

Dubai International priva...



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational
needs and disabilities



Innovation

Inspection Report 2015-2016

Dubai International private School

Curriculum: US

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 Garhoud
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	1985
Website	www.dis.sch.ae
Telephone	04-2823513
Address	Al Garhoud- Dubai PO Box 15495
Principal	Mr. Nafez Hayek
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	25 to 28 January 2016

Students



Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	4-17
Grades or year groups	Kindergarten 1 to Grade 12
Number of students on roll	2,502
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	1,031
Number of students with SEND	50
Largest nationality group of students	Emirati

Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	143
Largest nationality group of teachers	Arab
Number of teaching assistants	23
Teacher-student ratio	17:1
Number of guidance counsellors	4
Teacher turnover	10%

Curriculum



Educational permit / License	US
Main curriculum	US
External tests and examinations	TIMSS, PISA, IBT
Accreditation	AdvancEd
National Agenda benchmark tests	IBT

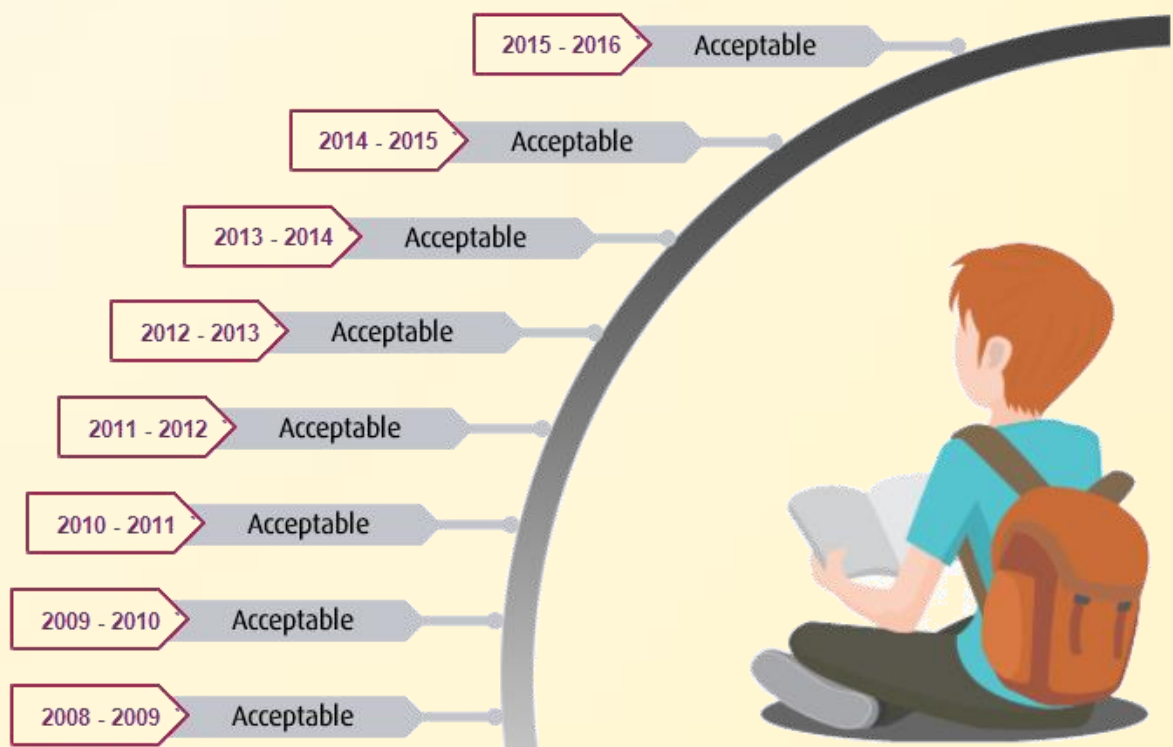


Summary for parents and the community

Dubai International Private School was inspected by DSIB from 25 to 28 of January 2016. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **acceptable**.

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

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





How well did the school perform overall?

Overall, **Dubai International Private School** provided an **acceptable** quality of education for its students.

- The attainment and progress of children in kindergarten (KG) were good in all key subjects. The attainment and progress of students in the elementary, middle and high phases were variable across subjects. This was because the quality of teaching was inconsistent.
- In the KG, children were consistently self-disciplined and responded very well towards each other and adults. Older students generally followed school rules and were courteous, but the behavior of boys outside of their classrooms was too frequently disorderly. Students generally demonstrated clear understanding of the UAE culture and Islamic values across the school. In KG children's understanding was outstanding.
- Teaching and assessment practice in the KG was good, elsewhere in the school they were acceptable. This was as a result of weaknesses in the monitoring and development of teachers.
- The curriculum focused on developing students' knowledge and skills, although the focus was predominantly on acquisition of knowledge. Planning and progression were best in Arabic as an additional language, Islamic education and in English.
- The provision for health and safety of the students was acceptable but had declined since the last inspection. It remained good in KG. Child protection practices were in place. Specialist facilities were limited and the classrooms were often overcrowded. Technology resources were not sufficient to enable students to develop the skills needed for the 21st century.
- The principal and senior leaders communicated the vision of the school but did not have clear plans to make this vision become a reality. Communication between the school and parents was good and parents reported that school leaders were available to meet with them. Governance was weak because the board had not rigorously held leaders accountable for the performance of the school nor the achievement of students.



