



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational
needs and disabilities



Innovation

Inspection Report 2015-2016

Dubai English Speaking College

Curriculum: UK

Overall rating: Outstanding

Read more about the school



www.khda.gov.ae

“The race for
excellence has
no finish line”



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

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School information

General information



| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Location | Dubai Academic City |
| Type of school | Private |
| Opening year of school | 2005 |
| Website | www.descdubai.com |
| Telephone | 04-3604866 |
| Address | Academic City, PO Box: 125814 |
| Principal | Chris Vizzard |
| Language of instruction | English |
| Inspection dates | 9 to 12 November 2015 |

Students



| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Gender of students | Boys and girls |
| Age range | 11-18 |
| Grades or year groups | Year groups 7 to 13 |
| Number of students on roll | 1253 |
| Number of children in pre-kindergarten | 0 |
| Number of Emirati students | 10 |
| Number of students with SEND | 140 |
| Largest nationality group of students | UK |

Teachers / Support staff



| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| Number of teachers | 114 |
| Largest nationality group of teachers | British |
| Number of teaching assistants | 10 |
| Teacher-student ratio | 1:11 |
| Number of guidance counsellors | 2 |
| Teacher turnover | 27% |

Curriculum



| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Educational permit / Licence | UK |
| Main curriculum | UK |
| External tests and examinations | General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) |
| Accreditation | None |
| National Agenda benchmark tests | None |

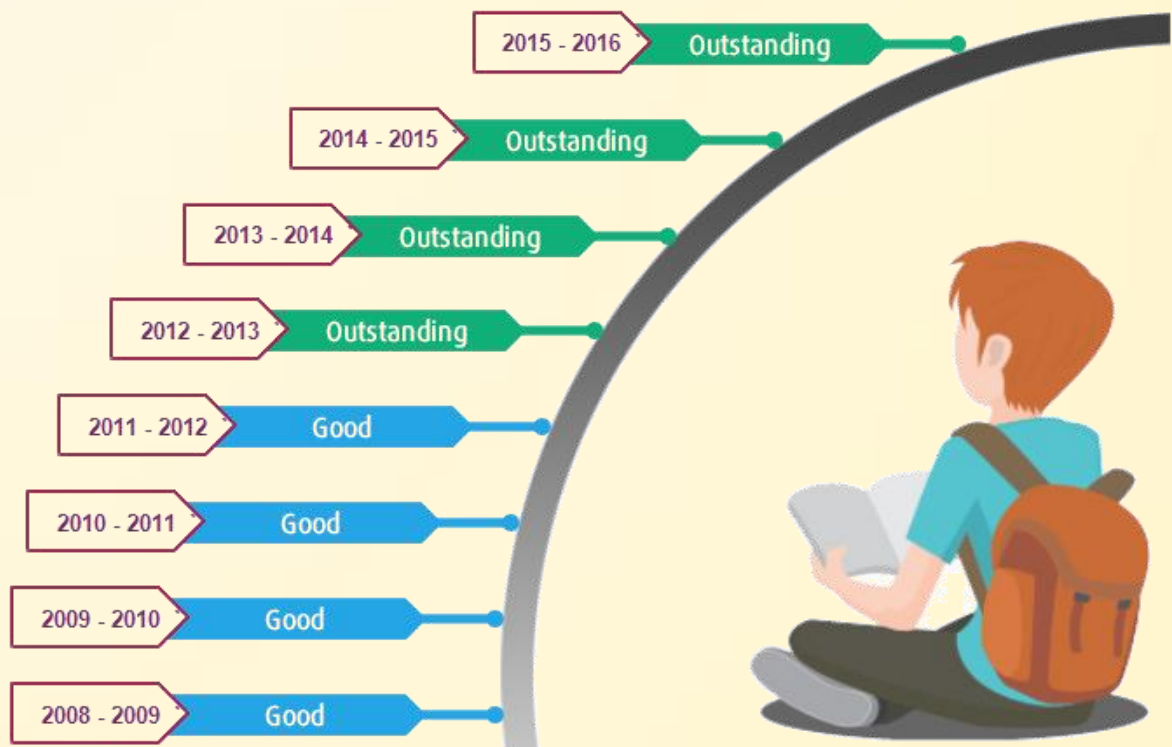


Summary for parents and the community

Dubai English Speaking College was inspected by DSIB from 9 to 12 November 2015. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **outstanding**.

