



Cambridge International
School

Curriculum: UK

Overall Rating:

Good



"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	Al Garhoud
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	1983
Website	www.gemscis-dubai.com
Telephone	04-2824646
Address	P.O. Box 60835, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Principal	Craig Dennis Lamshed
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	7 to 10 November 2016

Teachers / Support staff	
Number of teachers	136
Largest nationality group of teachers	Indian
Number of teaching assistants	20
Teacher-student ratio	18
Number of guidance counsellors	1
Teacher turnover	26%

Students	
Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	3-18
Grades or year groups	FS1-Year 13
Number of students on roll	2599
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	31
Number of students with SEND	79
Largest nationality group of students	Indian

Curriculum	
Educational permit / Licence	UK
This might be deleted Main curriculum	UK / None
External tests and examinations	GSCE, IGCSE, AS, A, CAT4, GL
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.

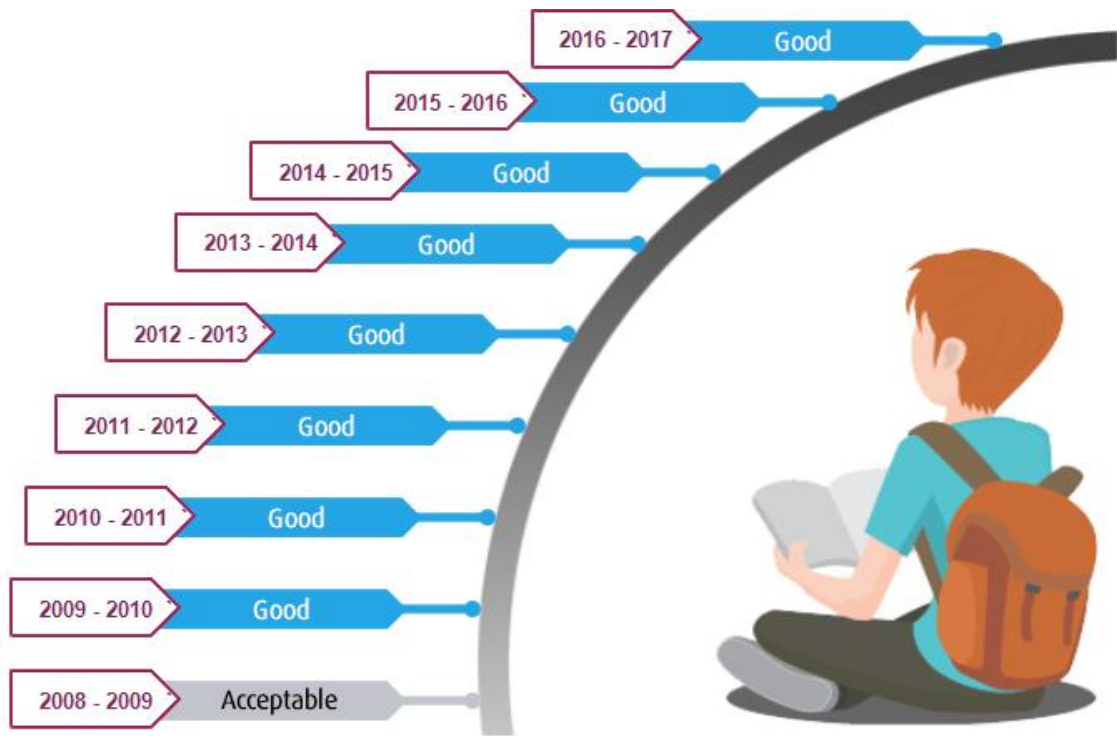
Inspection judgements are drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observation of students' learning in lessons, review of their work, discussions with students, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and review of surveys completed by parents, teachers and students.

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 Cambridge International School



- The number of students attending the school has risen to 2599, this academic year. Students, aged from three to 18 years old, are taught in single and mixed gender classes from the Foundation Stage (FS) to Year 13. The school opened in 1983 and the principal has been in post for four years. Teacher turnover is 26 percent, compared to 31 percent last year.
- Previous inspections have acknowledged that teaching, learning, assessment and the curriculum were improving and that links with parents were outstanding. Health and safety arrangements, curriculum design and curriculum adaptation were outstanding in the secondary and post 16 phases.
- Recommendations over time have focused on improving Islamic education and Arabic as well as the need to develop teaching and improve learning especially in the primary phase. Recommendations from previous reports also focused on the need to reduce overcrowding in classrooms.

Summary of inspection findings 2016-2017



Cambridge International School was inspected by DSIB from 7 to 10 November 2016 . The overall quality of education provided by the school is **good** . The section below summarises the inspection findings for each of the six performance indicators described in the framework.

