



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational  
needs and disabilities



Innovation

## Inspection Report 2015-2016

Regent International Private School

Curriculum: UK

Overall rating: Good

Read more about the school ➔



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“Don't look  
behind to  
see who is  
following you,  
but look forward  
to be ahead”



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

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## School information

### General information



Location	Emirates Hills
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	1993
Website	www.risdubai.com
Telephone	04-3608830
Address	PO Box 24857 Dubai- Greens-Emirates Hills
Principal	Janet Okeeffe
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	23 to 26 November 2015

### Students



Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	3-18
Grades or year groups	Kindergarten 1 to Year 13
Number of students on roll	1,499
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	9
Number of students with SEND	0
Largest nationality group of students	UK

### Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	118
Largest nationality group of teachers	British
Number of teaching assistants	38
Teacher-student ratio	1:26
Number of guidance counsellors	0
Teacher turnover	32%

### Curriculum



Educational permit / Licence	UK
Main curriculum	UK
External tests and examinations	GCSEs, IGCSEs, AS and A-levels
Accreditation	Not applicable
National Agenda benchmark tests	None

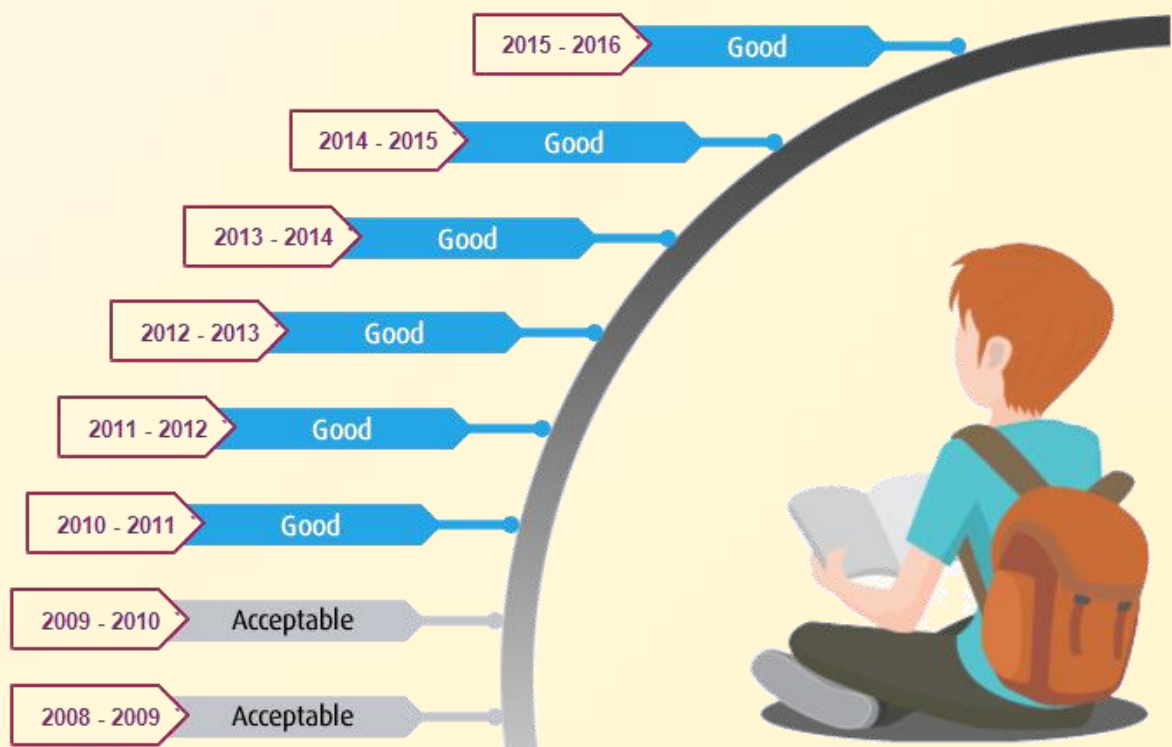


## Summary for parents and the community

**Regent International Private School** was inspected by DSIB from 23 to 26 of November 2015. 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 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, Regent International School provided a **good** quality of education for its students.

