



Dubai Carmel School...



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational  
needs and disabilities



Innovation

## Inspection Report 2015-2016

Dubai Carmel School

Curriculum: UK

Overall rating: Acceptable

Read more about the school



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‘Without  
challenges,  
we won’t feel  
the taste of  
success and  
happiness’



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

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## School information

### General information



|                         |                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Location                | Al Nahda                  |
| Type of school          | Private                   |
| Opening year of school  | 1990                      |
| Website                 | www.dubaicarmelschool.com |
| Telephone               | 04-267-5424               |
| Address                 | Al Nahda PO Box: 89212    |
| Principal               | Alia Abu Younis           |
| Language of instruction | English                   |
| Inspection dates        | 7 to 10 March 2016        |

### Students



|  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| Gender of students                     | Boys and girls             |
| Age range                              | 3-17                       |
| Grades or year groups                  | Kindergarten 1 to Grade 12 |
| Number of students on roll             | 872                        |
| Number of children in pre-kindergarten | 0                          |
| Number of Emirati students             | 106                        |
| Number of students with SEND           | 101                        |
| Largest nationality group of students  | Arab                       |

### Teachers / Support staff



|                                       |          |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Number of teachers                    | 85       |
| Largest nationality group of teachers | Egyptian |
| Number of teaching assistants         | 28       |
| Teacher-student ratio                 | 1:12     |
| Number of guidance counsellors        | 7        |
| Teacher turnover                      | 19%      |

### Curriculum



|                                 |                 |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Educational permit / Licence    | UK              |
| Main curriculum                 | UK              |
| External tests and examinations | Cambridge/IGCSE |
| Accreditation                   | None            |
| National Agenda benchmark tests | None            |