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?

- Students' achievements and progress were outstanding. They did particularly well in English, mathematics and science.
- Students had excellent attitudes and learning skills. They behaved extremely well and had a strong sense of social responsibility.
- Teachers were highly skilled in challenging and motivating students.
- The curriculum engaged students across a wide range of subjects and was skillfully adapted to meet their individual needs.
- The health, safety and welfare of students was given a high priority.
- Leadership and management were outstanding.



What did the school do well?

- Students' outstanding performance in English, mathematics and science and their good achievement in Islamic education.
- Students' extremely positive attitudes, their excellent learning skills and their strong sense of community and social responsibility.
- The high quality teaching, underpinned by excellent assessment strategies and an engaging and challenging curriculum.
- The exceptional regard for health and safety and the first class support and guidance for students.
- The excellent leadership of the headteacher and key staff, and their total commitment to inclusion.



What does the school need to do next?

- Improve students' achievement in Arabic by raising teachers' expectations and increasing the level of challenge in order to meet the needs of all groups of students.
- Monitor the work planned for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) when in class and in the learning support department, to ensure it is well matched to students' needs and offers appropriate challenge.
- Establish relationships with other schools, so that they may benefit from the considerable range of skills and expertise of leaders and teachers in this outstanding school.



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

- Resources had been improved and there were good links between teachers in class and learning support staff which had begun to promote better progress for students.
- The school informed parents of their child's progress through formal and informal reporting methods. This included reporting about subject achievement.
- The school worked closely with parents of students with SEND. Appropriate home school communication was promoted by school staff.
- The involvement and feedback of parents made a positive contribution to the quality of provision available to students with SEND.
- Most parents had access to helpful and appropriate guidance, training and support services within the school.

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 and was making good progress in meeting their National Agenda targets.
- The school had promoted awareness of the National Agenda through presentations to students and parents and through assemblies. The level of awareness varied across the stakeholders but was good overall.
- The school aligned its curriculum to TIMSS and PISA very well by analysing students' results. In mathematics, they had started to focus their curriculum on geometry and reasoning. In science, they started to focus their curriculum in physics on applying the appropriate scientific skills. In English, they increased opportunities for reading in a wide range of contexts.
- Most teachers were very successful in promoting students' critical thinking and inquiry in lessons. In lessons, students actively learned and evaluated their own work and often tried to improve it. In English, for example, activities consistently and frequently required students to take and maintain a stance, defend it and amend it in the light of a superior argument.
- Students consistently used a variety of resources, including online resources, to develop a wide variety of learning skills such as independent research and investigations. The tasks in many lessons were open-ended and allowed students to conduct their own investigations. In mathematics, students used iPads to research and obtain information they could utilise in project work through evaluation, analysis, and the drawing of accurate conclusions.

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:

- School leaders had a well-developed understanding of the importance of the national innovation agenda and could showcase many examples of how the school was promoting a culture of innovation. Key leaders and teachers were identified for taking responsibility to grow a culture of innovation in learning, teaching and in school leadership. The learning environment and infrastructure supported the development of innovative thinking and learning skills because of the many wide-open access and flexible zones, facilities and resources available for students and teachers. The curriculum promoted several opportunities for students to formally and informally learn about innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurship.

Overall school performance

Outstanding

1. Students' achievement

| | | Secondary | Post-16 |
|--|------------|---------------|----------------|
| Islamic education  | Attainment | Good ↑ | Good ↑ |
| | Progress | Good | Good |
| Arabic as a first language  | Attainment | Acceptable | Not applicable |
| | Progress | Acceptable | Not applicable |
| Arabic as an additional language  | Attainment | Acceptable | Not applicable |
| | Progress | Acceptable | Not applicable |
| English  | Attainment | Outstanding ↑ | Outstanding |
| | Progress | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Mathematics  | Attainment | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| | Progress | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Science  | Attainment | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| | Progress | Outstanding | Outstanding |

| | Secondary | Post-16 |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Learning skills | Outstanding | Outstanding |

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

| | Secondary | Post-16 |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Personal development | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures | Good | Good |
| Social responsibility and innovation skills | Outstanding | Outstanding |

