

Inspection Report



Mirdif Private School 2014-2015





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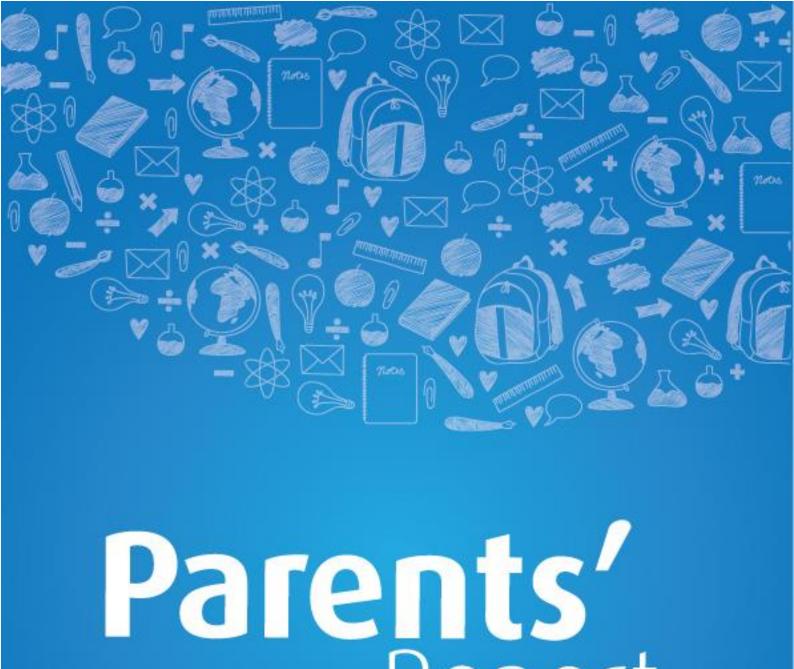
School information

E	General information				
	Location Al Mizhar				
	Location	AI MIZIO			
	Type of school	Private			
	Opening year of school	1995			
	Website	www.mirdifprivateschool.com			
	Telephone	04-288-3303			
	Address	P.O. Box 79195 Mirdif, Dubai			
	Principal	Randa Ghandour			
	Language of instruction	English			
	Inspection dates	10 th - 13 th November 2014			

Stu	dents
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age range	4 - 14
Grades or year groups	KG 1 - Grade 9
Number of students on roll	749
Number of children in Pre-K	n/a
Number of Emirati students	506
Number of students with SEN	37
Largest nationality group of students	Emirati

V	Teachers	/ Support staff
	Number of teachers	58
	Largest nationality group of teachers	Irish
	Number of teacher assistants	16
	Teacher-student ratio	1:13
	Number of guidance counsellors	3
	Teacher turnover	34%

Curri	culum
Educational Permit	US
Main Curriculum / Other	US
Standardized tests / board exams	ITBS
Accreditation	None
	Educational Permit Main Curriculum / Other Standardized tests / board exams



Parents' Report

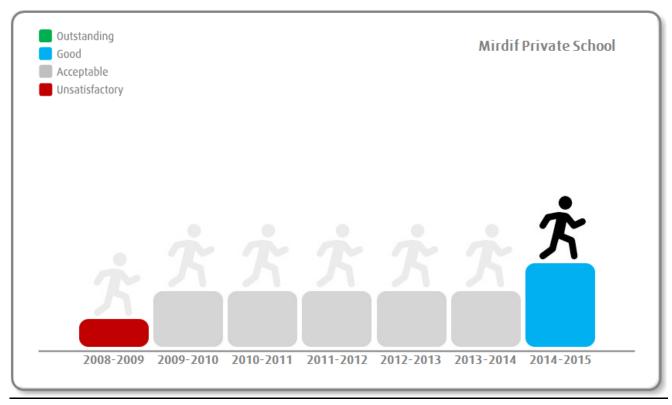




Dear Parents,

Mirdif Private School was inspected by DSIB from 10th to 13th November 2014, and the overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be Good

In order to judge the overall quality of education provided by the school, inspectors considered six key aspects of the school's performance and standards. Inspectors looked at children's attainment and progress in five key subjects, their learning skills as well as their personal and social development. They judged how effective teaching was across the school. Inspectors considered how well the school's curriculum, including activities inside and outside the classroom, 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 judgments were drawn from a range of evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observing children learning in lessons, looking at their work, talking with children, meetings with staff, parents and governors, and reviewing the parents' and teachers' surveys.