- Students' attainment and progress are stronger in English, mathematics and science than Islamic education and Arabic. Attainment and progress in the FS in English and science, in the secondary phase in English, mathematics and science, and in the post 16 phase in English and science are very good. Student's learning skills are very good in FS and post 16.
- Students' personal development is outstanding in FS and the post 16 phase, and very good elsewhere. Their understanding of Islamic values and world cultures is outstanding in secondary and post 16 and very good elsewhere. Students' social responsibility and innovation skills are excellent across the school. Students have an excellent work ethic and contribute widely to the school and community.
- The quality of teaching for effective learning is good in secondary and very good in FS and post 16. The quality of teaching in primary is variable as work is not matched to students' individual needs. Assessment procedures are well developed and the school makes good use of internal and external data to support teaching and to help modify the curriculum.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced with a wide range of academic, creative, physical and practical experiences for students. However, there are not enough opportunities to actively engage boys especially in primary. The curriculum is enhanced through an extensive range of extra-curricular, entrepreneurial and enrichment activities. Modifications to the curriculum for students with special education needs and disabilities (SEND), and those who are gifted and talented, are increasingly evident.
- The school provides a safe, secure and supportive environment for students. The school takes its responsibilities for health and safety very seriously but has failed to respond to previous recommendations about overcrowding in classes. The care and support offered by the school are very good overall and outstanding in secondary and post 16. Personal and academic guidance is a strength throughout the school
- The principal and senior leadership team have a strong vision for the school which is shared by staff, pupils and parents. The strengths and weaknesses of the school are well known and school improvement planning is detailed and extensive. Relationships with parents and the community are outstanding. The newly constituted governing board monitors the school and supports school leaders. Inspection recommendations about reducing overcrowding in classrooms have been mostly ignored.

What the school does best

- The attainment and progress of children in FS in English and science, of students in secondary in English, mathematics and science, and of students in post 16 in English and science are very good.
- The quality of teaching for effective learning is good in secondary and very good in FS and post 16.
- Students' personal development is outstanding in FS and the post 16. Their understanding of Islamic values and world cultures is outstanding in secondary and post 16. Students' social responsibility and innovation skills are outstanding across the school.
- The school's arrangements for promoting healthy lifestyles and keeping children safe are very good. Care and support, as well as curriculum design and adaptation, is outstanding in secondary and post 16.

Recommendations

- Address the recommendations, as a matter of urgency, from previous reports regarding overcrowding in classrooms to improve opportunities for learning as well as to meet health and safety requirements.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and behaviour management in primary by ensuring that:
 - there is a greater consistency in the quality of teaching for effective learning,
 - the behaviour of boys is better managed, and that they are more engaged in their learning,
 - work is more closely matched to students' individual needs and offers appropriate levels of challenge for all students,
 - problem solving and critical thinking skills are developed across all lessons.
- Raise attainment in Islamic education in the primary phase by:
 - improving students' understanding of the Holy Qur'an and its interpretation,
 - ensuring that teaching strategies are better matched to the needs of all students.
- Raise achievement in Arabic by:
 - increasing the opportunities for independent writing and speaking classical Arabic,
 - ensuring that teaching strategies are consistently matched to the learning needs of all students.

National Agenda Parameter



In 2014, H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of UAE, and Ruler of Dubai, launched the UAE National Agenda 2021, with education being a prime focus. The National Agenda includes two major objectives developed with the 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 meets the registration requirements of the National Agenda Parameter for the academic year 2016-2017.
- Students' attainment based on the National Agenda Parameter benchmarks meets expectations in English, mathematics and science.
- The senior leadership team has analysed the National Agenda Parameter tests, and shared them with parents. The school's action plan comprises actions, timescales, responsibility holders and key performance indicators. Training has been provided to teachers on how to include National Agenda assessment criteria in schemes of work, lesson plans and assessments. Leaders have been allocated sufficient time for interpreting data and implementing action points.
- All departments have audited the curriculum to identify coverage and also curriculum areas that need increased focus. Teachers have received support to develop a better understanding of reading comprehension in the primary phase. The TIMSS curriculum requirements have been mapped against the National Curriculum for England. Action plans and curriculum modifications have been introduced as a result of the analysis of National Agenda Parameter testing.
- A major focus for the school has been the move from teacher led teaching to student led learning. Student feedback is sought throughout the lesson with mini plenaries to check understanding. The emphasis has also been on more investigation and enquiry which has resulted in the introduction of one lesson per week for scientific experiments in Years 7 to 9.
- Students are regularly informed of their assessment results and subsequent targets. Parents and students are given the results of the National Agenda Parameter tests. A digital citizenship programme has been introduced, involving parents and encouraging students to develop high-level critical thinking skills. The school has also brokered support from an international software company to improve students' access to resources and develop research skills.

Overall, the school's improvement towards achieving its National Agenda targets meets expectations.