3. Teaching and assessment

| | Secondary | Post-16 |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Teaching for effective learning | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Assessment | Outstanding | Outstanding |

4. Curriculum

| | Secondary | Post-16 |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Curriculum design and implementation | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Curriculum adaptation | Outstanding | Outstanding |

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

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

6. Leadership and management

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



Main inspection report

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

Judgements are made on a six-point scale



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

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

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


1. Students' achievement

Secondary

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students demonstrated levels of knowledge, understanding and skills that were above national curriculum expectations. For example, students in Year 11 identified the scientific miracles in the Holy Qur'an and explained their effect on modern life and its practical applications. All assessments were internal and no external assessment or benchmarking was conducted. The tracking for students' achievements over the previous three years showed improvement in their attainment. The majority of students made notable gains in knowledge, skills and understanding, when measured against the learning objectives in lessons. They made links to prior knowledge and used external resources such as references and websites to extend their understanding of the topics being learned. All groups of students made sufficient progress.
- Attainment and progress in Arabic as a first language were in line with national curriculum expectations. Most students were developing their listening, responding and reading skills well, and showed good knowledge of Arabic grammar. However, creative, extended writing and speaking were the least developed skills. Most students made acceptable progress against the learning objectives. Where teachers' expectations were too low, students did not progress well. They made better progress in developing their Arabic vocabulary and reading skills than building the confidence of applying and extending them whilst interacting with others. Students did not progress well in extended speaking and creative writing due to lack of opportunities. Different groups of students made similar progress in lessons and over time.
- In Arabic as an additional language, in the absence of externally benchmarked tests, most students demonstrated knowledge, understanding and skills that were generally in line with curriculum expectations. They understood basic classroom instructions, although a few too often needed translation into English. Students were able to answer simple questions and rehearsed and acted out mini dialogues. They could identify the main points in short written texts made up of familiar language. Writing skills were best in lessons where thinking was extended and opportunities for independent writing were provided. Most students made acceptable gains in knowledge, skills and understanding, as measured against the learning objectives in lessons and over time. Progress in listening and speaking was quicker than in reading and writing.
- In English, most students attained above national and international standards in internal assessments and external examinations. In lessons and year by year, students progressively honed their skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing through regular discussion and debate, and critical analysis of demanding texts. By Year 11, they wrote exceptionally well for a range of purposes, using specialist vocabulary very precisely, for example in responses to literary texts. Overall, most students across all years made outstanding progress, although boys tended to attain less well than girls. The progress of students with SEND was above expectations.

- The high expectations of teachers and challenging, interesting lessons in mathematics had resulted in excellent progress and GCSE examination results over recent years. These results reflected very well against international standards. Students had developed an excellent understanding of geometry, algebra, data analysis, statistics and the use of formulae in calculations. Problem solving, investigations and critical thinking were well integrated into lesson planning and delivery. This resulted in better than expected progress in the development of knowledge, skills and understanding across the ability range. Girls and boys achieved similar academic standards in secondary mathematics. Almost all students benefitted from the use of relevant contexts which made their learning meaningful.
- Students demonstrated understanding of scientific concepts that exceeded the curriculum expectations. In Year 11, for example, students actively acquired an understanding of fusion and how it provides stars with energy. Their external examination results were strong and were sustained at a high level over the past three years. Different groups of students made better than expected progress in lessons. In Year 7, for instance, students were successful in developing their ability to collect reliable and reproducible results through experimentation.

| Post-16 | | |
|----------------------------------|--|----------------|
| Subjects | Attainment | Progress |
| Islamic education | Good  | Good |
| Arabic as a first language | Not applicable | Not applicable |
| Arabic as an additional language | Not applicable | Not applicable |
| English | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Mathematics | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Science | Outstanding | Outstanding |