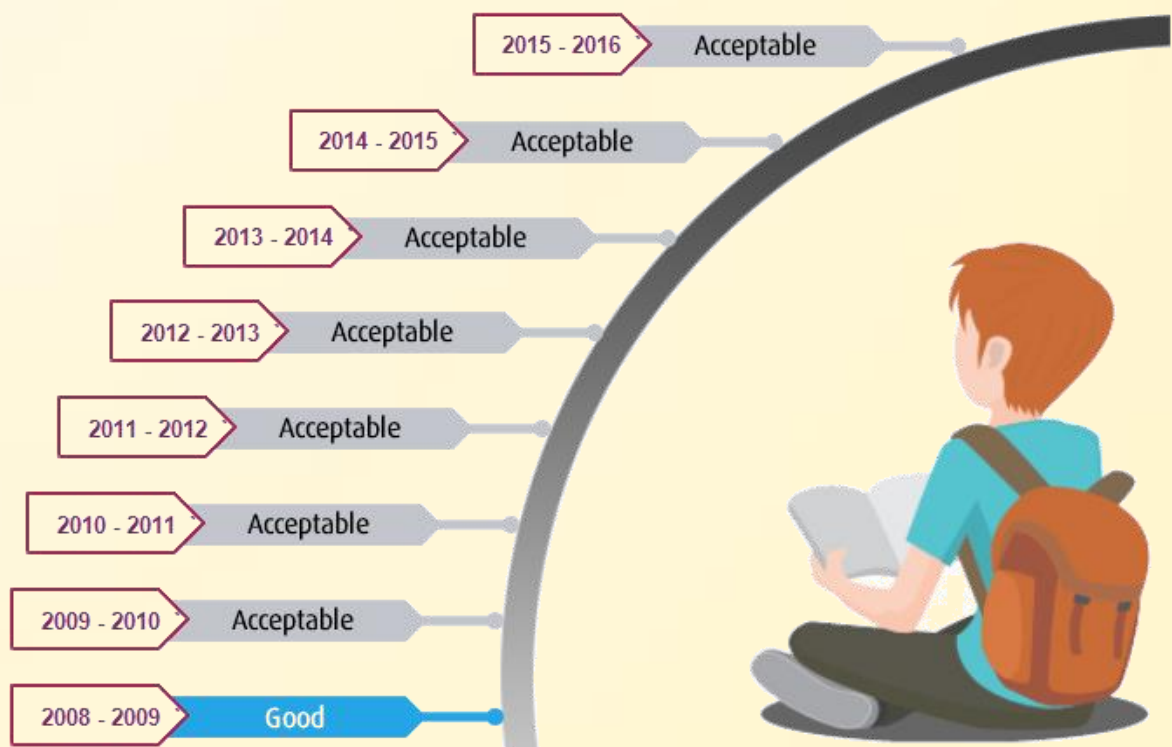


## Summary for parents and the community

**Dubai Carmel School** was inspected by DSIB from 7 to 10 March 2016. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **acceptable**.

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

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







### How well did the school perform overall?

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

- The students' attainment and progress were variable across subjects and phases. They were strongest in the Foundation Stage and in Islamic education and Arabic, especially in the primary phase. Attainment was weakest in English and in science in the post-16 phase. Students were willing learners who followed instructions carefully. They rarely took the initiative to ask questions or find things out for themselves.
- Students' personal development was strong. They behaved well and attended regularly. Students had very good understanding of Islamic values and displayed these in their interactions with others through very good social skills. In the Foundation Stage, the children showed outstanding awareness of the UAE's culture and heritage.
- In the Foundation Stage teachers had developed good awareness of how to teach young children. In the other phases teachers had secure subject knowledge. They did not use their knowledge of students well enough when planning and delivering lessons to make sure that all students did as well as they could.
- The curriculum had been extended to provide greater choice for older students. Whilst the subjects that the school was required to teach were in place the curriculum was not planned in enough depth to fully reach the expectation of the school's licenced curriculum. This was particularly weak in English.
- The good arrangements to protect, care, guide and support students seen in previous inspections had been maintained. Support for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) had been further improved. However, this did not extend to providing adequate challenge and support for those who were gifted and talented.
- Leaders and governors were rightly proud of the school's vision to welcome all students whatever their ability or need. They had not, however, been rigorous enough in ensuring that the school functioned fully as a UK curriculum school. The lack of focus on improving their English skills was holding back students' progress across most subjects.



### What did the school do well?

- The provision for students with SEND was good.
- The attainment and progress by students in Islamic education and Arabic as a first language in the primary phase were good.
- The quality of teaching and the progress made by the children in the Foundation Stage in English, mathematics and science were all good.
- The students' personal development was good overall.
- The protection, care, guidance and support provided for students were good.



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

- Improve the quality of leadership by:
  - increasing all teachers' understanding of the UK curriculum's expectations
  - increasing expectations for the quality of teaching
  - delivering the necessary aspects of the UK curriculum fully.
- Extend the analysis and use of assessment information by:
  - reviewing the curriculum to build on what students already know and understand
  - ensuring that tasks are adjusted to provide consistently high levels of challenge.
  - tracking and measuring student progress.
- Improve students' attainment in English by:
  - raising expectations of what students are expected to achieve within a UK curriculum
  - using standard English as the language of instruction
  - providing opportunities for students to develop their vocabularies and their reading comprehension and writing skills.



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

- The provision for students with SEND had improved and was good. The provision for students with complex needs was good and this generated good progress for them. Lessons in the mainstream school were improved and were moving more closely to match the needs of students with SEND.
- The school reported regularly to parents and they received good quality information on their children's progress. Parents knew the actions which were being taken to support their children.
- Parents were pleased with the school and indicated that it was easy to make contact to discuss any issues.
- Parents felt involved with the school but also felt that involvement was sometimes difficult because they lived a long way from the school.
- Good support and guidance were offered to parents by the senior staff. Teachers and support agencies were ready and willing to provide expert advice on how best to work with their children.