- Students' attainment and progress were mostly good, although better in the Foundation Stage (FS) and primary phase. Attainment and progress were weakest in Islamic education and Arabic. Most students were positively engaged in, and enjoyed, their learning. They had good opportunities to undertake research, and to develop their critical learning skills.
- Students' personal and social development were a strength of the school. Relationships were mutually respectful and almost all students displayed a secure awareness of healthy lifestyles. Attendance and punctuality were very good. Students demonstrated an understanding of Islamic values and understood the importance of living in a culturally diverse community. Environmental awareness and conservation efforts were promoted throughout the school.
- Teachers had good subject knowledge and the majority of teachers, particularly in the FS, had a secure knowledge of how children learned. Planning was consistently well structured and included different strategies to meet the needs of different groups of students. Assessment information was used effectively to meet the needs of most students.
- The school followed the English National Curriculum which also complied with the Ministry of Education (MoE) regulations relating to Arabic and Islamic education. The curriculum was skillfully modified to meet the different needs of almost all groups of students, although options in the secondary and sixth form did not always meet student requirements. A variety of extra-curricular activities were available and participation rates were high.
- The school provided a generally safe environment for its students. However it had been inconsistent in applying risk assessment systems and safety standards. Care of students with SEND was an area for further improvement especially the identification of students' needs and the provision of targeted support within and outside of the classroom.
- Senior leaders worked hard to improve performance, but they did not always prioritise key areas so that too much time was expended on new initiatives without consolidating what was already in place. The strengths and weaknesses of the school were well known, but school self-evaluation practices lacked coherence. Parents expressed concerns about communication. The governing board were too involved in the day-to-day running of the school rather than strategy. Staffing, facilities and resources were good.





### What did the school do well?

- The provision in the FS was a significant strength, and all children achieved very well given their starting points. Exceptional learning was supported by outstanding teaching, assessment and a high quality curriculum. The leadership of the FS was outstanding.
- Students demonstrated exemplary attitudes, behaviour and relationships, and awareness of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. There were high levels of attendance.
- The school had outstanding provision for health, safety and security for all students as well as the arrangements for child protection.
- Students' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science in the primary phase was outstanding.



### What does the school need to do next?

- Raise attainment and progress in Islamic education and Arabic language by:
  - improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment especially in the secondary phase
  - supporting subject leaders to overcome weaknesses and inadequacies in their departments.
- Address the relative weaknesses in provision of the secondary and post-16 phases by sharing the exceptional practices in teaching, learning and assessment which exists in the school.
- Ensure all students in the secondary and post-16 receive effective support for their future education and careers.
- Make sure the monitoring of the school's risk assessments is rigorous and effective at all times.
- Senior leaders and governors take focused action to improve the quality and impact of provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) by:
  - ensuring that accurate identification consistently informs targeted provision to ensure that all students with SEND make good or better progress in their day to day learning
  - ensuring that parents are fully involved in the development of the educational programs, and the review of the individual educational plans (IEPs) set for their children.
- Improve governance by focusing on their responsibility for the strategic direction of the school, while allowing the leadership to manage the day to day running, needs and operations.



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

- Students with SEND made acceptable progress in most lessons. Students with SEND were not often involved in setting their targets and learning and this held back their achievement. Progress made by students with SEND in the FS was outstanding.
- Parents received formal reports and information about their children's education. The school provided advice for parents on how to support their children at home.
- The school kept parents informed about their children's progress and encouraged communication. However, parents interviewed said that they would like the opportunity for more regular communication and information about how well their children were progressing and developing in their learning and in relation to their individual needs.
- The SEND team had organized some information to help parents understand their children's learning needs and therefore better support their children's education.

### 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:

- Progress towards meeting the National Agenda targets was as expected.
- The director of the school discussed the National Agenda with parents to familiarise them with the information and with the teaching staff at the beginning of the school year. Aspects of the National Agenda were included in the school action plan.
- The curriculum included opportunities for students to explore, use reasoning and higher order thinking and to evaluate, particularly in mathematics and science. Written and oral expression were key aspects of the school curriculum. Together, these approaches aligned well with the identified areas of need in TIMSS and PISA.
- There were very effective lessons where primary phase students used inquiry in projects and interdisciplinary activities. These examples were suggested as models which could be used throughout the school.
- A wide and varied range of resources were used at the school. Practical, day-to-day materials for investigation, as well as electronic tools and resources were common features across the school. These tools were used effectively in student initiated activities, as well as more traditional approaches to research.



## 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 acknowledged the importance of promoting a culture of innovation around the school. Leaders across phases believed in empowering teachers to take risks and initiative, to adopt and create better practice. The school had appointed innovation champions and was in the process of creating a plan for embedding the culture of innovation throughout the school. The school had adopted mechanisms to share good practice and build the capacity of teachers internally through piloting new ideas and sharing the results. Due to limited spaces available, the school had been innovative in maximizing the use of space for learning. The learning environment the school had created in the early years was stimulating and encouraged children to experiment and pursue their own interests. Modifying the curriculum to develop innovation skills was not consistent across the school. Some students benefited from extra-curricular activities promoting critical thinking and problem solving.