- In Islamic education, the majority of students demonstrated levels in knowledge, understanding and skills that were above curriculum expectations. They were able to confidently discuss the Islamic principles for managing economic systems. Assessments were internal and no external assessment or benchmarking was conducted in Islamic education. Students' attainment was tracked over the previous three years and showed improvement. The internal assessment information and students' work indicated that, in relation to their starting points, the majority of students reached higher levels of attainment than predicted in different areas of the subject, due to improved teaching strategies. All groups of students, including those with SEND made good progress.
- Students built effectively on their prior achievement in English. In internal assessment and external examinations, most attained levels above those expected of all students, and well above the national standard in England. By their final year, students wrote well-argued and richly detailed critical essays on classic texts such as Shakespeare's Othello. They confidently researched and debated complex topics such as theoretical grammars and linguistics. They habitually applied the higher order thinking that their coursework demanded, further developing those skills acquired in the secondary phase. As a result, students across Years 12 and 13 made notable and sustained progress in developing comprehensive understanding about the topics they were studying. Boys' progress had improved relative to girls'. The progress of students with SEND was also above expectations.
- Outstanding achievement in mathematics was evident in the confidence shown by senior students in manipulating advanced mathematics, higher order thinking and reasoning. Students could select and evaluate appropriate problem solving strategies to deal with complex mathematical problems. Real life contexts were used to link curriculum areas and bring the subject alive. For example, British triathlete

performance data was used in statistics, histograms and scatter diagrams as an ongoing theme. Whilst there were more boys than girls in senior mathematics classes, all groups of students made better than expected progress during in their final two years. Examination results at AS and A level had been excellent over the previous three years, reflecting the high quality and consistency of teaching.

- Students demonstrated outstanding attainment and progress in the sciences. They consistently learned new concepts through experimentation and investigation. In Year 13, for example, students were able to experimentally investigate the change in potential and kinetic energy in an oscillating spring. Students' results in external examinations had been sustained at a high level for the previous three years. Most students in all groups made better than expected progress in lessons. In Year 12, for example, students actively developed an understanding of the stages of the cardiac cycle and determined how the pressure inside the heart changed from stage to stage.

| | Secondary | Post-16 |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|
| Learning skills | Outstanding | Outstanding |

- Collaboration and interactions among students were outstanding. Students worked with maturity and focus carrying out tasks and communicating their findings and opinions clearly. For example, Year 10 students in learning technology worked productively in small groups to research and produce key information to understand the principles of internet operations. Students respected each other's roles and worked together to create an excellent presentation.
- Students displayed outstanding learning skills and showed genuine interest and enthusiasm in lessons. They were self-motivated and independent. For example, during a Year 13 English lesson, students were engaged in high levels of discussion relating to complex topics and theories which they articulated with clarity and consideration. As reflective learners, students used a range of strategies to make improvements to their work.
- Students were able to make connections very effectively across different areas of learning to deepen their understanding of the world. Year 7 drama students were able to empathise with the central character in their story and relate it to real life situations. They reflected this in their dramatic interpretations of how the character felt and what they might be thinking.
- Students used modern technology proficiently to enable them to research topics in depth. They demonstrated their innovative and enterprising skills by designing and selling their own brand of sunglasses as part of their vocational course. Critical thinking skills were well developed and students were adept at considering aspects of their learning from different perspectives.

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

| | Secondary | Post-16 |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Personal development | Outstanding | Outstanding |

- Excellent attitudes were displayed by students. They were self-reliant and responsible for their own learning and personal development. They appreciated and positively responded to their teachers' constructive feedback.
- Exemplary behaviour was maintained everywhere in the school. This was reflected in the level of self-discipline shown throughout the school. Students thrived on the responsibilities given to them. Bullying was extremely rare.
- Positive and supportive relationships were a very strong feature of this school. Students displayed respect, care and concern for others. When needed, they helped their peers in group work activities and presentations. They undertook a wide variety of leadership opportunities such as head boy/girl, sports captains and house leaders.
- Students showed an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy food. They demonstrated this through healthier and nutritious food choices. Students enjoyed participating in sports activities during or after the school day. They were also involved in inter-house and outside school competitions. All this helped in raising the value students placed on adopting a healthy lifestyle.
- Attendance rates were very good, and students arrived punctually for school and lessons. This resulted in a very positive impact on teaching, learning and all aspects of school life.

| | Secondary | Post-16 |
|---|-----------|---------|
| Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures | Good | Good |