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:

- Students are actively supported by a range of innovative and entrepreneurial activities offered through enrichment and extra-curricular activities. Students enthusiastically pursue opportunities to engage in research and enterprise as evidenced in their successful hosting of a TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) youth conference involving organising, financing, obtaining sponsorship and providing publicity for the event. Schemes of work across the school include reference to innovation but it is unclear how this is impacting upon classroom teaching. Leaders, at all levels, have a clear understanding of innovation but it is yet to permeate all aspects of provision

Overall school performance

Good

1 Students' achievement

		Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Islamic education 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable	Good ↑	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	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not applicable
English 	Attainment	Very good ↑	Acceptable	Very good	Very good ↓
	Progress	Very good	Good ↑	Very good	Very good ↓
Mathematics 	Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Very good	Good
	Progress	Very good	Acceptable	Very good	Good ↓
Science 	Attainment	Very good	Acceptable	Very good	Very good
	Progress	Very good	Acceptable	Very good	Very good
		Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Learning skills		Very good	Acceptable	Good	Very good ↑

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

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

3. Teaching and assessment

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

4. Curriculum

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

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

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



6. Leadership and management

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

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	Very good 	Very good
Mathematics	Good	Very good
Science	Very good	Very good

- In literacy, the large majority of children exceed the curriculum standards against their learning goals. They listen very attentively, respond clearly to questions and engage confidently in conversations with adults and each other. Almost all children recognise, and can sound, letters of the alphabet as well as write them correctly. By FS2, they can read and write short words and captions as well as make lists. They are beginning to compose short sentences for their stories. As a result, they make very good progress against the expected learning outcomes and from their starting points.
- Children are confident in numeracy and the majority are achieving above curriculum expectations. They can count and write numbers, and make patterns and sequences with shapes and colour. They are less confident with aspects of measurement. By FS2, they can apply their knowledge well, in play activities such as making charts and estimating capacity. They can order numbers correctly and add and subtract simple calculations. They identify polygons such as squares, rectangles and triangles, and recognise some 3D shapes such as cubes and cuboids. The large majority of children make progress which is above expectations.
- In science, children are developing their scientific understanding and skills very well, against expectations for their age. They demonstrate their skills when investigating and by being curious about their surroundings. They make predictions about what might happen to materials, for example water freezing and melting. They can make simple recordings in a scientific way and talk about their findings. They show enthusiasm for exploring and solving problems such as building a bridge or wall in their play area. As a result, children progress very well against expected outcomes in their activities, and from their starting points.

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


- In Islamic education, students' knowledge and understanding of Islam are in line with expectations. Most students have a secure knowledge of the life of the Prophet (PBUH) and Islamic morals. By the end of the primary phase, students can recite chapters of the Holy Qur'an applying appropriate rules. However, their understanding of these rules is not evident. In lessons, students' progress in understanding the pillars of Islam and Hadeeth is inconsistent. Arabic speaking students make more limited progress.
- In Arabic as a first language, students' attainment in internal assessments, is high and is improving year-on-year. However, in lessons, students do not demonstrate skills matching those indicated by their test results. In Year 2, most students can classify words into nouns, verbs or prepositions. In Year 6, they can read adequately but they are not fluent when speaking in classical Arabic. Students make slower progress in developing their independent writing skills. The progress of high ability students is inconsistent due to a lack of sufficiently challenging work.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students attain levels in line with curriculum standards. In lessons, students demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding in a range of language skills including listening, reading and writing. In lessons, most students make expected progress in all four language skills. In the lower primary, students make accelerated progress in reading and writing. In the upper primary, progress is less secure especially in vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension and speaking.
- In English, a majority of students attain levels that meet curriculum standards and a majority make better than expected progress. In the external National Curriculum for England exams at the end of Year 6, most students reach the expected levels of attainment. In lessons and in their written work, attainment is often better than this, and progress is good. Progress is best in those lessons where teachers know and understand the ability levels of their students well and set work which meets their particular needs. Levels of attainment, over time, are consistent and most groups make similar progress.
- In the external benchmark tests in mathematics, over one quarter of students attain below age expected levels. According to internal assessments, students show an understanding of numeracy by the end of the phase that is above curriculum standards. However, this is not reflected in the application of key mathematical concepts in lessons and workbooks. Because of inconsistent differentiation of work, students are not always challenged at the correct level for their abilities. Students make acceptable progress, over time, in relation to their starting points.

- In science, the work of most students is in line with curriculum standards. In lessons, most students demonstrate levels of knowledge and understanding that are age appropriate. External benchmarking test results and progress over time show weaker outcomes. The application of scientific methods and the development of skills are inconsistent and too rarely built into lesson planning and delivery. Science is stronger in the upper primary phase where students engage in active learning with a more student centred approach. Students are confident presenters of science, using accurate subject terminology and they make expected progress overall.

