethic and were increasingly active and reliable participants in the wider community. They also showed that they could take the initiative and make decisions when required. For example, they initiated and organised different events at the school such as science month, an old books sale, breast cancer awareness week, and a market day for collecting donations for charitable causes.

- Students had clear understanding of the environmental preservation concept. They demonstrated an understanding of how to take care of the environment, through assemblies, can collection, and paper recycling projects. There was scope for students to take more of a leading role when initiating such activities.

3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

- Teachers' subject knowledge was generally sound, although more so in the upper secondary years and the Post-16 phase. It was more secure in additional language contexts, such as Urdu and French and in the core subjects. Teachers' understanding of how students learn best was improving. It was best developed in the Post-16 phase, with greater differentiation and challenge for students.
- Lessons were generally well-planned, although in some cases insufficient time was set aside for plenary reviews of what had been learned. Classrooms were organised and often displays were well presented and celebrated students' efforts. In a minority of lessons, teaching was constrained by a lack of space and collaborative work was difficult.
- Interactions in lessons were generally positive, but all too frequently, especially in the lower years, questions that teachers asked were closed and failed to promote thinking. Teachers' questions generally checked for understanding. As a result, very few students were challenged in their thinking. When questioning produced choral responses, teachers were unable to ascertain the level of understanding of individual students.
- Teachers' planning regularly included different tasks for students of different ability. This was not consistently based on up-to-date information about what students already knew or could do, or feedback about what they found difficult. Teachers did not always plan well enough to meet the needs of all students. In the weaker lessons, plans did not take account of the need to provide varied tasks to meet students' varied learning needs.
- In the better lessons, tasks were designed to allow students to explore issues and to develop the skills of evaluation, analysis and critical thinking. This was not sufficiently widespread, however, and opportunities were lost as teachers failed to plan to promote students' deeper thinking. In the higher year groups, such opportunities were more widespread.
- Most Arabic teachers demonstrated a secure knowledge of their subjects and how students learn. Low expectations in the weaker lessons, hampered students' progress. Questioning strategies varied and critical thinking was not encouraged.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Assessment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable ↓

- Internal tests were established from the start of each year and were based upon the curriculum coverage documents. These assessments were beginning to produce informative data, and teachers were beginning to analyse what the data indicated about students' knowledge. However, teachers had yet to make fully effective use of this information to personalise students' tasks and activities in their lessons.
- The school had taken important steps to ensure that representative samples were entered for international benchmark tests. Secondary and Post-16 students sat for appropriate external examinations. These measures ensured that the school was well-placed to make valid and reliable comparisons of its students' performances with their counterparts in similar schools locally and internationally.
- Teachers had worked well to develop their understanding of data analysis, but it still lacked rigour and precision. It was used well to help identify areas of general weakness among the student body as a whole. Teachers had yet to consistently identify the specific weaknesses of groups and individuals. There was underdeveloped assessment practice in the primary years beyond the five key subjects.
- The assessment of learning was beginning to inform planning, but seldom offered information on 'next steps' in the written feedback in students' work books. Too frequently, feedback was restricted to praise or critical comment, with few pointers for improvement. Teachers' planning seldom changed in the light of their findings from assessing students' prior learning.
- Teachers knew the strengths and weaknesses of the students in their class, and were beginning to use this to challenge or move learning on. However, marking was not yet sufficiently evaluative. Support was given to students when they undertook tasks. Students' evaluation of their own learning and that of their peers was best developed in the Post-16 phase.

4. Curriculum

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

- The curriculum had a clear rationale, based on the National Curriculum for England. Breadth and balance informed curricular programmes beyond the key subjects. Additional language learning featured strongly across primary and secondary. Art featured across the first three phases but music only at Foundation Stage. Younger students could participate in Drama. Students in all phases took physical education.
- The curriculum met the needs of most students. A range of options were available for older students in languages, mathematics and sciences as well as commerce and other subjects. The Foundation Stage curriculum was appropriate for children, enabling learning through first-hand experiences. Students' survey responses indicated not all felt well prepared for the next phase of their education.