### 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 did not meet the registration requirements of the National Agenda Parameter. No attainment data from the National Agenda Parameter was available to make a judgement on the progress towards meeting the National Agenda targets.
- The school had promoted general awareness of the National Agenda amongst stakeholders. It had not appreciated its use as a vehicle for school improvement and therefore had not promoted awareness of school targets and what was needed to achieve them.
- The school had made minor curriculum adjustments in support of the National Agenda. The focus remained on the three core subjects and the school had not recognised the need for the Agenda to permeate across the curriculum. There was no coherent plan to develop the required English skills across all grades and subjects to enable students to achieve greater success on National Agenda tests.
- Critical thinking was at an early stage of development and the school did not have a strategy for the development of investigative skills and independent learning. Secondary students reported that there were opportunities to do these things in Islamic studies, business studies and environmental management lessons.
- The development of enquiry skills was at an early stage in science lessons and there was no clear plan to develop students' investigative skills. Students were not independent learners; they relied upon instructions from teachers and did not have adequate opportunities to conduct research, using either books or the internet.

## 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.



## Promoting a culture of innovation:






- Governors and senior leaders had begun to articulate a vision for innovation and how it could be embedded in their school culture. The promotion of innovation across the school included; curriculum modification, staff professional development and the employment additional leadership personnel. The school had started to implement consistent curriculum design across all phases to provide innovative opportunities for students in learning, creativity, problem-solving and enterprise.



Overall school performance

Acceptable

1. Students' achievement

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

|                        | Foundation Stage | Primary    | Secondary  | Post-16    |
|------------------------|------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Learning skills</b> | Acceptable       | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

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

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

## 3. Teaching and assessment

|                                 | Foundation Stage | Primary      | Secondary  | Post-16    |
|---------------------------------|------------------|--------------|------------|------------|
| Teaching for effective learning | Good             | Acceptable ↓ | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Assessment                      | Acceptable       | Acceptable   | Acceptable | Acceptable |

## 4. Curriculum

|                                      | Foundation Stage | Primary    | Secondary  | Post-16    |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Curriculum design and implementation | Acceptable       | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Curriculum adaptation                | Acceptable       | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

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

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

## 6. Leadership and management

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



## 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                          | Acceptable     | Good           |
| Mathematics                      | Acceptable     | Good           |
| Science                          | Acceptable     | Good           |

- Most children attained in line with the school's early years curriculum standards. Progress against these standards in lessons and as shown in the school's own tracking data was good by all groups of children. In Foundation Stage 1 children could listen to and follow instructions. They were confident when speaking with their teachers. In Foundation Stage 2 children could write simple sentences. They were developing early reading skills. For example, they could read single words but lacked fluency when reading full sentences.
- In mathematics, evidence in lessons and in the school's data indicated that almost all groups of children made good progress to attain at least in line with the curriculum standards. Children experienced an extensive range of active learning, including action songs, classroom routines and games-based learning. These reinforced their mathematical knowledge and understanding. In Foundation Stage 2 most children could identify and count numbers up to 20 and beyond. They were secure in carrying out simple addition and subtraction sums and understood comparative quantities. Children could recognise and describe the properties of simple geometric shapes. Opportunities for the children to apply mathematical skills in problem solving activities were limited.
- The children's attainment in science was in line with the expectations in the school's curriculum for the early years. The school's data indicated that most children made good progress from below age-expected starting points. In lessons, almost all groups of children made good progress in gaining knowledge. Their investigative skills were less well developed. Children could classify types of transport and were developing their understanding about the concepts of sinking and floating. Their overall levels of attainment been maintained from the previous year representing good progress over time.