The key strengths and areas for improvement to be made by the school leaders, governors and owners are:

Strengths

- Students made good progress in learning the majority of the key subjects.
- School leaders and governors were committed to providing good quality teaching for all students.
- There was a culture of support and strong relationships between parents and the school.
- There were outstanding arrangements for the health and safety of students.
- The students' social and personal development, particularly in the high school, was outstanding.

Areas for improvement

- Improve students' attainment and progress in learning Arabic by ensuring that their language skills are developed and measured against the curriculum standards.
- Ensure that teachers and leaders accurately monitor students' progress, especially by students with special educational needs, and ensure that lessons meet all students' needs.
- Use the results of assessment data to improve teachers' lesson planning and the curriculum.
- Develop students' learning skills by providing them with more opportunities to investigate, think critically and work independently.
- Enhance the curriculum in Kindergarten so that it provides for the learning needs of all children.

We warmly encourage you to read the full school inspection report.

The school is required to submit to DSIB an action plan identifying the steps they will take to address the areas for improvement. We have advised your school leaders to share this with you.

We trust that the information provided will help you understand, and encourages you to support, your child's school.

Yours sincerely,

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

A closer look at Mirdif Private School



How well does the school perform overall?

Overall, Mirdif Private School provided a 'Good' quality of education for its students.

- Students' attainment and progress were good in Islamic Education across all phases, and in Arabic as a first language in the elementary phase. Students attained well and made good progress in English and mathematics in the Kindergarten and the High School, and in science in the Middle and High Schools. Students learned in collaborative ways in lessons when given opportunities to do so.
- Students were respectful of their teachers and each other.
- Teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge, especially in the middle and high school grades.
- The curriculum followed the US Common Core Standards and standards from California. The curriculum in the Kindergarten did not fully provide for the needs of all children.
- The health and safety of all students was a very high priority in the school.
- School leaders and the Board of Governors provided a vision for continual development and change for whole school improvement, through effective self-evaluation and action planning.

How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?



- In the best lessons, the curriculum was well planned and adapted to meet these students' needs. However, across the school, not all teachers modified their teaching strategies to meet students' individual needs so that they could make better progress in lessons.
- Leaders had recruited a qualified special educational needs coordinator, qualified teachers of special educational needs and specialist learning assistants to support students' learning.
- Parents of students with special educational needs stated that they were very well supported by the school and that effective communication helped to keep them informed about their children's progress.

1. How good are the students' attainment, progress and learning skills?

		KG	Elementary	Middle	High
	Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
Islamic Education	Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
	Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good ↓
Arabic as a First Language	Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable
Arabic as an Additional Language	Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable
English	Attainment	Good 🕇	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Good 🕇	Good 🕇	Good 🕇	Good
\$ 55.1 8 3 54.	Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good 🕇
Mathematics	Progress	Good	Good 🕇	Good 🕇	Good 🕇
Science	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good 🕇	Good 🕇
	Progress	Acceptable	Good 🕈	Good	Good
		KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills		Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good

↑ Improved from last inspection

↓ Declined from last inspection

2. How good is the students' personal and social development?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Personal responsibility	Good	Good	Good	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Good	Good	Good

3. How good are teaching and assessment?

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

4. How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

5. How well does the school protect and support students?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Health and safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of support	Good 🕈	Good 🕇	Good	Good 🕇

6. How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	All phases	
The effectiveness of leadership	Good	
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good 🕈	
Parents and the community	Outstanding	
Governance	Good	
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding	



Overall school judgment



Key strengths

- Students made good progress in the majority of subjects.
- There was a strong commitment and vision of the Board of Governors and the school's leaders to provide high quality teaching.
- There was a culture of mutual support and strong relationships between parents and the school.
- There were outstanding health and safety arrangements.
- Students demonstrated well developed personal and social responsibility, particularly in the High School.