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


- In Islamic education, students attain levels that are in line with curriculum and national standards. Year 8 students know about the Fiqh law while Year 10 students know about 'Fat'h Makka' in Seera. However, students' recitation of the Holy Qur'an, Tajweed, and its interpretation are less secure, particularly for speakers of Arabic as an additional language. The majority of students are making good progress, especially girls. However, overall, a minority of Arabic first language speakers are not making progress at the same rate due to less effective teaching.
- Students' attainment levels in Arabic as a first language, as assessed through internal assessments, do not match students' actual levels in their language skills. Attainment and progress are both acceptable. Listening and reading are more developed than speaking and writing. Students do not show appropriate fluency in speaking classical Arabic. Most students are developing their writing adequately but too many are making basic spelling mistakes and not using proper punctuation.
- In Arabic as an additional language, students attain above curriculum standards in internal assessments but their performance in class is in line with expectations. Most students attain at an acceptable level in vocabulary acquisition, dictation and spelling. Students' reading fluency is a strong feature. Writing skills are underdeveloped. In lessons, students make steady progress in understanding spoken and written language. Girls make better progress than boys while students new to Arabic make limited progress.
- In this phase in English, a large majority of students attain and make progress above the expectations of the curriculum. In lessons, most students can demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in their written work and when debating or reviewing poetry. Progress in lessons is very good, particularly when students are challenged to think for themselves and are clear about the purpose of their tasks. Over time, attainment is consistent with international standards. There are no significant differences in performance between different groups of students.

- In mathematics, a large majority of students attain above expected levels in IGCSE and in external benchmark tests. By the end of the phase, students can solve measurement problems in non-standard contexts and change the subject of formulae as well as solving more complex equations. They can compare mean and median values for asymmetric distributions and for grouped data. Student progress is well above expected levels with boys making slightly better progress than girls.
- In IGCSE examinations, the large majority of students in biology, chemistry and physics achieve levels above curriculum and international standards. This has been the pattern over time. In lessons, students show levels of knowledge and understanding that are very good compared to expected curriculum standards. Students' skill levels are weaker, as investigative practical work, underpinned by scientific methods, has not been well developed. However, better than expected progress is made in lessons, especially in the upper secondary phase, where students are more focussed and can communicate scientific understanding with confidence.

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

- In Islamic education, most students' knowledge, understanding and skills are in line with expectations. Students demonstrate secure understanding of Islamic concepts. They are beginning to develop analytical skills and inferring relevant rules from the Holy Qur'an. However, their Holy Qur'an recitation is still underdeveloped. In lessons and in their recent work, the majority of students are making progress in understanding Fiqh and Sharia law. Students can make real life connections and search for relevant evidence from Qur'anic verses.
- Students' results in IGCSE are high but their attainment in Arabic as a first language continues to be acceptable, when compared directly to curriculum expectations. Students' skills in listening, reading and writing are developing at a steady pace, allowing them to make acceptable progress. In the best lessons, students can compare characters in two short stories. Too many students are using their own dialect when speaking, so they are not developing standard Arabic systematically. There is no difference in the progress made by different groups of students.
- In English, by the time they leave school, most students taking the A-level language and literature courses attain and make progress above expectations and curriculum standards. Students can express their ideas with a good depth of understanding. They use their well-developed oracy, innovation and technology skills to research the play 'Othello.' They take different character perspectives and present these confidently. They are well prepared for external examinations and, because of consistently high quality teaching, they progress well in all aspects of English. Over time, attainment is consistently above international standards.

- In mathematics, the majority of students attain above expectations in A-level examinations by the end of the two-year course. Approximately half of the students attain expected levels in the one year AS-level course. Attainment in lessons is above expectations for a majority of students in both the one and two year programmes. Students understand and use the definitions of sine, cosine and tangent well. They understand and use trigonometric functions, their graphs and symmetries. Given their starting points, progress is above expectations for the majority of students.
- Students are well prepared for A-level examinations, in the sciences, and standards over time are consistent and above international and curriculum standards. However, biology results were not as high in 2016. Students enjoy opportunities for enquiry and investigation when this is built into lesson planning and delivery. Students work effectively in groups to discuss science and solve problems. They can explain their work confidently using accurate scientific language. Levels of knowledge and understanding are above curriculum standards but skills are weaker since practical work is underdeveloped.