- Students had a good understanding of the influence of the Islamic values on modern society in Dubai and they respected and appreciated Islamic traditions. They could talk confidently about some Islamic values.
- A good understanding of the traditions and culture of Dubai was articulated by students. They described some of the main sporting activities such as camel racing, horse racing and falconry. They had a good knowledge about local food and traditional clothes and knew well the roles of H.H. Sheikh Zayed in the history of the Emirates.
- Students fully appreciated and celebrated their own culture and communicated a strong sense of identity. The awareness of the diversity of cultures from around the world was not as developed.

| | Secondary | Post-16 |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Social responsibility and innovation skills | Outstanding | Outstanding |

- The high degree of social responsibility shown by students was evident in the wide range of activities they initiated to support people less fortunate than themselves. Students willingly and enthusiastically took on leadership roles, with over 200 involved as house leaders, sports captains, prefects and other responsibilities.
- Creativity, resourcefulness and innovative skills were evident in various initiatives. These included contributions to the development of the new library and the 'Desert Garden'. The school council was very active and frequently made appropriate suggestions for school improvement. Students volunteered freely and enjoyed taking the lead in activities such as the Hefz Al Ne'ma (value the blessings) humanitarian projects.
- Students demonstrated a genuine care for their immediate environment, not least by contributing to keeping the school buildings and grounds in immaculate condition. Students had led many initiatives relating to conservation and had a strong awareness of ecological issues. This was evident in such activities as the 'bionest', the recycling of water to harvest plants, and solar energy projects.

3. Teaching and assessment

| | Secondary | Post-16 |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Teaching for effective learning | Outstanding | Outstanding |

- Excellent subject knowledge was used by teachers to effectively engage and motivate students. They used their understanding of how students learn to structure lessons which provided an inclusive and enabling culture.
- Teachers planned imaginative and engaging lessons which were well structured and delivered with effective pace to maintain student involvement and focus. Opportunities were prepared for students to work individually, in pairs or groups to discuss and reflect on learning points and experience practical hands-on learning. The learning environment was well organised with informative displays to support students and stimulate their thinking.
- Student contributions were valued and teachers encouraged ongoing interaction in lessons through skillful open ended questioning. Students were involved in insightful and thought provoking discussions. Students across both phases were encouraged and expected to take an active part in their learning. Teachers valued the contributions made in lessons and challenged students' thinking to consolidate and extend their knowledge and skills.
- Almost all teachers were proficient at using a range of strategies that met the needs of students with different abilities and confidence. Teachers provided appropriate scaffolding for learners requiring more support using visual aids and opportunities to work with peer partners or greater challenge for more able students.
- Critical thinking was promoted in almost all lessons and gave students time to give reasons and opinions on topics or themes of discussion. Innovation and independent skills were developed skillfully by most teachers. For example, Year 9 students successfully adapted a piece of music, ensuring it was recognisable but added their own variations to personalise it for a final musical performance.

- In Arabic as a first language, teachers planned appropriately but did not routinely provide work that was matched to the needs of different groups of students. The promotion of students' critical thinking, problem-solving, innovation and independent learning skills was limited during these lessons.
- In Arabic as an additional language, teachers had secure subject knowledge. The majority of teachers used the English language during lessons. Lesson planning was appropriate and time and resources were managed to provide a positive learning environment. Questioning ensured that students were sufficiently engaged. However, the level of challenge and support were not sufficiently personalized. The development of students' critical thinking, problem-solving, innovation and independent learning skills was limited.

| | Secondary | Post-16 |
|------------|-------------|-------------|
| Assessment | Outstanding | Outstanding |

- The school's highly detailed approaches to assessment remained closely matched to curriculum expectations. Innovative arrangements were enabling teachers to maintain an accurate and detailed profile of students' progress and attainment and personal development, particularly their attitudes to learning.
- Almost all teachers, understood their students' strengths and development needs very accurately and consequently planned highly suitable learning experiences that promoted progress. Across the school, teachers almost always provided pertinent and helpful feedback, including innovative 'podcast' feedback in geography. Comments very occasionally focused on presentational issues to the exclusion of feedback on the accomplishment or otherwise of learning objectives and next steps.
- Teachers had used assessment information to make appropriate changes to the curriculum, for example, in English and mathematics. They also planned lessons specifically adapted to address gaps or weaknesses in students' performance. This was a feature across most key subjects including Islamic education. It was less strong in Arabic as a first language.
- The school ensured that it compared students' performance rigorously against the National Curriculum expectations, and against the performance of UK schools. It had used the findings of international assessments to ensure that students' learning experiences featured regular and progressive opportunities for critical thinking and problem solving.
- Using external expertise, the school had assured the accuracy of its information on students' progress. As a result, teachers set suitably demanding targets for students as individuals. These targets were based on suitably high expectations of and for each student. Students' progress towards targets was rigorously monitored.