Overall school performance

Good

1. Students' achievement

		Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Islamic education</b> 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not applicable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good	Weak ↓	Not applicable
<b>Arabic as a first language</b> 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not applicable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good ↑	Acceptable	Not applicable
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b> 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not applicable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good ↑	Acceptable	Not applicable
<b>English</b> 	Attainment	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Good	Good
	Progress	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Good	Good
<b>Mathematics</b> 	Attainment	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↓	Good
	Progress	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Good
<b>Science</b> 	Attainment	Outstanding ↑	Very good ↑	Good	Acceptable
	Progress	Outstanding	Very good ↓	Good	Acceptable ↓

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Learning skills</b>	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Good	Good

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

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

## 3. Teaching and assessment

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

## 4. Curriculum

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

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

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

## 6. Leadership and management

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



## Main inspection report

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

### Judgements are made on a six-point scale



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

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

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

## 1. Students' achievement

### Foundation Stage

Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Not applicable	Not applicable
Arabic as a first language	Not applicable	Not applicable
Arabic as an additional language	Not applicable	Not applicable
English	Very good ↑	Outstanding
Mathematics	Very good ↑	Outstanding
Science	Outstanding ↑	Outstanding

- From their varying starting points the large majority of children attained above expected levels in all aspects of English and made outstanding progress. Exciting opportunities to listen and speak ensured most children responded well to instructions and listened carefully. They rapidly gained confidence sharing thoughts and ideas with both their friends and teachers. Vocabulary expanded swiftly, aided by ideas such as 'luscious language' focusing on themes related adjectives and subject related terminology. Systematic development of children's phonic and word recognition skills resulted in secure early reading skills and a love of books. Their letter formation and understanding of sentence construction meant that most FS 2 children could write sentences with a clear purpose, although some still needed support with this.
- Most children worked above expected levels in mathematics. Children in FS 1 had begun to count with some accuracy, and in FS 2, all children could count accurately and most were able to confidently order numbers to 20 and beyond. They were also gaining confidence in adding and subtracting orally and a majority could write number sentences for their calculations. In FS 2, children could describe the properties of two-dimensional shapes, carry out simple surveys, create and read basic graphs and recognise when vessels were half full. Children made outstanding progress in all aspects of mathematics because learning was exciting, relevant to their daily lives and skillfully woven into all aspects of the curriculum.
- Most children had attained levels well above those expected for their age as they used the inspirational learning environment to enquire and discover things for themselves. Children made outstanding progress in learning scientific skills and developing concepts. Children put on their science coats and goggles and carried out a rich variety of experiments. They hypothesised, predicted, observed, recorded, compared and judged their findings and reached conclusions in real world situations. They learned about reversible changes in materials, found out which materials were waterproof and what plants needed to grow. Children in FS 2 continued to develop their science vocabulary, knowledge, skills and understanding. Almost all were able to describe their findings.



Primary

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

- In Islamic education, most students demonstrated an appropriate level of knowledge for their age. For example, the importance of obeying parents in Islam and the Six Pillars of Faith with a special focus on Allah as the only God. The majority of students made better than expected progress in relation to lesson objectives, particularly when understanding the importance of kindness and honesty in Islam and how to apply these to their everyday lives. They showed less confidence in linking these concepts to the Holy Qur'an and Hadeeth. Their recitation skills and memorizing verses from the Holy Qur'an and understanding them were developing.
- In Arabic as a first language, in lessons and in students' workbooks, most students' listening and speaking skills were in line with curriculum expectations. Students used standard Arabic when speaking and reading, and their writing skills across the phase were developing well. The school did not track students' attainment or progress overtime. The majority of students made progress in the acquisition and use of new vocabulary. The progress of boys and girls was similar.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students' listening and speaking skills were acceptable. Students could understand and repeat familiar words and read them. Their writing skills were much better; for example, students could write to a paragraph describing a picture. The majority of students made good progress against curriculum expectations. However in the absence of external tests, progress between attainment points were not benchmarked more widely beyond the school. Different groups made similar progress in lessons and over time.
- In English, by the end of this phase a large majority of students attained above national and international standards in reading and writing. Students demonstrated very well-developed skills in listening and speaking. They wrote accurately, at a suitable length and for a range of purposes. Students' attainment had steadily improved over the last three years. The large majority of students made better than expected progress in reading and in writing by the end of the phase. In lessons and over time, most groups, including students with English as an additional language, made very good progress across all four aspects of reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- In mathematics, most students' work in number, quantity, space and the use of data was above curriculum expectations. Students carried out practical activities related to mathematical concepts. They were able to use their skills in measurement, shape, problem solving and comparing to find solutions, with a majority of students easily able to explain their thinking to others. External test results were above the benchmarks for a large majority of students, and combined with internal tests demonstrated consistent progress over time. All groups of students progressed well, including students who needed extra support and those who thrived on challenge.