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

- The majority of students in Islamic education demonstrated levels of knowledge and understanding that were above the national curriculum expectation. Students were able to use Islamic concepts in their daily lives such as the values they had learnt. There was variation in the students' attainment from year to year and between girls and boys. In lessons, students had good understanding of Islam's pillars, Hadeeth and values. The large majority of students were able to reflect on their knowledge, especially when memorising from the Holy Qur'an. They could understand the Holy Qur'an during recitation. Evidence in lessons and the data provided from the school confirmed that students were making better than the expected rates of progress over time.
- The attainment of the majority of students in Arabic as a first language was above the national curriculum expectation. Their listening, speaking and grammar skills were well developed. Students could understand passages that included familiar and some unfamiliar material. They were able to express their ideas clearly and fluently using a wide range of familiar words. Their reading skills were well developed. However, the opportunities for extended and creative writing were limited. The majority of students made good progress in speaking and in their understanding of grammar.
- In the absence of external measures, most students attained in line with general curriculum expectations when learning Arabic as an additional language. Their listening and speaking skills were stronger than those of reading and writing. Most students in the lower primary years were able to follow daily classroom instructions and answer questions related to familiar topics. In the upper primary years, most were able to form correctly structured short sentences in answer to direct questions from their teachers. They pronounced words correctly and read with proper intonation. The majority of students made above the expected rates of progress over time and in lessons in their listening, speaking and reading skills. Their progress in writing was acceptable.
- In the lower primary years, students' attainment in English was closely aligned to the expected curriculum standards and their progress was good. Students' attainment and progress across the rest of the primary phase varied and was less positive. In Year 6, the majority of students could listen accurately and speak with some confidence using a growing range of vocabulary. Their reading and writing skills were below the curriculum standards in lessons and on external examinations. In lessons and over time most students made the expected rates of progress, but higher achieving students were not challenged sufficiently and this slowed their progress.
- The attainment and progress by boys and girls based upon the Cambridge International curriculum for mathematics was acceptable in lessons. Their attainment over time showed some signs of improvement. Students with SEND made good progress from their starting points because they received well-targeted support. However, the acceptable progress made by the higher ability students was limited by the frequent lack of challenging work to engage them. Reliable international benchmark assessment data was not available. By Year 6 students were confident in using numbers in all four operations, including more complex square root calculations. They worked with fractions and decimals and had clear understanding of the properties of basic geometric shapes, such as polygons and parallelograms.



- The levels of attainment of students in science fluctuated over the previous three years. The most recent external tests indicated that only a majority had reached the appropriate standards by the end of primary school. However, changes to the science curriculum had led to acceptable progress by all groups in developing enquiry skills. Students had increased their understanding of scientific concepts, for example, the different arrangements of molecules in the three states of matter. In lessons and in their recent work, most students showed levels of knowledge and understanding in line with the curriculum standards. They could apply these to real world issues; for example, Year 3 students could explain simply what was needed in a balanced diet.

### Secondary

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

- In Islamic education, most students demonstrated levels of knowledge and understanding that were in line with the national curriculum expectation. Students were able to demonstrate what they had learnt in their daily lives and a few could discuss and express their opinions well. Although, it varied from year to year and between girls and boys, students' progress was acceptable overall. Most students were able to explain their knowledge orally but were less able to do so in writing. They could read and understand the Holy Qur'an, but their recitation skills were weaker. Data provided by the school indicated that students made better than expected progress, but this was based upon assessments with low expectations. Students who were non-native speakers of Arabic struggled to discuss Islamic values in depth.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students demonstrated secure listening and speaking skills. Attainment was in line with national curriculum expectations. Students understood their teachers' standard Arabic and responded well to their questions. Some teachers occasionally used colloquial language and this slowed the progress of students. Most students were able to communicate their ideas and express their views in formal Arabic with age-appropriate levels of accuracy and fluency. Students demonstrated the expected-level of skill in reading prescribed Arabic texts, whether prose or poetry. However, their skills in extended writing were limited. Students made better progress in listening and speaking than in other aspects of the language. In lessons and over time the majority of students made better than expected progress.
- In Arabic as an additional language, in the absence of external measures, achievement was broadly in line with general expectations. Students' listening and speaking were stronger than their reading and writing skills. Most students could understand passages and converse in sentences about familiar topics. Students could infer answers for direct and indirect questions and use contextual clues to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words. When writing, students made many spelling and grammatical mistakes. In nearly all lessons observed, the majority of students made above the expected progress in relation to the stated learning objectives. However, the most able students were not challenged enough nor given different work and therefore they did not make sufficient progress in relation to their abilities.