4. Curriculum

| | Secondary | Post-16 |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Curriculum design and implementation | Outstanding | Outstanding |

- The curriculum offered extensive breadth and challenge in its range, and reflected the needs and interests of students. The curriculum provided an excellent balance of learning opportunities for all groups of students across a wide range of subjects.
- The curriculum was exceptionally well-planned to ensure continuity. It was structured to ensure students made progress through the school. Senior leaders ensured smooth transition between phases and year groups.
- The school provided an impressive range of extra-curricular activities for all students, in addition to an outstanding enrichment programme which included overseas trips and visiting speakers. Staff monitored participation and encouraged students to keep a record of activities they took part in. Clubs nurtured the artistic, scientific, sporting and academic talents of students and included a 'School Bake Off' and an award winning choir.
- Excellent cross curricular links were made. Students understood how learning was connected between different subjects. In history lessons, for example, students learnt geographical facts about the UK when studying how children were evacuated during the Second World War,
- The curriculum was thoroughly reviewed on a regular basis. In response to parental and student consultations, the curriculum was enhanced to offer a vocational route for those students for whom an academic route was not their preferred option. In line with the expectations of the new National Curriculum, effective schemes of learning were innovatively developed to support students' mastery of skills.

| | Secondary | Post-16 |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Curriculum adaptation | Outstanding | Outstanding |

- Very careful attention was given to ensuring that the curriculum met the needs of all students. For the most able, extension activities gave them excellent opportunities to develop their skills and talents. The curriculum was planned and structured to help accelerate the progress of students with SEND. The recent introduction of BTec courses was a valuable adaptation to provision.
- Innovative approaches to the curriculum added greatly to the learning experiences of students. Out of class, students often developed their own innovative schemes such as the environmental project to recycle of sewage water to help grow vegetables which were, in turn, sold for a profit.
- The extensive range of clubs and activities for students outside of lessons provided an exciting range of learning and recreational experiences. Clubs such as chess, 'inspiring mathematics' and cake icing were available, as well as a very wide range of sporting activities.
- Links with many organisations, societies, educational and medical institutions were embraced enthusiastically by the school. One such enterprise to link students productively to UAE society was the long established support of a center for students with SEND. Students were keen to participate in local sporting events as well as debates and musical enterprises in Dubai.

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

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

- Effective policies and procedures ensured the safety of both students and staff. Policies were communicated well. Procedures and training regarding child protection, bullying and risk management were consistent. An awareness of cyber bullying risks had resulted in greater vigilance and clear procedures to minimise any abuse. The implementation of the bus safety procedures was exemplary.
- All facilities, equipment and resources were well maintained, clean and safe. The sports facilities were exceptionally well managed with safety as a key priority. Music rooms had recently been soundproofed to reduce sound transfer. Drama spaces had also been upgraded providing safer, purpose built rooms for creative activities involving information technology and electronic support.
- The school was well protected with regular safety checks on all services, including fire equipment and laboratory provision. Detailed records were maintained in all areas of health and safety. Evacuation and lock down drills were well recorded and ongoing improvements were being implemented. Staff were notified of any serious student health issues, for example, diabetes and asthma.
- A wonderful learning environment had been created for students. It was spacious, colourful and inviting with numerous student displays to enhance students' day-to-day experiences. The layout in departmental/house blocks created a family feeling that was very welcoming, combining well the academic and pastoral life of the school. It supported the learning of all groups of students including those with SEND.
- Healthy living was successfully promoted across the curriculum. The importance of good health and how to achieve this was a strong feature in physical education lessons and was demonstrated by the broad inclusive sporting programme. The healthy food policy of the canteen had been developed gradually over time to encourage maximum student participation.

| | Secondary | Post-16 |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Care and support | Outstanding | Outstanding |

- Consistently high quality and supportive relationships between staff and students and amongst students were distinctive features of the school. Expectations of good conduct and sensitivity towards others were clear and an orderly, respectful ethos characterised the school.
- Tutors monitored the few concerns about attendance and punctuality very efficiently, liaised closely with parents and sought additional support from senior pastoral staff where there were issues.
- Efficient procedures for identifying accurately students with SEND had been recently introduced and, as a result, the needs of these students were swiftly and accurately identified and support provided for them. Students with special gifts and talents were celebrated and extension activities were provided, including additional time to explore more complex mathematics.