What did the school do well?

- The good attainment and progress in all key subject areas in the KG
- The good progress that students were making in Arabic as an additional language and in all phases in English
- The very positive promotion of UAE culture and Islamic values throughout the school. The good or better community relations
- The good relationship the school had developed with parents and the surrounding community
- The improvement in provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).



What does the school need to do next?

- Improve the quality of teaching to raise attainment and progress by:
 - improving teachers' knowledge of the depth of understanding the students need to reach appropriate curriculum standards
 - using assessment information to plan lessons that challenge and support all groups of students to make at least good progress
 - supporting teachers in developing effective questioning to encourage students to think more critically about how to apply what they know.
- Strengthen self-evaluation and school improvement practices by:
 - using external assessment information to validate internal assessment information which is rigorous analyzed to plan improvements in key subject areas
 - using external benchmarking test criteria to evaluate how well students are developing 21st century skills
 - identifying clear priorities for improvement with measureable targets, as well as defining how they will be evaluated.
- Governors should ensure the effective operation of the school by:
 - reducing the overcrowding of classrooms and ensuring they are clean, well-resourced and equipped with instructional technology
 - informing themselves more securely about students' performance, including the performance of different groups of learners
 - rigorously implementing accountability procedures for the improved performance of all groups of students.



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

- Students with SEND made acceptable progress in the majority of lessons. Teachers tracked the progress of students and set targets based around learning skills. As a result, the individual learning needs of the majority of students with SEND were being met in the school.
- Parents were satisfied with the quality of support offered by the school. Guidelines for parents were clear. Parents were kept well informed about their children's progress through letters, telephone conversations and meetings. They were welcomed at any time to meet with their children's teachers and support staff, and discuss progress and interventions.
- Feedback from parents indicated that communication had improved and parents felt listened to and more involved in their children's education. The school was responsive to suggestions from the parents to help improve communication and support. Good home/school relationships were seen as a priority by the special educational needs coordinator and the support staff. This resulted in the majority of students making expected progress.
- The school held regular meetings for parents about the progress of their children and kept parents informed about changes in learning support or targets. Parents who were interviewed said that they would like the opportunity to be involved with teachers in deciding the range of learning activities and provision for their children.
- Through discussions and meetings, the SENCO helped parents understand their children's learning needs and provided advice and strategies for parents on how to support their children at home.

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.
- The National Agenda was known to governors, the principal and subject leaders. Leaders were aware of the National Agenda targets but these had not been shared comprehensively with governors. Promotion of the National Agenda was not evident in the school. Most students were not aware of the National Agenda. Although older students and parents were aware of TIMSS and PISA, they did not know the connection between these and the National Agenda. Students were unable to comment on how the National Agenda would impact on their future.
- Modifications had been made to the curriculum following the analysis of international benchmark tests. For example, the need to increase opportunities for problem solving, extend reading and make greater use of data and investigations in science. Application of these modifications in lessons was inconsistent. No modifications were observed, aimed at addressing the issues from PISA regarding the gap between the attainment of boys and girls and Emirati students and their peers.
- Teachers' strategies to develop critical thinking and inquiry were inconsistent. They were most effective in English for older students. In mathematics and science most questions were designed to check understanding and did not encourage students to consider, debate or extend their answers. Problem solving was evident in mathematics but did not sufficiently require students to use their reasoning skills. Teachers provided opportunities for students to apply their learning in a range of real life contexts in Arabic and English. In other subjects this was apparent in only a few lessons.
- Technology resources were not sufficient to enable students to develop the skills needed for the 21st century. The school was planning to upgrade and extend information technology resources but predicted that this project would not be completed for three years.

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:

- Despite an awareness of the UAE's focus on innovation, the owners and leaders of the school had not established a whole school approach to innovation. However, they were aware of the need to develop a deeper understanding of how to enhance the innovation skills of both students and staff. The school's leaders recognized that the school's infrastructure would need to be developed to support and promote a culture of innovation. The on-going implementation of the US curriculum provided potential opportunities to develop a community of innovators but the teachers were not yet able to embed consistently the development of innovation skills into their lessons.

Overall school performance

Acceptable

1. Students' achievement

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

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

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

3. Teaching and assessment

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

4. Curriculum

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

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Good	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓
Care and support	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

6. Leadership and management

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



Main inspection report

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

Judgements are made on a six-point scale



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

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

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

1. Students' achievement

KG

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

- From varied starting points, children's attainment and progress in English were good. Children listened attentively and followed directions well. The majority of children were confident speakers, communicating effectively with peers and adults. They wrote simple sentences with correct punctuation and used their phonetic decoding skills to read simple passages.
- Children's attainment and progress in mathematics were good. Children could count reliably using numbers from one to 20. The majority could place them in order, and use the appropriate language to talk about size, and position. For example, greater than and less than. They explored the characteristics of geometric shapes and used appropriate mathematical language to describe them. They could identify missing numbers and perform simple addition and subtraction problems.
- The attainment and progress in science were good. Younger children knew the parts of a plant and that nutrients and water were needed for the plants to grow. They knew the importance of conserving resources and how to recycle materials. Older children knew the names of some planets and could talk about the environment and how environments differ from one another.