- Students' attainment and progress in science were very good with the large majority of students achieving levels that were above curriculum standards. These results had been achieved as a result of discrete science teaching being introduced into the timetable. This had allowed for innovative and inquiry based learning which had stimulated student interest and motivation. In an outstanding Year 3 lesson, students could experiment on the effect of shadow lengthening based on the angle of incident light on an object. They could use scientific evidence to support their findings and observations. They could predict the outcome on the length of the shadow of the Burj Khalifa as the sun rose at dawn and set during the evening.

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

- In Islamic education, most students' work as measured against the school curriculum levels and internal exams, was broadly in line with age-related expectations. Most students knew how humans are born on 'Fitrah', they understood the differences between the Messengers and the Prophets of Allah. Lessons, and workbooks showed, less than three-quarter of students, and particularly the majority of non-Arab Muslims, made expected progress.
- In Arabic as a first language, the school used MoE curriculum standards and internal tests to measure students' attainment. The level of challenge in these tests was appropriate. Most students lacked confidence when speaking in standard Arabic language. Their reading skills were still with errors and their writing skills were developing. A sample of students' work showed that most students made expected progress, including students with SEND. School data showed that there was no difference between the progress of boys and girls.
- In Arabic as an additional language, attainment and progress were broadly acceptable for the different groups of students when judged against internal curriculum standards. Most students' listening skills were developing. Most students hesitated when reading familiar text, their writing skills were limited to short familiar sentences, which were mainly copying from books with limited opportunities for creative writing. Most students were able to apply their knowledge of new vocabulary to familiar context such as reading restaurant menu, types of food and drinks.
- Overall, the majority of students in English attained above expected levels in external examinations. Students' attainment compared well against national standards. In lessons, students were developing their skills across all four modes of English. Most were confident and articulate speakers, wrote accurately and at suitable length for a range of purposes and demonstrated good levels of comprehension of a range of texts including poetry and prose. Over time and in lessons, most students, including those with SEND, made good progress from previous levels of attainment, as measured by both school and external assessment.

- The majority of students improved their understanding of algebraic concepts, geometry, and data display, while a few showed growing prowess in higher level mathematics. Almost all students performed well in their IGCSE examinations last year. In Year 9 external tests, the large majority performed above international standards. Students' critical thinking, interpretation and analysis were areas of promise as the majority of students worked to develop these skills. Attainment standards improved in each of the past few years. In internal and external assessments progress was very good. During lessons and in their work over time, students showed general confidence in their knowledge, skills and understanding, while needing to develop their reasoning skills. Progress for a few students was limited by insufficient challenge.
- In science, students' attainment and progress were good with the majority of students achieving levels that were above curriculum standards. Good lesson planning together with a variety of learning opportunities, including experimental investigatory work and online research projects had supported the attainment and progress of the secondary level. Students could understand atomic structure and could predict the isotopes that would result from the removal of electrons from the outer shell of an atom. They could predict the position of an element in the Periodic Table from its atomic number

### Post-16

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, the very small numbers of students in post-16 generally attained well in external examinations. They made good progress from prior levels of attainment. In lessons and in recent coursework students were developing their skills in literary criticism through their study and discussion of contemporary prose fiction. They demonstrated engaged understanding of theme and character. Numbers were too few to establish trends over time, with only a few students taking GCE examinations last year.
- The school had started core mathematics for sixth formers, to ensure all students study mathematics beyond 16, which was a positive step ensuring students prepare for transitions after the sixth form.
- In science, students had acceptable attainment and made acceptable progress. Students' assignments were competently monitored and appraised. A strength of the department was the on-going assessment strategy of students' work in which a 'marking feedback sheet' was used on which students were expected to respond to the teacher's expectations. The department delivered lessons with imaginative practical assignments. However, critical thinking had yet to be formally structured into the department's courses.