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

- Students thrive when provided with opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. Most use resources and technology well to support their own learning. However, in the lower primary phase, some students are disengaged and lack self-discipline. Most students know what they need to do to improve and are keen to move their learning forward.
- Students collaborate well and enjoy group work when given the opportunity, particularly in FS and post-16. However, effective learning collaborations are limited in many lessons, especially in primary, due to overcrowding, resulting in an inability to set up group work. Students are very articulate and communicate their knowledge and understanding confidently in discussions and presentations.
- Real world contexts are used well to enhance learning in a range of subjects. These are most effective when initiated by students making their own connections to other subjects and to relevant interesting real world examples. The application of their new knowledge in unfamiliar contexts often requires teacher support.
- Innovation, enterprise and enquiry are developing areas in all phases. Critical thinking in English and problem solving in mathematics are seen but, too often, opportunities are missed to develop these further. Enquiry in science is limited by a lack of open ended investigations, especially in secondary. Problem solving is not a strong feature across the curriculum and only evident in the better lessons where teachers show skilful planning and questioning. Technology to support learning is slowly being implemented.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Personal development	Outstanding	Very good	Very good ↓	Outstanding

- Students demonstrate a strong sense of commitment and loyalty to the school. They willingly take responsibility for themselves and others. Children in FS have an extremely positive attitude to their studies and enjoy being in school. Post 16 students display exemplary behaviour in lessons and around the school which is a key factor in their successful learning. Constructive feedback is well received and enthusiastically acted upon.
- All students demonstrate good self-discipline although boys, in the primary phase, are sometimes inclined to be disengaged, especially where teaching lacks excitement or challenge. Students report that incidents of bullying are extremely rare, with students helping and caring for each other being the norm. Older students set a fine example. Discussions on cyber-bullying support students' safety when using social media.
- Throughout the school, the atmosphere is positive. Students get on very well with each other. Students do not hesitate to give support to others, especially to those with SEND. However, relationships with teachers vary. A few incidents of misbehaviour were evident although these were confined to the primary phase.
- In FS, children display an awareness of healthy living and physical activities. In other phases, students know how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy physical activities and enthusiastically participate in the wide range of sporting opportunities available to them. Students are aware of risks they may face, in and out of school, and take measures to protect themselves.
- Overall attendance is good with the highest attendance in the primary phase. Students are generally punctual to lessons and arrive at school on time.

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


- Students demonstrate an excellent knowledge and appreciation of Islamic values and how they influence society in the UAE. They understand practices such as prayer, Hajj, Zakat and the role of mosques for Muslims. Children in FS understand the Islamic dress code and primary school students show respect to Muslims during Ramadan.

- Students demonstrate a strong understanding and appreciation of the UAE culture. They understand the UAE's history and how the vision of leaders transformed it to the modern society it is today. They are aware of the importance of preserving the Emirati culture in a multi-cultural community.
- Students demonstrate an excellent awareness of their own and other cultures. In celebration of international day and ethnic day, students describe opportunities to share their culture and to experience different cultures in school through food and dress. However, students' understanding of the wider cultures in Dubai is rather limited, especially that of younger students.

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

- The school provides many opportunities for students to participate in projects that have a positive impact on the local community. Students participate in charity drives and community wellness programmes. Across the school, students take their responsibilities as members of the school community seriously. They are very active in and around the school and develop excellent citizenship skills.
- Students demonstrate a positive work ethic and a strong sense of integrity. They have confidence to ask for help when work is too difficult. They take advantage of the many opportunities to develop their enterprise and entrepreneurial skills such as that offered through the 'young entrepreneurship' project. However, younger students are less involved than older students in many of these events and activities.
- Students care for their school. They demonstrate an insightful understanding of environmental issues. The environmental club is very active and this year is targeting themes of water, litter, energy and gardening. Each class has an eco-ambassador who is involved in raising and promoting environmental awareness.

3. Teaching and assessment

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

- Most teachers have secure knowledge and an enthusiasm for their subject. In FS and post 16, teachers have a better understanding of how children learn. In the lower primary phase, teacher talk dominates and this is not an effective teaching strategy for younger children.
- Detailed lesson planning with clear objectives is evident. The most successful lessons are those where the delivery matches the planning and provides students with sufficient time to complete tasks and offers an opportunity to review what has been learnt. In the lower primary phase the slow pace, inadequate planning and poor class management reduce the quality of teaching.

- Teachers are developing their questioning skills. Some are now able to ask skilful questions to promote critical thinking and thoughtful discussions. The better teachers can adjust questions to the different student ability levels. Student confidence and enjoyment is enhanced when teacher questioning is more effective. This leads to them making more progress in their learning.
- Lesson planning incorporates the needs of students with differing abilities. However, in practice, classes are sometimes taught with little adjustment for different levels of ability. In the best lessons, challenge is in place for all students providing opportunities for success. Students with SEND who have assigned learning support teachers make best progress because large class sizes make it difficult for the class teacher to provide essential support for other students.
- In the more effective lessons, teachers promote collaborative work, independent learning and discussion. Critical thinking in English and problem solving in mathematics are seen but, too often, opportunities are missed to develop these skills further. Skilful questioning and task setting in English promote some lively discussions. Problem solving is not sufficiently well developed even in mathematics and science.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Assessment	Very good	Acceptable	Good	Good