Elementary

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students had attainment levels that were above the expectations when measured against the Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum. They had a good knowledge of main concepts, such as the Pillars of Islam and common Islamic values. Their recitation skills were less secure than their ability to explain the main reasons for some verses, such as Surat Al Muzamel. Progress during the last three years had been improving. It accurately reflected the standards students had reached. Students made better than expected progress against lesson objectives. For example, in Grade 1 students explained their views about the value of mercy, giving many real life examples. Students with SEND made limited progress. Girls made better progress than boys.

- In Arabic as a first language, attainment as measured against the expected MoE curriculum standards was above age-appropriate standards for the majority of students. This was also the case when measured over time. Students were able to read aloud familiar scripts, such as "The Salmon Fish Adventure" with few errors and they understood the meaning of what they had read. They could summarize and reflect critically upon how the fish journey represented the love of their home countries and the UAE. Arabic acquisition skills and speaking in correct standard Arabic varied amongst students within grades. Internal assessments and lesson observations indicated that the progress of the majority of students, and groups of students, was better than expected in listening, speaking, and reading. However, students' ability in spelling, writing and using new vocabulary in sentences was limited.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students had attainment levels that were in line with expectations in most skills. However, speaking skills were less developed. Progress had improved during the last three years. It was good especially when students were encouraged to express their ideas freely using standard Arabic. For example, in Grade 4 students contrasted and compared their favorite jobs. Girls were making better progress than boys.
- In English, most students attained the standards of the Common Core Language Arts curriculum. A few students attained above the expected standards for their ages and a few attained below. In external examinations, students in Grades 3, 4 and 5 attained below the international average scores for their ages. In lessons and their recent work, most students demonstrated listening, speaking, reading and writing skills that were in line with the curriculum standards. Over the past three years the attainment trends showed steady improvement. Assessment information indicated that the majority of students made better than expected progress against their starting points; this progress was confirmed by students' work and their participation in lessons. The progress of students with SEND was good overall. The progress of Emirati students was uneven.
- In mathematics, the attainment of most students was in line with the schools' curriculum standards. Students in lower elementary grades were beginning to make more rapid progress as a result of good opportunities to solve problems and work that contained appropriate levels of challenge. For example, more able students in Grade 3 could interpret data and solve two and three step problems. Students in Grade 5 could name a range of different polygons but could not consistently identify the difference between vertices and angles. In international assessments, students' attainment over time was below average. School assessment information indicated boys and Emirati students did not progress as well as other students in the same grade.
- In science, the attainment and progress of students were acceptable. Attainment over the past three years showed gradual improvement and was approaching international standards. Students were making acceptable progress in relation to individual starting points, based on internal and external assessments. Students were keen to learn and looked forward to investigating scientific concepts. For example, students conducted basic laboratory practical work, and learned how to apply scientific method to these investigations. They examined forces and investigated physical and chemical changes in matter.

Middle

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

- In Islamic education, the attainment of most students was in line with the MoE curriculum. Students' knowledge of the main concepts, beliefs and values of Islam was acceptable. Their recitation skills were less effective due to limited practice of the Arabic language. However, their ability to refer to different sources to explain one idea was adequate. In the better lessons, students' progress was improving. For example, Grade 8 students confidently discussed the importance of visiting sick people. Students with SEND made limited progress, and girls made better progress than boys.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students' work, as measured against the school curriculum levels and internal exams, was broadly in line with age-related expectations. A few students performed above standards. Over time, most students, particularly girls, demonstrated stronger speaking and listening skills. For example, they understood the implicit and explicit meanings of what they were reading. This was clear, when they were observed reading the plot and the components of a translated story by Leo Tolstoy entitled 'Alkafza'. Boys' comprehension and creative writing skills were less well-developed. Writing skills, including the use of grammar, correct sentence structure and acquisition of new vocabulary, were less developed, particularly when writing in an unfamiliar context.
- In Arabic as an additional language, the majority of students had attainment levels that were above curriculum expectations. They demonstrated good competence in most of the skills. However, speaking skills were less well developed. Students achieved stable levels of progress during the past three years. Progress was better when students were encouraged to practice speaking, such as in Grade 7 when they were provided with the opportunity to present their experiences during the summer holidays. Low and middle achievers made good progress due to the appropriate use of assessment. Girls made better progress than boys.
- In English, most middle school students attained the standards of the Common Core Language Arts curriculum. This was confirmed in students' workbooks and during the lessons observed. In external tests, students in Grades 7 and 8 attained below the international average scores for their ages. Over the previous three years the attainment trends showed steady improvement. Assessment information indicated the majority of students made better than expected progress against their starting points. All groups of students made expected progress, and progress of students with SEND was good overall although the progress of Emirati students was uneven.
- Students' attainment in mathematics was in line with the schools' curriculum standards. Internal data indicated that the majority of students had a secure knowledge of mathematics with a minority of students working below the level expected of students in Grades 6-8. However, this was not supported by international test data where less than half the students reached international averages. In lessons, most students made gains in knowledge, for example, how to calculate the area of a parallelogram. A lack of opportunity to apply their knowledge and develop independent thinking skills, limited students' abilities to make good progress overall. All groups of students across the phase made acceptable progress in lessons. School data indicated that girls and Emirati students did not make the same progress as other groups over time.