- The highly effective pastoral support and guidance provided by pastoral staff, and in relevant cases by the school counselor, provided a secure and supportive network for students. A new approach had been adopted to guide students through the complex decisions of subject options, careers choices and university selection. Close involvement of parents was supported by helpful guides for them on relevant issues.

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

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

Good

- The new leader of learning support had made an immediate and positive impact on improving the quality of support received by students with SEND. Improved resources, especially in information technology, the spacious and welcoming Learning Support Department, and closer liaison between subject and learning support staff had contributed to the progress made by students.
- Efficient and structured identification procedures resulted in students' needs being accurately assessed and more effectively met by specialist staff and subject teachers. Students were fully involved in their learning and helped set targets for themselves in their student 'passport' to help accelerate the progress they made. Parents remained comprehensively involved in all stages of the children's education.
- Steps had been taken to improve the monitoring of the support provided during lessons and to check how well learning material was matched to students' needs. The tracking of progress students made was developing but there were some inconsistencies in quality which had an impact on students' achievements.
- Appropriate curriculum modification took account of the individual needs, learning profiles and ability levels of individual students. Consequently the expectations of progress were consistent across the curriculum. Planning was appropriately modified.
- Appropriate tracking, monitoring and evaluation were being applied across the school. This provided information about the progress of students. Consequently the school was secure in showing how well students with SEND were achieving as a result of the school's work and how they were able to improve further.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Outstanding

- The headteacher provided inspirational leadership. His relentless determination to sustain the school as a centre of excellence was shared by the leadership team and all staff. Leaders were passionate about the inclusive ethos and justifiably proud of their work with the diverse range of students. The priorities of the UAE were integral to the school's ambitions and featured strongly in strategic development plans.
- The positive impact of the school leadership team was evident at every turn, in particular in the rising trend in students' attainment in English, mathematics, science and Islamic education over the previous three years. Leaders ensured that the school was compliant with statutory and regulatory requirements.

- The professional, warm and supportive relationships across the school owed much to the example set by leaders. Staff felt valued and knew that any requests for support would not be seen as a weakness. They enthusiastically shared successful strategies and willingly took up the many opportunities to further their professional development.
- The high level of expertise and professional insight across the leadership team enabled leaders to successfully promote effective teaching. The development of students' learning skills, alongside their personal development were the highest priority. The notion of a 'professional learning community' was firmly embedded within the school's ethos. An innovative aspect of this was the involvement of students in this process.
- The school's track record of improvement was impressive. Leaders responded to changes in the curriculum, for example, to help ensure that the quality and design of the curriculum remained outstanding. All staff were empowered to be innovative. This was evident, for example, in the revised approach to teaching and learning in Islamic education.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Outstanding

- Excellent systems for school self-evaluation were established. There was no sense of complacency and, at every level, students' performance was analysed in meticulous detail. Any gaps in their learning were picked up and quickly followed by actions to put things right. The school compared its examination results against the best schools internationally.
- The college was innovative in the way in which it monitored the quality of teaching and learning. In addition to formal observations of lessons, senior staff and heads of departments frequently popped in to lessons. Teachers appreciated the subsequent dialogue. Students took on the role of 'lead learners' and contributed to discussions about their learning experiences in different classes.
- School improvement planning was firmly based on accurate school self-evaluation. The three-year strategic plan was well founded, with goals achieved or almost achieved. The annual action plan clearly set out priorities based on the information from rigorous self-review and on the recommendations of the previous inspection report. The priorities of the UAE were given sharp focus. Plans included ambitious targets linked to the National Agenda.
- The school had addressed all the recommendations from the previous inspection report with determination and rigour. Students' attainment in Islamic education had risen due to a successful revision of the curriculum and improved teaching. Provision for personal, social and health education had been replaced by an innovative and more relevant 'Grow and Life' programme. The identification of students' individual needs was more accurate.