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

- Across the school, students had positive attitudes to learning. Children in the FS were highly engaged and curious learners. In primary, students increasingly took responsibility for their own and others' learning, for example as 'lead learners' in their group. In all phases, students generally knew their strengths as learners, what they needed to improve, and how to do so.
- Older children in the FS engaged in animated discussions often using sophisticated vocabulary. Primary students, too, collaborated very responsibly, for example, in 'chunking up' tasks and sharing together what they had learned individually. In the secondary and post-16 phases, students' earnest and purposeful discussion supported their learning well. They sometimes depended on teacher direction.
- Students across the school regularly made connection between their learning in class and daily life. For children in the FS, a piece of mouldy bread became a subject for scientific enquiry. Older primary students learned, for example, about the film industry's creative use of language. Secondary and post-16 students also understood how their learning, for example in mathematics, had applications in daily life.
- Children's innovative, creative and critical thinking were highly developed at FS. In primary, older students especially, for example in Year 5, viewed and analysed film clips, and used the internet to research information or new vocabulary. In the secondary phase, information technology students devised a commercial 'App'. The very few students in post-16 applied their critical thinking, for example, to demanding textual analysis.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- In classes and around the school students were very well-behaved. They were almost always positive about their learning in lessons, even where these might have lacked stimulus.
- Students were unfailingly polite to adults, respectful of each other, and very helpful and welcoming to visitors. Older students set a very good example to children and younger learners.
- Older students took very seriously their roles as mentors and role models for their younger peers. They supported their charges very successfully in a range of ways, for example in reviewing personal targets together.
- Students across the school steadily grew in their understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. For example, older secondary students took part in yoga in physical education. They helped plan events with a health focus. They took full advantage of extra-curricular activities, and were keen to do more.
- Students' attendance was very good. Almost all students arrived on time for school and for their lessons; they were invariably ready to learn.



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

- Students across all phases demonstrated a clear understanding of the impact of Islamic values, morals and good habits on the culture of the UAE. They celebrated Islamic festivals and traditions and displayed behaviour that reflected tolerance and respect for all people.
- Students participated in assemblies, festivals and charity events that showed respect for the traditions and values of the UAE. Visits to places such as the Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi, Dubai souks and fishing trips helped students develop their understanding in practical settings. Students could identify changes through cultural events at the school, such as the Black Gold theme day.
- Students had a secure awareness and appreciation of their own cultures and celebrated and embraced them through events such as the 'International Day' festival. Their knowledge of the different cultures in the school was evident through discussion and the displays around the school and in classrooms. Students knew and respected the traditional dress codes and customs.

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

- Students were responsible and contributed to the life of the school and wider community. Through the different 'student voice' groups, students focused on areas such as recycling and charitable causes. They undertook responsibilities through planned arrangements offered by the 'house system'. They also supported good causes such as their participation in the 'Box Appeal' for workers in Dubai and for the Nepalese community appeal fund.
- Students showed a positive work ethic and high aspirations. For example, their aims for jobs in the future included astronauts, bankers and bio-medics. The 'empowerment' team was working with different communities in Dubai, England and Japan to support positive changes in the world. Through well-planned projects, such as 'the social enterprise competition' in Year 10, students completed presentations to a panel of judges on their concepts and values.
- Students showed a good understanding of the 'environmental sustainability' and 'greening the desert' concepts. The Key Stage 1 'student voice' team met regularly to improve the school environment. Primary students held a recycling challenge to collect aluminum cans. Conservation in the form of recycling was promoted in and out of the classrooms so students could contribute to fulfil the criteria to becoming a 'green school'.



### 3. Teaching and assessment

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

- Teachers in the FS planned stimulating lessons that encouraged students to become curious and questioning learners. Such imaginative teaching continued consistently into lower primary classes. For example, students designed exciting and amusing comic books for younger children. In the secondary and post-16 phases, most teachers' specialist subject knowledge informed lessons focused on preparing students well for external examinations.
- Teachers' imaginative lesson planning was a consistent feature in the FS and increasingly in the primary phase. Teachers' planning invariably stated what students would do in the lesson, but not always what skills they would learn as a result. Clear measures of success were not consistently identified, so it was difficult for teachers to assess students' progress. Teaching supported students' knowledge and understanding of content well.
- In the FS teachers' skillful questioning and dialogue consistently promoted students' sense of wonder and excitement as they learned. In the other phases, questioning in the best lessons challenged and extended students' thinking, based on teachers' high expectations of what all of their students could achieve.
- Teachers in the FS had high expectations of all groups of students. Planning was based on regular and accurate assessment. Teaching strategies to meet students' needs were stronger overall in the primary phase than in the secondary phase. Teachers generally provided different tasks and activities for different groups, but across the key subjects did not have consistently high enough expectations of what all groups of students could achieve.
- Students' critical thinking and problem-solving was taught most consistently in the FS and the lower primary phase. In upper primary phase, teachers were increasingly planning opportunities for imaginative thinking through creative and open-ended tasks. For example, in mathematics students had to devise ways to measure depth of unusual shapes. In the later phases, students needed more opportunities to learn through their own research and enquiry.
- Teaching in Arabic was more effective in the primary than the secondary phase because teachers used their good subject knowledge well to plan lessons with greater challenge. In the secondary phase, teaching did not address the different needs of students and teachers' expectations of what students could achieve was too low in some lessons.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Assessment	Outstanding	Good	Good	Good

- Teachers across the school generally used assessment information well to plan lessons that met the learning needs of groups and individuals through, for example, tasks at different levels of difficulty.
- The school had effective methods, linked to English National Curriculum standards, to gather data on students' progress. Senior staff took appropriate steps to ensure data was accurate and reliable, for example through moderation of teachers' assessments.