- In primary, secondary and Post 16 the curriculum was well organised so that it was taught consistently and planned logically. As a result students learned systematically. Lessons were well organised so that there was sufficient time available for worthwhile teaching and learning to take place, and for students to build on what they knew and could do.
- Particularly in Foundation and Primary phases, planning allowed students to appreciate the links between different areas of knowledge, for example when developing themes and topic work. A rolling programme of theme-based months, for example Literacy month, helped students across all phases link their learning across the subjects they studied.
- Curriculum review had led to well-considered changes. These included the addition of new subjects such as humanities, and additional time for important aspects of learning such as study of the Holy Qur'an. Programmes of Personal and Social Education had also begun. The curriculum had been recently strengthened by the inclusion of initiatives to develop and promote students' understanding of innovation.
- UAE social studies had been taught as a stand-alone subject for students from Year 1 to Year 8. The curriculum was aligned to the Ministry of Education curriculum. In addition, UAE social studies was delivered through links with other subjects. This helped students to develop understanding and knowledge of culture, history, geography and economy of the region.

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

- In a minority of lessons, teachers effectively adapted learning materials for students such as those with SEND or those who had been identified as high attainers. More widely, additional activities, for example, debating in the Post-16 phase, had been introduced to expand opportunities for critical thinking. Teachers increasingly adapted the curriculum when under-performance was noticed. For example, mental maths had been introduced as a result of analysing performance data.
- The school provided acceptable opportunities to enrich learning through visits and extra-curricular activities. Students were increasingly involved in stimulating community activities. In a small number of lessons, innovation was attempted, but this was at an early stage. Teachers and students' understanding of truly innovative thinking was developing positively.
- The school celebrated and valued its links to Emirati culture and traditions, particularly during their studies in Islamic education and Arabic. Across all phases, the school encouraged students to learn about Emirati heritage and its importance in Emirati society. In the context of a multi-cultural school population, the staff had successfully fostered enthusiasm for learning about the UAE and the cultural richness it offered.
- The Foundation Stage provided two short Arabic lessons for 48 Arab students each week. The programme was shaped by the published Ministry of Education curriculum and concentrated on the Arabic alphabet, sound recognition and basic vocabulary, appropriate to the ages and understanding of the children.

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

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

- A clearly stated child protection policy, shared with all staff members, was available to parents upon request. All staff members, including ancillary, transport and support staff had been suitably trained. New security procedures to identify school visitors were inconsistently applied. The school took suitable measures to protect students from bullying and cyber bullying. These topics had been shared at parents' meetings.
- The school met all legal and statutory requirements. The support staff managed school bus arrivals and departures well. However, bus travel attendance records were not kept consistently or accurately over time. The law requiring the wearing of seat belts was not always enforced. Students' entries and exits were not consistently monitored. Arrangements for safe student collection and drop-off adjacent to the school were not consistently effective.
- The school premises were adequately maintained and provided a safe learning environment for students. The clinic maintained secure up-to-date medical records. Accident records were carefully maintained. Temporary ramps provided access for the whole school community. Specialised areas such as the science laboratories were in need of refurbishment and updating.
- Overall, the school premises and outdoor facilities provided a safe physical environment for students. Some aspects of the premises and facilities did not fully meet the learning needs of all students. Some classrooms were too small to support effective learning.
- Suitably qualified clinic personnel provided a range of programmes promoting health throughout the school. Canteen meals and snacks were generally healthy. Appropriate measures protected students from the sun and fresh drinking water was available in the playground area. Staff members did not work together sufficiently well to promote the importance of diet and exercise.

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

- Teacher and student relationships were founded on respect. Most teachers managed student behaviour well. However, in more than a few lessons, students were not always fully engaged with learning.
- The school had appropriate systems for managing and monitoring students' attendance. During the school day, more than a few lessons started late, because either the teacher or students were not punctual. This reduced the effectiveness of planning, and discouraged respect for learning.