| Partnerships with parents and the community | Outstanding |
|---|-------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents believed that communication with the school was excellent, smooth and two-way. They were able to monitor their children's homework using a web-based programme which tracked the homework set. Highly effective communication links had been established to ensure that parents were consistently well informed about their children's education. Reporting to parents was excellent. Twice a year, they were given the opportunity to discuss their children's academic and social development in one-to-one meetings. The end of year reports were very detailed and included information that was useful for the next academic year. Teachers contacted parents with any issues on an on-going basis to help ensure that any underperformance was identified and eradicated. Effective engagement with parents had a high priority and there were productive relationship with the parental body. The headteacher actively encouraged an 'open door' policy throughout the school and wrote a weekly blog to parents. Together with senior leaders, he was present every morning as students arrived. This helped to forge relationships with staff, students and parents. Parents made regular, useful contributions. For example, they talked to students about careers, arranged work experience placements and supported the school's work on environmental sustainability. The school enjoyed strong and mutually beneficial relationships with other schools and organisations. Links with the sister primary school enabled a smooth transition from Year 6 to Year 7 and combined professional development opportunities. | |

| Governance | Outstanding |
|---|-------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The governing board included appropriate representation of parents, members of the community and school staff. The board knew the school very well as a result of effective two-way communication with the school community. Members of the board were highly skilled individuals who were elected so they could make the best impact possible on the performance of the school. The governing board played a very effective role in ensuring that the school had the resources to perform at its maximum potential. They approved, for example, funding to enhance the library resources and the resources used in the science laboratories. The school was held fully accountable for students' academic and progress and personal development by governors. They closely monitored student outcomes. At the same time, governors had a constructive relationship with the school and kept a balance between empowering the senior leadership team and holding them accountable for the school's performance. | |

| Management, staffing, facilities and resources | Outstanding |
|--|-------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school ran extremely smoothly because the staff worked as cohesive team. Leaders set the tone for each day by warmly welcoming students as they arrived. The timetable was organised to provide the optimum use of time and space. Students routinely moved from class to class without fuss and needed minimum supervision. Well placed information boards and attractive displays were kept up-to-date. • Leaders were highly successful in recruiting and training teachers. In almost all subjects, teachers were highly skilled. They were extremely well deployed, which meant that students' experiences across the curriculum were varied and stimulating. Teachers took advantage of the wealth of training opportunities, which were coordinated skillfully by the leader of teaching and learning. • The manager of facilities was meticulous in ensuring an attractive, hazard-free learning environment. The school site was extremely clean, tidy and litter free. Students took a great pride in keeping it that way. The imaginative use of space had enabled the college to retain a spacious 'campus' feel. Students valued this feature of their college and talked very positively about it. • Specialist subjects were very well supported, with excellent facilities available. These included large areas of synthetic turf and a grass sports pitch, well-equipped and spacious art rooms, a computer room in each block, music studios and practice rooms, and a superbly designed library. A drama studio provided students with access to a professional level of equipment. Teachers took every advantage of such facilities in order to meet students' learning needs. | |

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 | 185 |
| | 2014-2015 | 205 |
| Teachers  | 95 | |
| Students  | 544 | |

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

- Parents, students and teachers who responded to the survey expressed high levels of satisfaction with the various areas of school performance. Almost all parents and almost all students expressed that they were satisfied with the quality of education at the school.
- Almost all parents believed that their children were making good progress in English, mathematics, and science, and students generally agreed. A few parents expressed their concern about the quality of their children's progress in Arabic.
- Parents and students agreed that the school promoted the development of a good range of learning skills. Almost all parents and students thought that the school offered a good range of subjects and extra-curricular activities. All teachers agreed.
- A large majority of parents thought that their children had gained a good understanding of the importance of Islamic values in Dubai. A majority of students agreed.
- Almost all parents believed that the school provided their children good opportunities to learn about the community and environmental responsibilities. All teachers agreed. Most students and almost all teachers believed that the school dealt well with bullying. Only a few parents expressed their concern about bullying in the school. All teachers believed that students enjoyed the school, developed good social skills and worked well with others.

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