- The school accurately compared students' attainment with national expectations of the English Curriculum, and external examination bodies. Students also sat other assessments that provided particular information about their skills in English, mathematics and science. The school had begun to address specific skills for example, supporting students to improve their English language in order to tackle 'word problems' in, for example, mathematics.
- In the FS teachers monitored students' progress day-by-day and built accurate profiles of what students knew and could do. In primary, progress of groups was monitored, such as students of English as an additional language (EAL), and individuals. Targets were set for each student and progress towards these was regularly tracked and reviewed. In secondary and post-16, teachers monitored students' progress towards targets associated with external examinations.
- Teachers across the school knew their students' strengths and areas needing improvement. Written feedback increasingly helped students identify weaknesses and provided advice on how to improve. Students themselves, across all phases, were assessing their own learning. There was scope to develop students' understanding of the value of this process, particularly in the secondary and post-16 phases. More focus on identifying 'what success looks like' would have assisted this.

#### 4. Curriculum

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

- The curriculum had a clear rationale based on the shared values and philosophies of the school. Emirati and national priorities were realized, so that continuity of learning was seamless and progressive. The curriculum was delivered thematically in the primary and secondary phases with an emphasis on experiential and child-initiated learning. This structure promoted innovation and creativity and enhanced the students' engagement in the learning process.
- Transition between primary and secondary phases had been enhanced through a common approach which ensured progression and continuity of learning. Students in the secondary and post-16 phases undertook work experience to prepare them for the world of work. This enabled them to crystallise their career aspirations, but the lack of a structured counselling process constrained their thinking about future careers.
- The school stated that any 'A' level subject which a student wished to opt for would be run even if there was only one student involved. This encompassed a very wide range of potential choices of subjects and subject-combinations which was indicative of the flexibility of the curriculum accessible for senior students. At post-16, the option choices had been widened to a range of future studies in vocational courses at further and higher educational levels. A wider philosophy for developing students' higher order and critical thinking skills as an investment for their future was not adequately apparent in the secondary school.
- Cross-curricular links were effectively incorporated into themes in the primary phase. In the secondary phase, the development of students' skills and knowledge was extended through establishing links between subjects so that knowledge was viewed as a continuum rather than being divided into discrete subjects. Through theme weeks and theme days, opportunities were given to students to deepen their knowledge and skills within real-life contexts.

- Curriculum evaluation was embedded and rigorous in the primary phase. The curriculum had been expanded to take in new extended qualifications in the secondary level in, for example, the 'Extended Project Qualification' in which the school was developing modules on 'Human Values', 'Enterprise' and 'Community Enrichment'.

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

- Curriculum review periods were specific to groups of students, including SEND, EAL, Emirati and the most able students. 'Student voice' was active in influencing adaptations. Recently employed support practitioners in primary had enabled students to meet their specific needs and so raise attainment. Within the secondary school an intervention schedule provided extra support. A mentoring scheme helped senior students gain leadership skills by working with younger students.
- The innovative theme-based curriculum within the primary school enabled student-led enhancement and enrichment activities, often with parental support. Many of these developed students' enterprise and creativity skills, for example, the baking of bread to sell during lunchtimes.
- Within the senior school, leadership skills were enhanced through such activities as the International Award Scheme and charity and community events. Despite these and the wider A-level choices, recruitment onto the A-level courses remained low. A diverse and dynamic range of extra-curricular activities were arranged after school on a weekly timetabled basis.
- The curriculum at all levels enhanced students' knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the heritage of the UAE. Learning experiences were organised on ancient Islamic civilisations. The English department organised cross-curricular links with the Arabic and Islamic departments. Visits were arranged to mosques, and students competed in Hadeeth and Holy Qur'an competitions.
- The 139 children in FS 1 were taught Arabic for one 30-minutes session a week, whilst the 163 children in FS 2 were taught Arabic for two 30 minutes sessions a week.

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

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

- Staff and parents were well informed about the policies and procedures on the safeguarding and child protection of the students, including internet safety. The monitoring of the school's risk assessments was not sufficiently rigorous or effective across the premises at all times.
- School premises and buildings were hygienic and clean. Safety checks of staff members were conducted appropriately and staff and teachers were deployed effectively around the school. The front gates to the school were supervised to ensure students were safely dropped-off and picked-up.