Changes since the last inspection

- There were nearly 30 new staff members, including new heads of English, mathematics and science and a new head of the Kindergarten.
- There was improvement in students' attainment and progress in learning some key subjects.
- There was improvement in the quality of teaching in the Kindergarten and the Elementary school.
- There was improvement in the quality of support provided for students.

Recommendations

- Improve students' attainment and progress in learning Arabic as an additional language by ensuring that:
 - the teaching strategies fully meet the language needs of all groups of students; and,
 - students' language skills are measured against the curriculum standards.
- Improve students' learning skills by providing them with more opportunities to investigate, think critically and work independently.
- Ensure that teachers and leaders use assessment data, including international benchmark results, to inform lesson planning, teaching and curriculum modifications.
- Improve the monitoring of students' progress, especially for special educational needs students, and ensure that the modification of the curriculum meets the needs of all groups of students in all lessons.
- Ensure that the Kindergarten curriculum fully meets the learning needs of all children.
- ↑ Improved from last inspection
- Declined from last inspection

1. How good are the students' attainment, progress and learning skills?

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	Acceptable	Acceptable			

- In English, children made good progress in listening, speaking and the development of vocabulary. Almost all children could write simple words, sentences, labels, and their names. External assessment results reported that the children had attained at or above the grade level expectations.
- In mathematics, children could count to eighty, place numbers in order and explain the concepts of more and less. Almost all children were beginning to add and subtract two single-digit numbers. However, there were too few opportunities for children to measure, problem solve or experiment.
- In science, children were developing an understanding of the world around them. They were learning about pushing, pulling and growing seeds. However, they had limited opportunities to observe, investigate, experiment and find things out for themselves.

Elementary					
Subjects	Progress				
Islamic Education	Good	Good			
Arabic as a First Language	Good	Good			
Arabic as an Additional Language	Acceptable	Acceptable			
English	Acceptable	Good 🕇			
Mathematics	Acceptable	Good 🕇			
Science	Acceptable	Good 🕇			

- In Islamic Education, the majority of students knew the Pillars of Islam and could recall short, prescribed verses of the Holy Qur'an. They made good progress in acquiring knowledge of the Hadeeth.
- In Arabic as a first language, the majority of students had developed strong listening skills and could answer questions appropriately. Their progress in writing was satisfactory.
- Students learning Arabic as an additional language could memorize, present a short speech, and could apply their learning to real life. Their reading skills were developing as expected, but their writing skills were underdeveloped.
- In English, students listened well and communicated with their peers, although their levels of vocabulary and confidence with the language varied. By Grade 5, students' phonic, reading and writing skills were established well. Students could apply writing conventions with accuracy and construct complex sentences and paragraphs.

- In mathematics, students had good knowledge of numbers and multiplication when doing mental mathematics. They were developing mathematical vocabulary as expected in the US curriculum standards.
- Most students had developed good knowledge of scientific concepts; however, their investigative and experimental skills were less well developed.