- Assessment systems are consistent across the school. In FS, assessment information provides valid, reliable and comprehensive measures of children's academic, personal and social development. Across the school, there is a regular schedule of both formative and summative assessments, which are linked to curriculum standards. School leaders have ensured that these internal processes are applied to all core subjects.
- The school uses international benchmark testing for FS and in primary and secondary phases in English, mathematics and science. There is moderation of work in Arabic across a group of GEMS schools but none in Islamic education. Leaders are confident about the value of the benchmark tests and are exploring how best to use them.
- Teachers analyse internal data and record student attainment regularly. They are alert to instances of individual underperformance. Analysis of external data is not yet consistently used to monitor students' progress. Information obtained from data interrogation is variable across phases with transition from FS to Year 1 still not fully developed. The monitoring of student progress over time and the identification of patterns and barriers to achievement are rapidly developing areas.
- Assessment information is used effectively in some areas of the school to modify the curriculum. Some subjects are developing strategies to ensure that teaching meets the needs of all groups of students. The sharing of good practice and collaboration between staff members is encouraged. Data is used to set targets for students and there are reliable systems to inform students of their progress against these targets.
- Teachers in FS have a very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of individual children. Student self-evaluation and an improvement dialogue, between the teacher and the student, is a developing strategy in the secondary phase. Follow-up action after target setting is not yet consistent. The good practice in the post 16 phase, where students critically assess their own performance and set their own targets has not been adopted more widely.

4. Curriculum

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

- The school follows the National Curriculum for England and the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. The curriculum is well organised, has a clear rationale and successfully meets the requirements of the Ministry of Education for Arabic and Islamic education. The curriculum has breadth and balance across all subjects and includes a wide range of academic, creative, physical and practical experiences for students.
- The curriculum is well structured to ensure progressive learning from year to year. It is designed to ensure that learning builds consistently upon previous knowledge and skills. It is very well organised in FS to provide opportunities for cross-subject learning in meaningful contexts for young children, including real-life scenarios. Older students are very well prepared for further education and the world of work.
- The curriculum has an increasing variety of provision, both in class and after school, which promotes and responds to a range of needs and interests. Older students have an excellent choice of subjects, including vocational courses, which provide a successful basis for future career choices.
- Cross-curricular links are planned for in most lessons and these support students' wider understanding and transfer of learning across subjects. Students, particularly older ones, have good opportunities to learn independently and develop skills of research and critical thinking, despite the cramped conditions in many classrooms.
- The school's curriculum committee, including subject and senior leaders, conduct regular reviews of the provision to ensure coverage and continuity of learning across classes. As a result, the well-planned curriculum is able to meet the needs of most students, including those with SEND.
- Teachers use a range of resources to enhance students' understanding and appreciation of the culture and heritage of the UAE. Students are very positive about, and interested in, their social studies work. Well planned lessons enable them to increase their knowledge as they move through the school. Younger students are assessed each term on their knowledge and understanding of the social studies themes which have been taught. Secondary students engage in assessed presentations, essay writing, research and contextualised learning.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum adaptation	Very good ↑	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Specialist teachers in the learning support department are very effective in modifying the curriculum for individual students with SEND. They also provide support for teachers across the school to help them adapt their strategies and resources. Gifted and talented students are not always sufficiently challenged in lessons to develop their higher order thinking and problem solving skills. Insufficient consideration is given to curriculum modification for Arabic and to meeting the needs of some boys.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities is offered for students to extend their learning and creativity and improve their health and wellbeing. Younger students enjoy yoga and the delights of cookery. Older students grow in confidence and develop leadership skills during outdoor learning activities, sports and the arts. Senior students are highly innovative in their approach to school life and demonstrate their leadership qualities in many ways.
- A variety of activities promotes students' understanding of the Emirati culture and UAE society very well. Children in FS learn about the local environment and life in the desert. There are cross-curricular links between subjects such as art, music and geography. The curriculum enhances students' understanding of the heritage of the UAE. Older students are increasingly aware of economic and environmental factors related to the UAE today.
- The school offers Arabic to all children in FS. In FS1, one session is offered for twenty minutes while, in FS2, two sessions are offered. Children learn songs, letters and numbers.



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

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

- The child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures are very clear and incorporate the latest guidance. All staff receive regular training. Students' needs and concerns are sensitively dealt with by staff. Students, staff and parents are all aware of what they should do if they have any concerns. Students are also aware of different forms of bullying. They are very proactive in offering support to their peers.
- Thorough, frequent and rigorous checks of the site ensure that it is maintained to a very safe and hygienic standard. The school meets all its regulatory and legal requirements such as conducting regular emergency evacuation procedures. The bar-code system of recording students' attendance,

following up absences and monitoring the bus transport, contributes well to the highly effective supervision of students.