- School contracts for maintaining the school building and equipment were up-to-date, especially the clinic where students' medical records and the records of particular incidents were detailed and properly stored.
- The school premises and buildings had easy access for students with mobility difficulties. Other specialist rooms, such as dance, music, IT, science laboratories and libraries, ensured that students were surrounded by a rich learning environment.
- Students understood the importance of living healthy, by eating healthy food and practicing exercises. The school had provided facilities and premises for them to engage in a healthy lifestyle.

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

- Staff and student relationships were underpinned by the schools mission statement and vision and ensured that teachers were well informed and aware of student's emotional and social needs. Teachers knew the students well. Positive behaviour, based on respect was promoted and managed well in the school, particularly in the FS.
- The school maintained accurate records on attendance and punctuality. Appropriate action was taken on students who were repeatedly late or absent. Parents were contacted promptly where there were concerns of individual students.
- Appropriate baselines for identification of students with SEND and gifted and talented students were established. In the best classes procedures were matched to interventions and support. However, this was not always effectively delivered to affect progress and support was inconsistent across phases. The majority of lessons provided sufficient challenge and different activities to promote the development of gifted and talented students.
- Staff ensured modifications to the curriculum for different groups of students. Some students were withdrawn from lessons for individual support or small group activities in the Individual Needs Department. There was a programme of after school extension activities offered to gifted and talented students.
- Teachers provided an effective system of support. Transition procedures from the FS to Year 1 were well managed and supported the students' progress. The school did not have a counsellor for senior students. Secondary teachers helped students create targets to support their academic progress and wellbeing. Students in need of emotional guidance and support were referred to external agencies. For older students, advice about learning pathways was not effective.



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

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

Acceptable ↓

- The school had appointed a senior leader with responsibility for students with SEND. In partnership with other key members of staff, a clear understanding of key priorities for improvement had recently been established. However, since the previous inspection, not all senior leaders and governors had been successful in ensuring that appropriate policy and procedures were embedded or that the schools' capacity to improve was sufficiently developed.
- Despite recent improvements, previous weaknesses in provision had deteriorated mainly due to lack of capacity. This had resulted in inconsistent quality of provision for students with SEND across the school. The new senior leader for SEND had correctly evaluated the effectiveness of provision. There were areas of strength across the school and particularly in the FS.
- The school was working to improve links with parents. Parents and their children were not sufficiently involved in the planning and development of individual education programmes. Student's progress was reported regularly to the parents through letters, telephone conversations and meetings. Policy and plans had been developed but were inconsistently applied across the school.
- The quality of modification and support provided by the school broadly met the needs of the majority of students identified with SEND. The needs of other students were not accurately identified. In the best lessons, teachers scaffolded learning and amended resources appropriately. Some students also had access to individual support programmes, which promoted their learning and progress.
- Most students identified with SEND made progress in-line with curriculum expectations and was acceptable, whereas in FS progress was outstanding. The outcomes of individual education plans indicated that many students had made progress in specific areas of skill acquisition or personal development. Monitoring and evaluation had been established in some phases, but this was not consistently applied.

## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Good

- The principal and other senior leaders worked well to improve most aspects of provision and knew their school very well. Their vision for the school was consistently articulated and understood by staff, students and parents.
- Senior leaders displayed a high level of competency. Staff were supportive of and accountable to one another. A number of senior and middle leaders were appointed very recently in response to internal and external review and in preparation for the move to a larger site. At subject level, these middle leaders were beginning to make an impact and set a clear direction for their departments.
- Relationships between staff were professional and supportive. Staff were encouraged to work co-operatively with one another. However, communication was not always effective and staff commented on low morale especially on the many initiatives which they were expected to engage with.



- Senior leaders demonstrated a strong capacity for improvement and were resolute in their determination to move the school forward. They had a clear and accurate view of what needed to be done but many staff were still relatively new in post so it was not always easy to identify the impact of their actions over time
- Leaders had worked to improve school performance. They had been receptive and open to external evaluation. Leaders ensured that the school was compliant with statutory and regulatory requirements in terms of the curriculum.

#### School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Acceptable ↓

- Senior staff and governors had a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school which they were addressing with commitment and determination. The judgements, identified in the school's self-evaluation broadly aligned with the inspection outcomes.
- Senior leaders had a good awareness of the need to further improve teaching and learning. Lesson observations were regular and supportive. Performance management was well considered, but improvements were focused on moving from acceptable to good, rather than on greater ambition. Professional development opportunities included coaching, peer lesson observations and training sessions run by school staff as well as course attendance.
- Improvement planning was lacked coherence. In particular, the secondary improvement plan lacked sufficient focus and clarity to bring about required changes. The combination of staff in new leadership positions and a wish to improve had, at times, led to many initiatives being considered and a failure to prioritise the most important aspects.
- There had been some progress in addressing the recommendations of the previous report but students' attainment and progress in Islamic education and Arabic languages were still not good enough and support for students with SEND was underdeveloped. The school had maintained the high quality of provision in the FS. Students demonstrated exemplary attitudes and behaviour as well as healthy lifestyles and high levels of attendance.