Middle					
Subjects Attainment Progress					
Islamic Education	Good	Good			
Arabic as a First Language	Good	Acceptable			
Arabic as an Additional Language	Acceptable	Acceptable			
English	Acceptable	Good 🕇			
Mathematics	Acceptable	Good 🕈			
Science	Good 🕈	Good			

- In Islamic Education, students could recall key events in the lives of prophets and made good progress in understanding the rules of recitation. However, the application of this understanding to their lives was less well developed.
- In Arabic as a first language, students had good listening skills, but lacked the confidence to speak in standard Arabic. Their knowledge of grammar was satisfactory, but their progress in extended and creative writing was slow and below the expectations for their grades.
- Most students learning Arabic as an additional language could engage in brief conversations. However, their writing was limited to a few short sentences.
- In English, students' development of listening, reading and writing skills was good. They used reading strategies to aid comprehension and a variety of literary devices when writing. Their fluency in speech and their vocabularies required further development.
- In mathematics, students knew irregular shapes and were developing their skills in the transformation of numbers. However, their understanding of proportionality was not well developed.
- Science students had developed scientific knowledge and understanding through discovery and experimentation in laboratory work.

High					
Subjects Attainment Progress					
Islamic Education	Good	Good			
Arabic as a First Language	Good ♥	Acceptable			
Arabic as an Additional Language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable			
English	Acceptable	Good			
Mathematics	Good 🕇	Good 🕇			
Science	Good 🕈	Good			

• In Islamic Education, students demonstrated good knowledge of the key concepts, but their ability to make reference to the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah was less secure. They had made good progress in building their knowledge of Islamic values.

- Students' good listening skills were a key feature of lessons in Arabic as a first language. However, they often lacked the confidence to use and apply standard Arabic, including knowledge and use of grammar in their speech and writing.
- In English, students in the High School were fluent and expressive in speech and had good listening skills. Most could read a variety of genres and could write for specific purposes, including extended writing tasks.
- Students of mathematics showed initial skills in working with inequalities and were developing the ability to relate their mathematics to real life situations.
- In science, students could apply their scientific knowledge to independent laboratory work, including problem solving and the forming of hypotheses.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good

- Most students had positive attitudes, enjoyed learning and participated well in lessons.
- Students in the middle and high grades collaborated well and could make connections to real life. This was most evident in English, science and Islamic Education lessons.
- In the Kindergarten and elementary grades, students' collaborative work was hindered by intense teacher supervision and the lack of opportunities to learn independently.
- In the middle and high grades, students were developing the ability to use technology to support their learning. Independent learning and critical thinking skills were not fully developed in the Kindergarten and Elementary School.

2. How good is the students' personal and social development?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Personal responsibility	Good	Good	Good	Outstanding

- Students were highly self-disciplined and behaved with courtesy and mutual respect.
- There were positive relationships between students and the teaching staff.
- Older students were effective role models for younger students in the school.
- Most students demonstrated positive attitudes toward healthy living and making healthy choices in food and exercise.
- Attendance in the school was good and most students were punctual arriving to their classes.

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

• Students' understanding and appreciation of the impact of Islamic values on life in contemporary Dubai was strong, particularly in the middle and high grades.

- They demonstrated excellent appreciation of Islamic values and Emirati culture. These values were reinforced through their involvement in school and in class assemblies and making cultural displays.
- Students were strongly aware of the common elements between cultures and of the diversity of cultures in the school community, particularly in the middle and high grades.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Students had a sense of responsibility and a voice in the school in a variety of ways, such as the Student Council. They were involved in community support events such as the Dubai Cares Initiatives, Zayed Humanitarian Work and Breast Cancer Awareness.
- Students showed strong dedication to completing tasks when given sufficient opportunities to do so.
- Students initiated and were involved in environmental projects and activities both inside and outside of the school.