- Students' attainment in English lessons was below curriculum and international standards. A large majority of students conversed confidently and could express their views clearly. They read with some fluency, and could understanding literal meanings. However, students understanding of inferred meaning, was a developing feature. Opportunities to develop examination writing techniques were taken. For example, in Year 11 students were able to identify key information and summarise short passages of text. Nevertheless, their writing remained at basic levels and there were few opportunities to write at length or in a variety of genres. In external examinations outcomes were below expectations. Over the past three years, the results from the IGCSE examinations had declined. In lessons and over time, from low starting points students made the expected progress. Overall, girls performed significantly better than boys.
- Attainment against the Cambridge International mathematics curriculum was in line with its curriculum standards. Students' attainment in external international examinations was weaker but remained broadly in line with average standards. The progress made by most groups of students was acceptable in lessons and over time. Students with SEND made good progress from their starting points. The progress of students of higher ability was often limited by a lack of challenge in their work. Students were able to develop and improve their skills with numbers, but problems solving exercises were often too simple. Students could use equations, interpret data in graphic forms and use a range of algebraic formulae with accuracy.
- The performance of students on the IGCSE science examinations had fluctuated over the past three years. Overall attainment was in line with international standards. Among the three sciences, physics was generally the students' strongest subject and chemistry their weakest. In the most recent examinations, the minority of students achieved very good results. However, external test results for science in Year 9 indicated that only a minority of students met the UK national standards. Curriculum changes had led to improved progress in developing knowledge and understanding of science across Years 7 to 10. Most students in the higher years had sound analytical skills, but their ability to devise and carry out scientific investigations was underdeveloped. Different groups made similar progress.

### Post-16

| Subjects                         | Attainment     | Progress       |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Islamic education                | Acceptable     | Acceptable     |
| Arabic as a first language       | Acceptable     | Acceptable     |
| Arabic as an additional language | Not applicable | Not applicable |
| English                          | Not applicable | Not applicable |
| Mathematics                      | Acceptable     | Acceptable     |
| Science                          | Weak ↓         | Acceptable     |

- Most students attained in line with the MoE national and curriculum expectations in Islamic education. For example, Year 12 students were able to link the values and morals that they learnt in lessons to their daily lives. Students' abilities to analyse and develop new ideas were limited. Most students were able to say what they had memorised from the Holy Qur'an and use this in discussions, but they did not have deep understanding. The data provided by the school indicated that students had made above the expected progress, but this was not supported by students' work or the observation of lessons. Progress for the different group was broadly as expected.
- Attainment in Arabic as an additional language was in line with national curriculum expectations. Most students demonstrated secure listening and speaking skills. They understood their teachers' standard Arabic and responded well to their questions. Most students were able to communicate their ideas and express their views in formal Arabic with reasonable age-appropriate levels of accuracy and fluency. They were able to read the prescribed Arabic texts. Their writing skills were limited. In lessons, most students made the expected progress as measured against appropriate learning objectives. The more able students were not challenged enough nor given sufficiently different work to other groups. As a result, they made slow progress from their starting points. Progress generally was acceptable.
- Following strict entry requirements for the AS mathematics course, the attainment of both boys and girls was in line with the curriculum standards. This was an improvement on past year groups' attainment, but they had not been tested by external examinations. All students made similarly acceptable progress over time. Progress in lessons was better by the boys, who were more confident to respond to questions and share their ideas aloud than the girls. Students were able to work confidently with complicated mathematical concepts such as probability, arithmetic progression and radians.
- Students' attainment over time in science varied considerably. In the previous year only a few students attained in line with the international curriculum standards on external examinations. In lessons and in their course work, the majority of students demonstrated appropriate levels of understanding in relation to the expected standards. Most students made the expected levels of progress in relation to their starting points and varying abilities both in lessons and over time, except in their development of investigative skills, which were weak.