#### Partnerships with parents and the community

Acceptable ↓

- School reports were regularly sent each term and gave parents valuable information about their children's progress and attainment levels. Some parents expressed difficulty in understanding the format of the reports, and the terminology, when trying to access their children's understanding, next steps in learning, overall achievement and social or academic needs.
- The school involved parents in some aspects of school life, and provided opportunities for parent voices to be heard, including representation on the governing board. There were activities both within and outside of school where some parents were actively involved in their children's learning. Not all parents felt they were fully a part of the school community, or its development.

- Communication strategies employed by the school were not effective in ensuring that parents were engaged as school partners in a timely and fully-informed manner. There were several different types of approaches, but some parents found these channels difficult or unhelpful. In particular, they felt a need for greater parent-school communication regarding the vision and direction of the school as it expanded.
- The school had some partnerships and links with the community, and included visits outside of school to a range of sites that augmented and enriched the curriculum. The mutually beneficial aspects of such external partnerships was not fully developed.

## Governance




Acceptable ↓

- The governing body consisted of teachers, parents, senior staff and company board members and other professionals. They were highly involved in the school and played a key role in holding the school to account and setting targets for senior leaders. They met regularly and received and analysed data. Although, there was a good understanding of many of the factors that need to be addressed, the school had listened insufficiently to its students and parents and consequently had sometimes been unaware of their concerns.
- Governors had a secure knowledge of the school supported by regular updates from the school leaders. Governors participated with senior leaders in regular learning walks around the school. They were committed to providing the highest possible standards in teaching and learning.
- Governors were involved in setting targets. They supported and encouraged senior staff in their pursuit of improvement but did not do enough to ensure that priorities were identified. There had been some progress in addressing the recommendations of the previous report. Students' attainment and progress in Islamic education and Arabic languages and the support for students with SEND was now acceptable.

Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school had effective and well managed systems that were reflected in the smooth day-to-day running of the school. Classes and activities were scheduled to take advantage of available facilities. Students were able to use the spaces of the school in their practical activities and learning explorations, both inside and out. There were electronic signs which kept the students and staff aware of current happenings.</li> <li>• Almost all staff were well qualified, but pedagogical consistency was not well established. Teachers were a strength of the school, demonstrating innovative practices to engage students and embed learning.</li> <li>• A positive development step this year was the successful training of 38 learning support assistants, who played an important role in driving students' progress. Professional development was ongoing and included a focus on improving assessment as well as a range of topics from using electronic tablets for learning to team building.</li> <li>• The premises were very good. The multi-purpose halls and large areas were well-used. Electronic resources supported learning, with smartboards, tablets and laptop, computers in the IT laboratories and Kindles with headsets for e-books in the library.</li> <li>• The library provided levelled readers, fiction and non-fiction for primary students, although the choices for secondary students were limited, particularly in terms of print media for research or reading for pleasure. A separate library was provided for students in the FS.</li> <li>• A plethora of day-to-day items used in creative and resourceful ways to supplement imagination, discovery and practical applications of learning existed throughout the school. The resources contributed well to students' reasoning, explorations and depth of understanding as widely varied topics were pursued.</li> </ul>	

## 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	
<b>Parents*</b> 	2015-2016	272
	2014-2015	189
<b>Teachers</b> 	43	
<b>Students</b> 	137	

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

- Parents, students and teachers who responded to the survey were generally positive about the school. Most confirmed that they were satisfied with the quality of education at the school.
- Almost all parents felt their children were making good progress in English. A minority of parents felt their children were not making good progress in Arabic as a first language.
- Students did not feel they were making good progress in Arabic and Islamic education.
- Almost all parents agreed that their children enjoyed school and that their children were looked after and safe.
- Students believed that assessments were supportive but homework did not help them to learn.
- Nearly one third of students did not feel that they were well prepared for their future or received adequate careers education advice.
- Almost all parents felt that school reports and staff meeting were helpful.
- A minority of students felt teaching was not good and a large number cited problems around staff turnover and staff changes.
- A minority of parents and teachers did not feel that the school listened to them.
- Nearly half of the students felt that the school did not listen or act upon their opinions.
- Approximately one in five teachers did not feel the school was well led or that leadership was effective.

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