- In science, students' attainment and progress were acceptable. In lessons, students defined problems, developed possible solutions and improved on their designs. They could discuss food webs and food chains, and could derive information about atoms from the periodic table. They discussed and evaluated each other's work in groups and communicated meaningfully using the scientific method. Students with SEND made good progress within lessons. Emirati students did not make the same progress as their peers.

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

- In Islamic education, most students had attainment levels that were in line with the MoE curriculum. They displayed age appropriate knowledge of the main concepts, beliefs and values of Islam, particularly when taught in English. Their recitation skills were inconsistent as was their ability to make references, justify or infer using different verses. In the few better lessons, discussions enabled the majority of students to make appropriate progress against lesson objectives. For example, in Grade 9 students discussed the concept of honesty. Students with SEND made limited progress, and girls made better progress than boys.
- In Arabic as a first language, students' work confirmed their attainment was at the expected curriculum levels. Internal examinations results also indicated this to be the case. Students' progress over time was also acceptable. In lessons and through their recent work, most students had developed acceptable listening and speaking skills but struggled when presenting their arguments in standard Arabic. They were beginning to use language to persuade, discuss and advise. However, their knowledge of creative writing, comprehension and use of correct sentence structure and grammar were less developed. Students' vocabulary was also under-developed and sometimes resulted in poor comprehension.
- In Arabic as an additional language, attainment was in line with expectations. Students' abilities were secure in most of the language skills, although speaking skills were below expectations. Progress was better when teachers made good use of assessment to plan challenging lessons. Girls made better progress than boys.
- English, most school students attained the standards of the Common Core Language Arts curriculum. In external examinations, Grade 11 students attained above the international benchmark average. Most students in Grade 12 attained the international standard for students learning English as an additional language, but almost one quarter of them were not tested. Girls scored higher than boys in these tests. Over the previous three years, attainment trends were uneven. Assessment information showed that the majority of students made better than expected progress against their starting points; this progress was confirmed by students' work and their contributions during the lessons observed. Students with SEND made good progress overall while, the progress made by Emirati students was uneven.
- In mathematics, students' attainment and progress were acceptable. This is not supported by national data where, for those taking the test, only a minority of students reached the average levels of attainment. In lessons, most students made acceptable progress. This was demonstrated for example in a lesson, when students confidently used their knowledge of basic geometry and the four operations of numbers to recognize and use the relationship between arcs and chords. School data indicated that over time most groups of students made similar progress.

- In science, students were making better than expected progress as measured against curriculum standards. However, external assessment information indicated lower performance and a disparity between Emirati and non-Emirati students and between boys and girls. Students had firm understanding of the scientific method and consistently used it to gather data, form hypotheses and, when laboratory time was available, they could test their hypotheses and form conclusions.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- In KG, the children were excited about discovering the emerging world around them and eagerly engaged in lessons. In the elementary section, students were able to focus for short periods of time but had positive attitudes towards their work. Older students, worked diligently on class assignments. They were confident in their responses during lessons and had a general idea of how to improve their work. In the high school, students worked responsibly, maintained their focus and demonstrated pride in their learning.
- Students were polite and respectful toward each other. They were comfortable working collaboratively in groups. Communications focused on the assigned work and they engaged in meaningful dialog. At the high school level, students worked collectively on work sheets, problem solving, and assisted each other in decoding layers of a problem.
- At the KG and elementary levels, students were able to make connections with their previous learning when supported by the teacher. At the middle school level, connections were more spontaneous but required further development. At high school level, challenging questions by teachers generated further exploration of the application of the subject matter to world issues in various creative ways.
- At the KG and elementary levels, students were just beginning to find things out for themselves. In the upper elementary grades students were beginning to use learning technology to expand their knowledge and were beginning to solve problems on their own. Older students, were experienced in gathering information using learning technology. The ability to think critically was emerging, and problem solving skills were used in the classroom but not consistently. In Grades 10 to 12, students used their lap-tops to work through the software designed to illustrate the relationships in Ohm's Law. Whilst, in another class, students were assigned to identify, define, and describe terms related to the interchangeable states of matter by deriving information from a complex set of graphs. In upper grades, students demonstrated a developing ability to think innovatively.

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Personal development	Outstanding	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓

- Children in the KG demonstrated very strong and responsible attitudes for their ages. Students in the elementary, middle and high school demonstrated positive and responsible attitudes but this was not observed in all lessons.
- In the KG, children were consistently self-disciplined and responded very well toward adults. Older students generally followed school rules and were courteous toward adults and one another, but the behavior of boys outside of their classrooms was frequently disorderly.

- Children in the KG were helpful toward one another at all times. Amongst the older students there was awareness of the needs of others and their relationships were respectful but not always helpful.
- Children in the KG demonstrated a strong understanding of healthy living. For example, they knew they needed to exercise in order to be healthy. Older students generally understood safe and healthy living but they often ate unhealthy snacks during recess periods. They occasionally participated in physical activities and events that promoted healthy living.
- The rate of school attendance was good overall, lower in the KG and best in the high school. The attendance rates during the inspection matched the rates reported by the school.