|                 | Foundation Stage | Primary    | Secondary  | Post-16    |
|-----------------|------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Learning skills | Acceptable       | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

- Most students followed instructions well and kept to tasks. They rarely took the initiative to ask questions or develop their learning beyond that which was directed by their teachers. Many were happy to sit passively and allow a few more able students to take the lead during discussions.
- When given opportunities, students worked well in pairs and small groups. In science lessons, for example, they discussed and agreed upon answers in a mature manner. In Year 11 English, students worked together well to identify information from a piece of text. When less successful, tasks were not appropriate for paired or group work and too many students did not get the opportunity to extend their learning.
- Students' abilities to link different areas of learning and apply these to real life were a developing feature. In science, students responded well and applied their scientific knowledge when considering the need for a balanced diet and the effects of regular exercise. Most students were content to let teachers direct learning and were reluctant to attempt to make their own choices.
- The use of learning technologies by students was limited. When directed, older students could carry out research but this skill was not well developed in most lessons. Secondary phase students were able to analyse and interpret their findings in science, but did not display these skills as well in other subjects.

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

|                      | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary | Post-16 |
|----------------------|------------------|---------|-----------|---------|
| Personal development | Good             | Good    | Good      | Good    |

- In the Foundation Stage children showed good attitudes towards school and enjoyed exploring and learning new things. Most students demonstrated consistently positive and responsible attitudes toward learning, but some older boys were easily distracted when not motivated by challenging work.
- Most students behaved well, were respectful and showed self-discipline in classes and when moving around the school. A few older boys in the upper primary and lower secondary years displayed immature behaviour, which interrupted other students' learning. Incidents of bullying were rare and dealt with positively and quickly.
- Positive relationships were a notable feature of the school. Teachers and almost all students treated each other with courtesy, so that a calm and respectful learning ethos existed in most classrooms.
- Students demonstrated well-developed understanding of all aspects that contributed to a healthy lifestyle, including the importance of exercise and a healthy diet. They understood the need for safe and careful procedures when using the internet.
- Students' rate of attendance was very good and had increased to above 97 per cent. A few students who did not use school buses did not always arrive punctually to school.

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

- Students demonstrated very well developed understanding of Islam and were balanced citizens who respected others' religions and nations. Students readily began the school day with recitation of the Holy Qur'an and singing of the UAE National Anthem. Children in the Foundation Stage were involved in a range of events and activities which led to outstanding knowledge and understanding of the local culture and Islamic values.
- Students enthusiastically explained their understanding of the celebrations linked to Flag Day, UAE National Day, Cultures day and Commemoration day. The country's traditions and local heritage were well known to all students.
- Students had very well developed understanding and appreciation of the multi-cultural nature of society in Dubai. Older students were able to share with each other their own cultural traditions from around the world and compare and contrast these with those of the UAE. For example, different types of dress and their significance for their religions and cultural heritage.

|  | Foundation Stage | Primary     | Secondary   | Post-16     |
|--|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Social responsibility and innovation skills</b> | Very good ↑      | Very good ↑ | Very good ↑ | Very good ↑ |

- Students were aware of their responsibility towards the school and took pride in their immediate surroundings. Most of them assumed additional tasks such as volunteering. They showed charity by organising activities such as buying furniture for the Mashaer organization.
- Students demonstrated good attitudes toward projects and were creative in making decisions regarding the format of careers day, when they exchanged ideas with others. Some students undertook actions which had significant social benefits. For example, the 'green patch,' Eco Club and an air quality project. These levels of students' creativity and independence were not as apparent in lessons.
- Students cared for their environment; they participated in projects to improve the school environment, such as recycling and saving energy. Some students extended this initiative to the wider world environment by raising awareness amongst their fellow students.