- Buildings are very well maintained and some recent refurbishments of student and staff toilets, changing rooms and of the library area have improved facilities further. Comprehensive records are kept by the doctor and medical staff, in relation to students' health and welfare.
- Children in FS benefit from outstanding, safe and secure outdoor facilities that very effectively promote their learning needs. However, some classrooms in FS and throughout the school, such as laboratories and the drama studio, are not large enough or easily accessible to ensure they are fit for purpose for all students. A lack of lifts mean that upper levels are not easily accessible to people with mobility difficulties.
- The promotion of safe and healthy lifestyles very successfully permeates the school. The youngest children know that exercise is good for you and older students are very aware of how to keep safe and healthy, in body and mind. The services of the school counsellor promote the latter aspect extremely well. Students are well-protected from the sun and have ready access to fresh drinking water.

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

- Relationships between teachers and students are very positive and, in most cases, they are exemplary. Most teachers have clear expectations for, and a positive and highly effective approach to managing behaviour. In primary, teachers do not always manage behaviour well and consequently some boys show disrespect on occasions.
- There are very good systems in place for promoting regular attendance and punctuality. The school makes its expectations clear to parents and students and is proactive in monitoring and following up absence. It strives for excellence and rewards it when it occurs. This is having a very positive impact particularly for the older students in the school.
- The school has a very effective approach to identifying students with SEND. It starts in FS, or on entry to school, where a range of assessments and tests are used to identify barriers to learning. The specialist teachers are highly skilled in understanding the needs in the school and the provision required. The number of students identified as gifted and talented is increasing each year due to increasingly refined systems for identifying them.
- SEND staff support students exceptionally well with suitably adapted learning approaches and an impressive range of resources to help students to become successful learners. In lessons, most teachers closely match activities to students' learning needs, and provide challenge for gifted and talented students. In a few lessons, tasks and activities are not sufficiently well matched.
- The school places a high priority on students' personal, social and emotional development because it is integral to the positive ethos of the school. Teachers know their students very well. Older students play a leading part in this work acting as role models, buddies and prefects. Guidance for students to consider their options for further and higher education and the world of work is outstanding.

Inclusion

Provision and outcomes for students with SEND

Good 

- The head of learning support and her team of specialists provide strong support for students in the learning support centre during small group and one-to-one sessions. They use an impressive range of strategies and resources to help students become successful learners. They also work well with teachers across the school to develop their skills and understanding in supporting students during whole-class sessions.
- The school has an effective graduated approach to identifying students with SEND. The specialist teachers in the school are highly skilled in understanding when needs can be met within the school's own resources and when to refer more complex cases for external diagnosis.
- Parents of students with SEND are very appreciative of the inclusive ethos of the school. They speak highly of the head of learning support, her care and concern for their children and her expertise in overcoming barriers to learning to help them be successful learners. Parents would welcome more regular reviews of progress towards targets in the Individual Education Plans (IEPs).
- Specialist teachers in the learning support department are very effective in modifying the curriculum and resources for students with SEND. They also provide support for teachers across the school to help them adapt their strategies and resources to better meet those students' needs in the classroom. Older primary students who are gifted and talented are not consistently and appropriately challenged in lessons.
- The specialist learning support team meets regularly with all staff to evaluate their effectiveness in supporting students with SEND. They monitor progress and, when necessary, make further modifications in the best interests of the students. Thus, a large majority of students with SEND make good progress in lessons, evident in the detailed records kept to track their academic and personal development over time.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Good

- The principal and the senior leadership team have a clear vision and commitment to the school. Development planning provides a clear strategy for improvement, which is beginning to have an impact on school performance. Leaders, at all levels, are committed to the UAE and demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of students with differing needs. Most parents express confidence in the leadership of the school.
- Leaders demonstrate a secure knowledge of the National Curriculum for England, including an understanding of recent changes which have been introduced. Priorities for development are known and the senior leadership team are working well together to raise performance in Islamic education,

Arabic and the primary phase. Middle leaders have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in raising attainment and progress.