3. How good are teaching and assessment?

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

- Teachers' subject knowledge was strong and most teachers had a sound knowledge of the pedagogy that was appropriate to the needs of their students.
- Lesson planning was generally well developed but not always thorough. In most subjects the lesson plans included different and varied activities to challenge students appropriately. However, the planning and provision for students with special educational needs was less developed.
- Teachers' and students' interactions showed good use of dialogue and questioning strategies. This was more evident in the upper grades. In the lower grades, good relationships had been developed to motivate students.
- Teaching strategies met the needs of the majority of students, however those of the special needs students were not sufficiently met
- Students made progress in lessons when they used critical thinking and independent learning skills. However, these skills were not well developed throughout all grades and subjects.
- The quality of teaching of Arabic as an additional language was inconsistent. Teachers had strong subject knowledge, but their knowledge of how students acquire language skills was not always evident. Teacher and student interactions did not always lead to the development of language and critical thinking skills. Lessons in the lower elementary grades were more interactive than in the upper grades. Lesson activities often lacked purpose and rarely led to improvement in Arabic speaking and writing skills.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Assessment	Good 🕈	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Internal assessments of learning were aligned with the curriculum standards of the state of California.
- External Iowa Tests of Basic Skills were conducted from the Kindergarten up to Grade 9. Analysis of the results had been used to modify the curriculum and teaching of English, mathematics and science with some success.
- Formative and summative assessments of learning were used to track students' progress in learning most key subjects, but not in learning Arabic as an additional language.
- Most teachers used assessment to provide focused support for students such as in the Kindergarten, where the teachers' knowledge of children's developmental milestones provided a holistic understanding of each child's progress.
- The assessment rubrics used did not accurately match the curriculum standards. Consequently, they did not effectively measure students' learning or facilitate appropriate support and challenge for them.

4. How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good

- The curriculum for all subjects was aligned with the standards of California, including the Common Core State Standards for English language Arts and mathematics and the 'Next Generation Science Standards.'
- Standards in the Kindergarten curriculum allowed for continuity and progression in learning, but lacked enrichment opportunities and cross-curricular learning experiences for the children.
- Cross-curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular links were a developing feature of the school. For example, there were group swims, an environmental conservation club and after-school activities.
- Effective review and planning ensured that students' learning within and between each phase was continuous.
- Curriculum content and quality in Arabic as a first language was compliant with the Ministry of Education's requirements. The scope and sequence were annually planned, but were not suitably tailored to effectively develop all students' language skills.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- The design of the curriculum provided for the different learning styles of most students. However, limited choices in the curriculum meant that many lessons did not meet learners' needs. The curriculum had not been effectively modified for some students.
- Curricular options were too few to fulfill students' talents, interests, and aspirations.
- A few extra-curricular activities and community links enhanced students' academic and personal development.
- Lessons in Arabic as a first language were provided to children in the Kindergarten. Classes for Arabs and non-Arabs were combined and the school taught basic vocabulary to them.

5. How well does the school protect and support students?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Health and safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The school site and buildings were well maintained. Thorough systems and processes ensured the health and safety of students, including evacuation procedures, site safety and transportation.
- Child protection policies and procedures were firmly in place and known to all. All staff members were aware of their responsibilities under the policy, as well as their responsibilities to care for, protect, and support students.
- Cyber safety and practical steps to prevent the abuse of students were high priorities for the school.
- Medical staff members were vigilant in their care of students. Routine checks were carried out and detailed records were kept.
- Encouragement for healthy eating was embedded within the curriculum and lessons. They regularly included healthy eating, exercise and having a healthy lifestyle.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Quality of support	Good 🕈	Good 🕈	Good 🕈	Good 🕈

- Staff student relationships were generally positive.
- Successful systems were in place for promoting students' attendance and punctuality.
- The school had developed measures to identify students with special educational needs.
- Almost all students reported that they felt comfortable asking for help and guidance. However, individual guidance and support for all students needed further development.
- Older students received guidance and support for choosing the next stages in their education.

How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?

	Overall
The overall effectiveness of provision for students with special educational needs	Acceptable

- The leadership and management of the special needs program had been enhanced with the addition of a new coordinator, two teachers and four learning support assistants. Training had been provided for teachers on inclusion, best practices and differentiated instruction in their classrooms.
- The identification of students included formal screening on their cognitive development. External agencies were consulted for further support in precisely identifying students' learning needs.
- Specific strategies, modifications and support for students with special educational needs were not evident. In most classes, students with special educational needs were given the same work as other students. Providing appropriately for different learning needs was inconsistently done by the regular classroom teachers.
- Communication between parents and the school was effective and contributed to the progress of special needs students. Parents took active roles in establishing their children's individual educational plans.
- The school had not fully identified all students with special educational needs or ensured that they made progress in relation to the goals written in their education plans.