- Recent improvements in the identification and diagnosis of students' needs had resulted in more accurate planning to secure more successful outcomes. The school appropriately directed parents to sources of external diagnosis and therapies. The identification of particular students' gifts and talents relied almost exclusively on academic assessments, with teachers and parents contributing additional information.
- The SEND staff provided knowledgeable and detailed advice. When such advice, given in writing, was followed well, this resulted in engaged learners. When tasks, materials, and teaching did not accommodate particular groups or students with SEND, learning was less effective. The very able students were seldom challenged to do research or provide student-led teaching to their peers.
- Regular and frequent careers guidance enabled students, particularly in the Post-16 phase, to make informed choices around their academic and vocational lives after school. Counsellors and teachers made very effective use of the opportunities created in 'Circle Time' to monitor students' well-being, support their academic and social challenges and to cement good relationships.

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

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

Weak

- The SEND leader successfully coordinated the policies and led the practices of the department. The students' Individual education plans were up to date and useful for monitoring progress, setting targets, and advising how teachers could match individual students' needs.
- The students with SEND were identified and appropriately categorised. Others who might have specific difficulties indicated by weak performance in either English or mathematics, were not routinely identified. This was because the relevant data were not fully analysed.
- Most parents reported that the SEND staff organised frequent opportunities to influence education programmes, and knew about their children's progress in English and mathematics. Parents' knowledge of their children's progress in other subjects was less secure.
- Particularly in the primary and secondary lessons, poor lesson planning resulted in little progress in many lessons. Support by the SEND department could not always compensate for such underdeveloped plans.
- Progress by students with SEND was sometimes weakened as teachers did not routinely and systematically check their learning in lessons. Therefore, their planning for future lessons was based upon learning that might not have taken place.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Acceptable

- Guided by the principal's leadership, senior and middle leaders were firmly focused on improving the school. The school's refreshed vision and mission statements informed the necessary and important developments since the previous inspection. The Principal and her relatively new leadership team had made well-considered adjustments to the curriculum, including UAE social studies. There were important revisions made to the provision for students with SEND.
- Leaders at all levels, including the principal, had supported teachers, almost half of them new to the school, to develop their understanding of effective practices. Leaders were developing their own understanding of the effective use of assessment data to adapt teaching to meet all students' needs. These important developments were not yet well-established.
- The principal had ensured that the recently expanded school leadership team had clear roles and responsibilities. Leaders at all levels were increasingly clear about what was expected of them. The principal had supported the staff to work collaboratively across the different phases of the school, for example to develop a revised programme of 'Personal and Social Education.' Relationships across the team were mutually supportive.
- Leaders at all levels had contributed significantly to developments in the curriculum, assessment, self-evaluation, and a range of other aspects of school life across the phases. All were aware of the need to develop these initiatives. School leaders were committed to their own professional development as well as that of their colleagues.
- The school had appropriately revised vision and mission statements to inform its development. Suitable adjustments to the timetable had provided additional teaching and learning time for key subjects in particular phases. Senior and middle leaders had clear responsibilities for review and self-evaluation. These positive developments represented a very promising foundation on which to build further improvement.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Acceptable

- School leaders, including the principal, had a realistic view of the majority of the school's priorities. In some areas, such as the interpretation of both internal and external data on students' attainment, the staff had been insufficiently rigorous in their comparisons. Accordingly, the staff had an over-optimistic view of the students' performances on both internal and external assessments.
- Leaders at all levels evaluated the quality of teaching across all phases. Senior leaders had thereafter provided suitable training to help teachers improve their practice. This had contributed to improved progress in some areas, but not yet to improved progress for all students. Teachers did not consistently modify the curriculum and adapt lessons in ways that supported improved progress.
- The improvement and action plans identified broadly accurate priorities for improvement. The lack of measurable indicators of success, and imprecise timescales, made it difficult to evaluate the progress in making improvements. The school had addressed aspects of UAE's national priorities, such as analysing data on students' performance in international assessments and adapting lessons in the light of findings.

- Guided by the principal, senior and middle leaders had undertaken improvements in line with the recommendations of the previous report. As a result, the school had made important changes to staffing and teachers' professional development, in line with its reassessed vision for the future. These changes had already led to improvements in a few students' progress, and the care and support of students.