- Relationships and communications between staff across the school are professional, supportive and effective. Responsibility is carefully delegated to individuals and teams who are increasingly being held accountable for ensuring the quality of teaching as well as attainment and progress. Morale throughout the school is high and all staff are well informed about the school and its intentions.
- Leaders demonstrate a secure understanding of their roles and actively support and promote innovation. The school has appointed an 'innovation developer' as well as produced a 'Digital Strategy Plan' to support the innovation agenda. Leaders and staff understand what is needed to be done to raise the quality of teaching and improve outcomes. Leaders have a good capacity for further improvement.
- Leaders have started to make improvements across most of the recommendations given at the last inspection, although these improvements are relatively new and the impact in terms of improved performance is not fully evident. Statutory and regulatory requirements are all met but there has been no improvement in the reducing the number of students in each class and therefore many classrooms remain overcrowded and cramped.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Good

- The grades in the school's self-evaluation documents are mostly accurate but the comments were more descriptive than evaluative with too few explicit links to the UAE school inspection framework. Senior leaders and middle leaders are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders at all levels work co-operatively and effectively to address weaknesses.
- Lesson observations are undertaken regularly, making use of a recording system which allows strengths and weaknesses to be quickly identified. Lesson observations are evaluated on a range of aspects with written targets, identifying areas for further improvement. This links in well to the school's strategy for individual professional development.
- The school's development plan includes appropriate actions and achievable goals with suitable timescales and planned resources. The plan is extensive and detailed, providing good coverage of all the recommendations from the last report, except for the important matter of overcrowding.
- There has been progress in addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection report although further work is still needed to raise attainment and accelerate progress in Islamic education and Arabic. Leadership in the primary phase has been extended and strengthened and the governing body does hold senior leaders to account. Action on reducing the overcrowding in classrooms has been inadequate.

Partnerships with parents and the community

Outstanding

- Parents appreciate the senior leadership team and all members of staff. They are actively involved and committed to supporting the school. Parental involvement includes areas such as curriculum weeks, students' assemblies and Arabic reading. Parents are generally very happy with the quality of education provided for their children.

- Systems for communication between home and school are effective. Communication occurs through emails, newsletters and social media. School leaders and teachers are accessible and approachable, and parents are confident to bring any concerns to their notice.
- Parents are well informed about their children's attainment and progress and are happy with the quality and frequency of reports.
- The extensive links with external agencies and organisations greatly enriches students' learning experiences beyond the classroom. Students in Years 10 and 12 welcome the opportunity for work placements, while BTEC and mathematics students benefit from the STEM activities at the Skills Academy. Partnerships with international software companies enables the school to showcase students' increasing skills in innovation, research and design.

Governance

Acceptable

- The newly constituted governing board includes representation by parents and other stakeholders. The board is timetabled to meet regularly and, like the predecessor governing board, intends to uphold the school's vision and values as well as hold the school accountable for standards and performance. To date, any concerns raised by parents are responded to in a timely and supportive manner.
- The governing board regularly monitors the school. School leaders have been held accountable for their actions but attainment and progress is still not high enough in Islamic education and Arabic as well as in the primary phase. Areas for improvement relating to large class numbers and small classroom sizes, mentioned in the last report as well as the previous report, have not been sufficiently addressed.
- The governing board offers support for leaders, including the senior leadership and the Islamic education and Arabic departments. Statutory and regulatory requirements are met. However, the governing board has mostly ignored the recommendation about reducing the overcrowding in classrooms which is impacting on teaching and learning as well as health and safety.

Management, staffing, facilities and resources

Acceptable ↓

- Management of most of the day-to-day aspects of the school is effective and the school runs smoothly. Routines are well-rehearsed and understood by most staff and students. However, the timetable does not take account of teachers having to move across the school site between lessons and this can impact on teaching time and student achievement where lessons do not start punctually.
- Teaching staff are suitably qualified with a satisfactory range of experience to support the delivery of the curriculum. However, there are still several teachers of Islamic education and Arabic who have not yet been approved by KHDA which was also the case at the last inspection. This contributes to the negative impact on some students' achievements.
- The premises limit how effectively some lessons can be taught. Over-crowded rooms such as science laboratories and classrooms have an adverse impact on how well students carry out practical




activities and investigations. The acoustics in other small, overly-populated rooms can affect students' ability to concentrate, particularly for those students who have learning difficulties.

- The library and technology equipment have been recently updated, providing more resources to enhance students' independent learning. The outdoor area for the younger children has been greatly improved and is now an excellent resource that is being effectively used to enhance children's development of early skills.

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	602
	2015-2016	189
 Teachers	65	
 Students	408	

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

- Most parents who responded to the survey were satisfied with the quality of education provided by the school. Written responses were mixed with some parents expressing confidence in the school with others indicating concerns over the quality of teaching especially in Islamic education and Arabic. A minority of parents felt that the school did not do enough to encourage reading.
- Almost all parents said that their children felt safe in the school and safe on school transport. Almost all parents said their children enjoyed school. They felt that their children was developing a good awareness of the UAE as well a good understanding of their community and environmental responsibilities.
- Older students who responded to the survey said that there was a teacher or other adult in the school who expects them to follow the rules, believes they will be successful and wants them to do their best.
- Teacher comments were invariably positive and almost all said that they enjoyed working at the school. However, a minority did not agree that students were well behaved and respectful to teachers.

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