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

- Students generally had a good appreciation of Islamic values. They knew the famous mosques in the UAE and understood the importance of having a prayer room at their school. They were convinced that the development of Dubai went along with respect for the values of Islam. The elementary phase students confidently recited the Qur'an accurately during assemblies. A group of the students were observed discussing the merits of visiting children in the hospital as recommended in Eid Al Adaha.
- Students respected and appreciated the culture of the UAE. KG children were attentive and enthusiastic during the morning assemblies when the National Anthem was sung, in contrast to high school students who generally lacked enthusiasm. They were aware of the traditional costumes and food, as well as the main features of important sites in Dubai. Students across all phases were able to give examples of the different landmarks, cultural tourist attractions such as forts, the Culture Village and the Al Bastakiya Area. Students reported attending cultural field trips with the school.
- Students demonstrated an excellent understanding, awareness and appreciation of their own culture. They celebrated the diversity of their school during international celebrations. This included children in KG who enthusiastically celebrated the diversity within their classroom during planned cultural experiences.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good	Good	Very good ↑

- Students understood their responsibilities in the school, and contributed positively to the school community, such as in the "Clean-Up the World Campaign", as well as the volunteer work completed at Al Ansaria School. In the high school, students took key leadership roles, such as on the Student Council, and led on initiatives within and outside the school, for example organizing the anti-bullying campaign for children in KG. They also visited elderly care homes, directed films and participated in the Children's International Film Festival
- Students demonstrated positive attitudes to their work and were determined to do their best and achieve their goals in life. Students in the high school, demonstrated very positive work ethic and initiated and managed projects such as designing a human logo during the domestic violence week. They organized support for the lower school students by sponsoring an anti-bullying campaign and collected donations for charities such as Dubai Cares. Students independently organized and developed the hydroelectric power and solar energy presentation at the "What Works" conference.

- All students were well aware of the environmental challenges and issues facing the world and Dubai. They explained how their recycling campaign contributed to the school's greener environment. However, they did not take as much care in reducing the litter in their school. Older students, fully understood the meaning of the 'greening the desert' concept and created their own green house in the school from recycled materials. In the high school, students developed ways to reuse, reduce and recycle products and made informed decisions to use the metro instead of cars to contribute positively to the environment of Dubai.

3. Teaching and assessment

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

- Most teachers had secure subject knowledge, and understood how students learn best. In the KG, teachers planned lessons with a variety of learning activities using multiple modalities suited to the needs of younger learners. In the other three phases of the school, most teachers in most subjects planned relevant and interesting lessons. In weaker lessons the teaching emphasized knowledge rather than understanding of skills. In a minority of lessons teaching that addressed the varied learning styles of students was underdeveloped.
- Teachers planned lessons that included learning objectives and appropriately related learning activities. In stronger lessons, especially in English and Arabic, the effective planning for the use of resources, the appropriate allocation of time and the purposeful use of learning technology, enabled students to be fully engaged learners. Establishing a positive climate for learning varied across phases and between teachers. In the better lessons, students were encouraged to learn from their mistakes and were able to make adjustments in their learning. In a few lessons the written lesson plan was not delivered in the classroom.
- The effective use of questioning and dialogue was variable across the phases. In weaker lessons questions were targeted at the recall of lesson content rather than at engaging students in reflection and meaningful dialogue. In the good or better lessons, questioning promoted thoughtful and considered responses. For example, Grade 9 students, applied their learning to their own lives through a discussion on the value of time and the importance of not wasting it. In a KG2 science lesson, children responded thoughtfully to questions about the solar system.
- Teachers recognized that different groups and individuals, including those with special education needs and disabilities (SEND), had different learning needs. A majority of teachers modified lessons, with varying degrees of effectiveness, to meet the learning needs of the less able students. Often, the more able students were not sufficiently challenged, hindering their progress in lessons. Teachers were just beginning to develop a repertoire of teaching strategies to meet the learning needs of all groups and individuals.
- Although there were pockets of strong teaching that promoted critical thinking, initiative, problem solving and innovation, this was not a regular feature in most lessons. In a few lessons, students responded to compelling questions requiring reflection and original problem solving, either through small group interaction or in response to teachers' questions. These opportunities were more prevalent in the high school, lower elementary mathematics and Grade 11 and 12 science lessons. In some lessons, critical thinking and independent learning skills were linked by connecting subject content to the real world. In a Grade 10 Arabic lesson, students explored the rights of women and how to stop the spread of domestic violence. Teachers' planning for the promotion of students' innovation skills was underdeveloped.