Partnerships with parents and the community

Good

- Since her appointment the principal had sought to develop further and more active partnership with parents, through both formal and informal meetings. The school had responded to parental concerns, for example by providing more advice and support to students at times of transition.
- The school communicated regularly with parents in a range of ways including circulars and electronic mail. As a result, parents felt well-informed about school matters, such as expectations for attendance and late coming, and new approaches to assessing learning. The school had also organised events to promote partnership, for example through presentations on topics of mutual interest such as 'positive parenting.'
- Almost all parents found the termly reports and parents' meetings informative and helpful to their understanding of their children's academic progress and personal development. Parents could seek more detailed information through further discussion with school personnel.
- Parents were aware of a number of ways the school helped students establish links with both the local community and beyond. For example, students had supported local and international charitable appeals and engaged in community service for the elderly.

Governance




Acceptable

- The governing body included parent, teacher and former student representatives. Governors conducted an annual stakeholder survey and took the views expressed into account. They had responded to students' concerns about advice and guidance by appointing a counsellor. Individual board members were keenly aware of their specific areas of responsibility.
- Governors were well-informed about the work of the school, through monthly reports and fortnightly meetings with the principal and other leaders. They were still at an early stage in holding senior leaders and the senior staff accountable for the school's performance. Important aspects of the work of the school, including the overall quality of outcomes for students, had not consistently improved.
- The governing body was very supportive of the principal and her leadership team's approaches to improving the school. Governors had established an extended leadership team in the primary phase, a SEND coordinator, and a considerable number of new and suitably qualified classroom teachers. A programme of staff appraisal had begun.

Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The daily life of the school was well organised. The principal had adjusted timetables to improve teaching and learning in particular subjects. This supported the study of the Holy Qur'an. The institution of humanities lessons included UAE social studies. The school was addressing students' attendance at lessons, and punctuality for lessons particularly in the Post-16 years, and instances of teachers arriving late for lessons. • The governors and the principal had ensured that the school was adequately staffed with suitably qualified teachers. The extended leadership team included a new SEND coordinator. Continuing professional development for teachers was generally well matched to the improvement priorities. These developments were positive steps, but had yet to result in consistently improved outcomes for students. • The premises were adequate. There was some overcrowding in particular areas of the school. Specialist facilities existed but some, such as the science laboratories, were outdated. Areas such as the library needed additional resources to support important national initiatives such as the Year of Reading. Student washrooms during the inspection were clean and well-stocked with soap and towels. • Overall, the available resources supported adequate teaching and learning. The promotion of healthy lifestyles, such as encouraging healthy eating, was not consistently complemented by, for example, equal access to exercise in physical education classes. For example, while there was space for football, there was restricted space for athletics and other sports. 	

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	411
	2014-2015	202
Teachers 	82	
Students 	119	

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

- Most parents were satisfied with the quality of education the school offered.
- Lower proportions of parents agreed that their children's progress in Islamic education and Arabic was good, compared to most who agreed that progress was good in the other key subjects.
- Most parents responded that their children enjoyed school.
- Only a large majority agreed the school prepared their children well for the next stage of education.
- While almost all agreed their children were safe in school, a minority disagreed this was the case on school transport.
- Only a majority agreed the school's approaches to cyber safety kept children safe online, and the same proportion agreed the school dealt well with bullying behaviour.
- Of the senior students who responded, almost half, were dissatisfied with the quality of education the school provided.
- Only minorities of students agreed their progress was good in Arabic as a first language, and a minority felt the same about their progress in learning Arabic as an additional language.
- Most students agreed that their progress in English was good, while only a large majority agreed this was so in mathematics and science.
- Most agreed that homework was helpful, and that they were developing good learning skills.
- Only a majority agreed students' behaviour was good.
- Only a majority believed that teachers' comments and marking helped them improve their progress.
- A large majority of students disagreed that the range of subjects and activities offered was good.

- Of those teachers who responded, almost all agreed that students behaved well, were developing good awareness of other cultures, the importance of Islam and Islamic values. Almost all agreed students worked well with others.
- The same proportion agreed the range of extra-curricular activities was good and that students were well-prepared for the next stage of their education. All felt assessment helped students improve.

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