6. How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	Overall
The effectiveness of leadership	Good

- The Principal and senior leaders had communicated a clear vision for the future development of the school.
- Senior leaders were well supported by the subject leaders, and the leader of the Kindergarten. Most, but not all leaders provided direction in their areas of responsibility.
- Relationships and communication between all leaders and staff members were professional and showed a strong team approach to school improvement.
- Leaders had successfully managed changes to the school's structure and to staff accountability measures.
- Through continued professional development and support from the governing body, leaders had improved their capacity to make further improvements in the school.

	Overall
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good 🕈

- There had been development in the school's self-evaluation processes, with evidence gathered from a range of stakeholders, including parents, teachers and members of the Board of Governors.
- School improvement planning was effective, with accurate judgments and evaluations providing clear areas for action, such as improved student learning across the school.
- Regular lesson observations by subject and senior leaders had enabled the identification of the training needs of teachers.
- The school had made significant progress in addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection report. Further development was needed to improve students' learning and the use of assessment data to more effectively plan and teach.

	Overall
Parents and the community	Outstanding

- There were highly productive partnerships between the school and the parents to support and foster students' learning and personal development.
- Almost all parents reported high levels of satisfaction with the work of the school. They considered
 teachers and school leaders to be accessible and helpful. They were satisfied with the school's
 communication of their children's progress and the support for them, including how to help their
 children at home.
- Parents supported the school in a range of activities, such as improving students' reading skills and new learning initiatives which supported their children.
- Community links were extensive. They included visits to places of interest and visitors to the school, both of which enhanced students' social, cultural and learning experiences.

	Overall
Governance	Good

- The Principal and the school's owner led a small but committed board of governors, supported by parents and members of the community, including representatives from universities. There were two parents' advisory groups, one for activities and one for academic matters, to provide input to the governing board.
- Governors held the school to account for improvements and for progress in meeting the recommendations from the previous inspection report.
- The governors supported the school and took responsibility for strategic planning.

	Overall
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding

- The daily running of the school was highly efficient, with effective routines that allowed the staff and students to concentrate on their work.
- The Principal applied systematic procedures for the appointment and induction of new staff members. They were well deployed according to their specialties and experience. The support staff assisted learning in the Kindergarten and the lower elementary classes.
- The premises offered an outstanding range of accommodation, including specialist areas, classrooms, outside play and physical education areas to support the school's curriculum and thus students' learning. Access to the school for those with physical disabilities was not fully appropriate, due to a lack of lift access and ramps. However, there had been some modification of the environment to support students with special educational needs.
- Learning resources were of good quality and included a well-stocked library.

What are the views of the Principal, parents, teachers and students?

Before the inspection, the views of the Principal, parents, teachers and senior secondary students were surveyed. Key messages from each group were considered during the inspection and these helped to form inspection judgments. A summary of the survey statistics and comments from those who responded to the survey follows:

Responses to the surveys					
Responses received		Number		Percentage	
	Parents*	This year	70	14%	
		Last year	141	23%	
A	Teachers	54		93%	
	Students	There were no senior students in the school			

- Most teachers responded to their survey, but only a minority of parents did so.
- Most parents who responded were satisfied with the quality of education provided by the school.
- Parents agreed that their children made good progress in learning most of the key subjects, but many did not know if their children had made good progress in Arabic lessons.
- Parents were happy with communication between school and home, and indicated that their children enjoyed school life, were safe, respected and valued.
- Parents considered that the school was well led and that leaders were responsive to their concerns.
- Almost all teachers were equally positive about the work of the school.

^{*}The percentage of responses from parents is based on the number of families.

What happens next?

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

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

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

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

How to contact us

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