- In Arabic as a first language, most teachers had secure subject knowledge and knew how to apply the subject content to real world events in order to enhance the context of teaching. However, lesson objectives were not always linked to the four linguistic skills areas. A key strength in the teaching of Arabic was the positive learning environment and teacher-student relationships. A key weakness was the inability of teachers to meet the needs of different ability groups. Developing reading and writing skills and the use of questioning to develop knowledge and deepen the understanding was weaker in most lessons. There were too few opportunities to accelerate the learning skills, particularly through the use of creative writing.
- In Arabic as an additional language, the majority of teachers had secure subject knowledge. These were reflected, particularly in the better lessons, when the teaching methods suited the needs of the students. All teachers planned their lessons but the planning was not effective and mostly general. Various strategies were used such as singing and narrating stories. There were limited opportunities to challenge students and extend their thinking.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Assessment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- The school used a range of assessments carried out by teachers, together with end of term tests, all of which were generally aligned to the schools' curriculum standards. Benchmarks used to analyze assessments were not in line with those expected in US curriculum schools. As a result, the school had an over-generous view of student attainment and progress. The exception to this was the KG where good systems of assessment provided staff with regular and accurate assessments.
- Data from international benchmark tests were analyzed to identify where curriculum modification was needed to support improvement. The rigor of analysis and how well this could inform teachers' planning varied between subjects. Only a minority of students in the high school undertook national SAT1 tests. Therefore, data to assess and compare students' attainment levels for entry to universities beyond the UAE was not extensive.
- Analysis of internal and external data from year-to-year was undertaken to measure the progress of students. Some comparisons were made of the progress by different groups of students across phases. This was not sufficiently developed in all subjects to provide the school with an accurate view of students' progress or to make comparisons between boys and girls or different sections within a grade.
- Inconsistent use was made of assessment information to modify lessons to narrow the gap in attainment between boys and girls, and Emirati students and others. In the majority of lessons, with the exception of English and those in the KG, all students were given the same task irrespective of their prior knowledge. During lessons, teachers did not routinely use assessment to make adjustments to tasks to ensure that all groups of students made equally good progress.
- Teachers had a reasonable knowledge of students' strengths and weaknesses. This was better in KG. In the best lessons, teachers used assessment well to provide appropriate support and challenge. Students were occasionally involved in assessing their own work. In English, students routinely completed self-assessment skill trackers. This was not a consistent feature of lessons in most subjects. The marking of students' work was variable and was not routinely used to provide students with guidance on how to improve their work.

4. Curriculum

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

- The curriculum followed the requirements of the school's curriculum. It focused on developing students' knowledge and skills, although the focus was predominantly on acquisition of knowledge. The curriculum was planned and met the needs of a large majority of students but was uneven between subjects. Planning and progression were best in Arabic as an additional language, Islamic education and in English. In other subjects there was insufficient challenge offered to students on some topics.
- Generally, the curriculum ensured continuity and progression and met the needs of the majority of students. For example, in the high school the progression of subjects was spiraled, with correlation of content within the spiral, due largely to the fact that the same teacher may teach two or three of the levels of the spiral. Most students were adequately prepared for the next phase of education within the school.
- There were too few curricular options, particularly for the older students. Consequently, their interests and abilities were not well served by the curriculum. The curriculum was well planned in the KG, as it was most closely aligned with the Common Core standards. In the other phases the curriculum emphasized knowledge acquisition, often at the expense of skill development. This was particularly the case in elementary mathematics and science lessons.
- There were some cross-curricular links evident in the language curricula. Such links were not observed in other subjects during the inspection.
- There was on-going review of the curriculum to ensure that provision was adequate to meet the needs of most students. The needs of some students, particularly the more able, were not consistently addressed in all the key subjects.
- The Arabic social studies program was taught based on the UAE curriculum. However this was not aligned to the English social studies curriculum. Students participated in the celebration of national events and celebrated national heritage. In Phase 1, social studies was taught in an integrated manner focusing on raising awareness of the national identity.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum adaptation	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- At the elementary and middle phases, the curriculum was uniform with limited modification, with the exception of students with SEND. In the high school, modifications to the curriculum to meet the needs of several groups of individuals had not produced the desired result. There was the beginnings of appropriate focus on students with SEND but this required further development.
- The curriculum engaged the interests of the majority of students. The opportunities for students to be enterprising, innovative and creative, and to make social contributions were mostly found in clubs and activities that took place after school hours. The range of extra-curricular activities and the links with the local community were broad, but these did not engage all students.
- The curriculum provided for the development of students' understanding of Emirati culture and the society of the UAE but these aspects were not consistently integrated within subjects.

- The school provided Arabic sessions in KG. There were 11 sessions of 40 minutes each for KG1 children and eight sessions of 45 minutes each for KG2 children. Teaching focused on the acquisition of simple Arabic vocabulary and recognition of high frequency words, such as greetings, likes and dislikes.

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Good	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓

- Policies for safeguarding students were in place. Child protection and students' code of conduct policies were available on the school's website. Teachers had received training the week before the inspection. Older students were designated to watch for bullying. A significant number of students reported on the school survey that they did not feel safe in the school.
- School leaders had not ensured a safe, hygienic and secure environment for students and staff. Toilets were not sanitary and the floors of crowded classrooms were not clean. There was no provision for "air changes per hour" in the classrooms. Toilets were not monitored well or regularly.
- Maintenance services for the swimming pool, HVAC, water, bacteria, and exterminators were contracted and each application was recorded with the date and the services rendered. The exterior was clean, although some walls and windows showed signs of neglect. The health office was staffed with a doctor and three nurses, who ensured records and medications were secure. There were detailed health records for each student with emergency contact information, immunizations, and other health issues. Security personnel required visitors to sign in and out and wear visitor badges. Hall supervisors were assigned to each section. Students did not wear lab coats, gloves, and glasses in laboratories when using materials.
- The premises provided a safe physical outdoor environment. However, many classes were crowded to the extent that moving around was extremely difficult. The provision for students with physical disabilities was limited. For example, access ramps were very steep and there was no elevator to access to the second floor. In the science laboratories, some chemicals that were no longer in use were still kept in the liquid reagent cabinet. The cabinet was not flame-proof. Cramped classrooms interfered with students' learning and inhibited teachers when moving around assessing students. The library facilities were clean but under-utilized.
- The school was inconsistent in promoting a safe and healthy life style. The cafeteria offered healthy foods, but also offered "junk food". Hand sanitizers were on the walls at various locations but were used infrequently by students. The school did not monitor students' exposure to bus exhaust at dismissal time. There were displays around the school which promoted healthy living but healthy lifestyles were not an integral part of the culture of the school.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Care and support	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- In the KG, the teachers knew the children well, were caring and supported their needs. In other phases, teachers had developed positive relationships with the students in their classes. Behavior management, systems and procedures in classes, during transition periods and in the canteen were inconsistent across phases. As a result the behavior of some students, particularly boys in the elementary and middle phase was boisterous.
- The school kept records on attendance and punctuality. Appropriate action was taken with students who were repeatedly late or absent. Punctuality to lessons first thing in the morning and during the day was varied. Parents were contacted promptly where there were concerns about individual students.
- Early identification was seen as a key factor in the provision for students with SEND. The school made use of a variety of formal and informal identification procedures. These were matched to interventions and support. However, this was not always effectively delivered to help students to make progress and support and was inconsistent across phases. The gifted and talented students were identified as a result of academic tests and some teacher identification. However, the details gathered did not always inform differentiated provision. As a result, progress for some able students was no better than acceptable.
- The schools' systems to identify students with SEND in the best lessons, led to good support. However, this was inconsistent and not always effectively delivered to have a positive effect on student progress. Some students with SEND were withdrawn from lessons for individual learning or small group activities. In these sessions, the support provided was more accurate and matched to their needs. As a result, students made their best personal and academic progress. Support in lessons for the gifted and talented students was not consistent and did not always provide sufficient challenge to promote their academic and personal development.
- The school staff monitored the well-being of all students. Social-emotional counseling provided by the counsellors and student support team helped students who required help to manage their behavior throughout the school day. Additional personal and academic guidance was provided by administrative, teaching, and support staff. The advisory program was a way to encourage change in the behavior of students and understand the needs of others. The guidance counsellor had developed an effective program of post-school educational support and the quality of guidance offered to senior students in their career choices and higher education pathways was good.

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

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

Good ↑

- Students with a range of SEND were admitted. The SENCO had a vision of her role with the skills and knowledge to continue to develop good support. This was having a positive impact. Sustainability of improvements was at risk without a top level plan, supported by leaders and governors, for the provision of specific resources for individual students, as agreed with the parents.

- Identification of students with SEND and the use of a variety of indicators to assess barriers to learning was good. The school worked in partnership with outside agencies to support the process. As a result, support for the large majority of students was quickly matched to provision, with appropriate targets set. The SENCO provided teachers with targeted and specific professional development.
- Parents reported that they felt listened to and that the school acted on their concerns. They were kept well informed about their children's progress. Parents were not consistently actively and engaged in their children's support.
- Appropriate modifications were made for students with SEND through their individual education plans (IEPs), learning targets and differentiation by teachers. This ensured that the majority of students were engaged in relevant learning, but the quality of teaching and of curriculum modification varied too much. Effective learning with a modified curriculum occurred in sessions where students were withdrawn from lessons.
- Progress was monitored effectively by the SENCO through IEPs and assessment data. Some teachers tracked the progress of students with SEND and set targets based around learning skills. However, where provision and progress were less effective, the class teachers had not taken responsibility for the achievement in their lessons and relied too much on the SENCO for strategies and targets.
- Students' starting points were recorded and parents and their children were involved in the process. Information was shared with teachers and with parents so that the individual learning needs of the majority of students with SEND were being met in the school. The school did not involve students enough in the initial design and implementation of their learning programs.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Acceptable

- The principal and senior leaders communicated the vision of the school but were unclear about the initiatives needed to make this vision become a reality. The school was aligned with the vision of the UAE and associated national priorities but the actions necessary to move toward these goals were still developing. Some heads of departments were very focused upon improving teaching and learning within their departments. Evidence of improved attainment and progress was seen in these areas.
- The roles of the senior leaders were well-defined but not always aligned with the tasks necessary to drive school improvement projects. The school culture welcomed inclusion and the provision that the school provided for students with SEND was good. The delegated responsibility for serving the SEND population was clear and properly coordinated. With this determined and organized leader, better provision had resulted.
- Communication between senior staff and teachers was professional but not always fully effective. The failure of senior leaders to identify clear improvement goals and strategies had resulted in confused commitment from the teaching staff. Leadership responsibilities for the performance in key subject areas had been delegated. Senior leaders consulted with parents and students but this consultation rarely led to practical strategies designed to improve attainment and progress.
- The ability of senior leaders to influence school improvements was limited. Responsibility for self-evaluation was not distributed. There were no process for external evaluation that were effective. An analysis of the self-evaluation form indicated that the delegation of responsibility for completing this evidence was not widely distributed.

- Despite repeated recommendations from previous inspections, school leaders had not been successful in improving key aspects of the school's operations. Leaders lacked determination and commitment to improving the school.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Weak ↓

- School leaders had been overly generous in indicating that the school had improved, despite external data showing that students' performance was below that of other US curriculum schools in Dubai and in the international cohort who attended US curriculum schools. The judgments in the school evaluation form were not based upon careful analysis of the data available.
- Senior leaders indicated that most students in all phases performed above curriculum standards. However, the inspection found that many students were unable to apply knowledge to problem solving or to establish relationships between knowledge. Most assessments were based upon knowledge acquisition and test questions were mostly of the closed ended variety.
- The school's development plan was inadequate to guide school improvement. The plan had very little direction as to how improvement would be achieved. There were no quantitative means to measure progress towards targets. The recommendations from the previous inspection were not treated as priorities to be applied daily, in the quest to improve the school. Teachers reported that the action plan was not shared with them. Parents were not aware of a school development plan
- School leadership had been unable to bring about sustained improvement in teaching and learning for the students of Dubai International School. A culture that suggested that these students cannot improve had led to sustained acceptance of the status quo.

Partnerships with parents and the community

Good

- The school had successfully engaged parents and considered their views. Parental involvement across the school was encouraged through an "open door" policy. This was a strength in the KG.
- The school had different channels of communication with parents including SMS messages and the school website. The parents of children with SEND and gifted children, particularly in the KG, felt that they had particularly good communication.
- The school reported regularly on the students' academic achievement across all phases and commented also upon personal and social development of the students. However, there were no comments on what the students needed to improve or what future actions would lead to that improvement.
- The school made regular social contributions to the local, national and international communities, such as raising funds for the needy people in Syria and Yemen. They had links with other schools and participated in sports competitions with international football teams from Jordan and Lebanon.

Governance

Weak ↓

- The school governing board contained no stakeholders representing the interests of parents or students. There was a mothers' group that was largely advisory to the principal. There were no surveys administered by the board and therefore the board's information was limited in nature.
- Governors had limited awareness of the attainment and progress of the students and reported that they were not secure with their understanding of the students' performance on external assessments. They also reported that they were not aware of the progress differences between the various groups of students in the school.
- The overall judgement for the school has remained 'acceptable' for the past seven years. Similar recommendations for school improvement had resulted from each of the annual inspections. The board members accepted from the principal, school development plans that contained no clear goals, no measurable targets, no success criteria, no estimate of necessary resources and no identification of the individual with responsibility to accomplish each improvement project.
- The school governing board relied upon the senior leadership team to formulate school improvement plan and to direct school improvement activities. They required only affirmation that the process was going well. They did not require accountability for measurable targets that would indicate higher attainment and better progress by students.
- The governing board had failed to maintain safe and healthy surroundings for the students because it maintained cramped classrooms by enrolling too many students for the existing facilities.




Management, staffing, facilities and resources

Weak ↓

- The school operated effectively on a day-to-day basis. Instructional time was protected from disruption to maximize learning. Absent teachers were substituted in timely fashion. Transportation was well coordinated and arrived on time. Lunchtimes were staggered to eliminate students having long wait times and to provide time for play.
- Within budgetary constraints, the school was adequately staffed. The majority of the staff was qualified and deployed to maximize the use of their personal expertise. However, some staff were not suitably deployed. Some lessons that should have been instructed in English, since the school claimed alignment with the US curriculum, retained Arabic as the language of instruction.
- Classrooms and other learning spaces were not adequate for the number of students enrolled in the classes. Students sat elbow to elbow and had to climb over classmates to exit and enter the rooms. Laboratory facilities were limited and overcrowded.
- Cafeterias were poorly provisioned with too few tables and chairs for the number of students assigned to the rooms. Consequently, many students used take-away strategies. As the school day progressed, classrooms and cafeterias were heavily littered. Students reported in their survey that washroom facilities were frequently left without supplies.
- Resources were not adequate to provide students with the opportunity to develop 21st century skills. Learning technology facilities were unavailable for most students to use for individual research or investigation. Frequently, too few resources were available for all students to have access simultaneously. Lack of laboratory space limited the opportunity for students' practical work, data analysis and problem solving.

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	93
	2014-2015	161
Teachers 	115	
Students 	487	

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

- The student survey contained a significant number of comments expressing dissatisfaction with the quality of education in the school.
- Thirty per cent of 487 students reported that they were not satisfied with the quality of education at this school.
- Almost all students believed they were making good progress in English. A significant minority of students reported that they needed private tutoring to help their attainment and progress in school.
- The large majority of parents approved of the quality of education available in the school. They also felt that their children were making good progress in the key subjects.
- Most parents believed that the school was preparing their children well for the next stages of their life. Written comments were not as supportive.
- Parents also suggested that the school prepares well for inspection but that it normally was not well run.
- Teachers believed that students got a good quality of education in their school. They overwhelmingly believed that the children were well-behaved and that they developed good learning skills and were concerned about protecting the environment.
- Teachers believed that students and parents were kept up to date on their children's progress. They reported that they felt that students were safe on the school buses and were free of bullying in school.

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