### 3. Teaching and assessment

|                                 | Foundation Stage | Primary      | Secondary  | Post-16    |
|---------------------------------|------------------|--------------|------------|------------|
| Teaching for effective learning | Good             | Acceptable ↓ | Acceptable | Acceptable |

- Teachers' subject knowledge was acceptable overall, with strengths in Islamic education and weaknesses in English. Teachers in the Foundation Stage had good understanding of how young children learn. Teachers' knowledge of how to deliver an appropriate, progressive curriculum to ensure good learning was inconsistent in other phases and across the different key subjects.
- In the best lessons, clear learning objectives were planned and delivered with appropriate pace and resources. In the majority of lessons, teachers' planning did not facilitate good progress by students. Plans often included modified activities for students with SEND, but little account was taken of the wide range of students' abilities. Lesson planning was particularly weak for meeting the needs of the most able students.
- Teachers used a range of questions to check their students' knowledge. These were mainly addressed to whole classes and thus opportunities to check the understanding of individual students were missed. Rarely were supplementary questions used to probe understanding or to challenge students to explain their thinking fully.
- Teachers were beginning to use a range of strategies to interest and motivate students in their learning. For example, in an Islamic education class role-playing was used to extend students' understanding. In primary science lessons, investigations and experiments were being introduced. These strong features were not commonly seen in English and mathematics lessons.
- Across all phases and subjects, there was limited development of students' enquiry, reflection or critical thinking skills. In science the revised curriculum supported teachers in planning questions and investigations, but this was at an early stage of development. In most subjects, students were not regularly encouraged to be inquisitive and find things out for themselves, or to reflect on what they already knew. Textbooks provided structure but teachers did not extend the challenge sufficiently beyond the books.
- The majority of Arabic teachers had good subject knowledge and understood how their students learned. Most planned lessons with clear objectives and shared them with students. Teachers in primary delivered interesting lessons with good pace, most notably in the lower years. The promotion of critical thinking, inquiry and independent learning skills was not a strong feature of most lessons.

|            | Foundation Stage | Primary    | Secondary  | Post-16    |
|------------|------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Assessment | Acceptable       | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

- Internal assessment processes were linked to the Cambridge curriculum and this recent initiative provided a more regular and consistent record of students' attainment. The analysis of the assessment data was at an early stage of development. Systems were not rigorous enough to accurately measure students' progress or identify the areas of the curriculum which were not effectively covered, especially in English.

- The school benchmarked the IGSCCE examinations results against the UK national standards. Very recently, Cambridge 'Checkpoint' tests had been introduced to verify students' attainment in Years 6 and 9. International benchmarking tests were not used and therefore the leaders did not know how well their students were performing in comparison with others in the UAE or internationally.
- The analysis of assessment data for individuals and groups of students was underdeveloped and not used effectively to track students' progress. The results of all internal assessments and one external Cambridge 'Checkpoint' test were recorded efficiently. This data was not investigated deeply to identify trends in progress by different groups of students, or to identify where improvements were needed.
- The use of data to improve teaching strategies and the activities planned for groups of students varied between subjects and classes. The quality of assessment in lessons, largely through teachers questioning, was inconsistent. As a result, activities were not well enough adjusted to consistently meet the learning needs of all students, especially the most able.
- Teachers generally had knowledge of their students' attainment and how well they were progressing in learning their subjects. In the better lessons, students were encouraged to assess their own learning and received feedback on how well they were doing. Teachers provided some written feedback after units of study, for example, in mathematics. However, the process of target setting to identify how students could improve their progress and attainment was rarely seen.

#### 4. Curriculum

|                                      | Foundation Stage | Primary    | Secondary  | Post-16    |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Curriculum design and implementation | Acceptable       | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

- The curriculum was reasonably broad and balanced. The curriculum for MoE subjects met requirements; others such as art and physical education were not fully meeting the requirements of the school's licenced curriculum.
- In the Foundation Stage only English, mathematics and science were delivered in line with formal expectations. In all other phases of the school science provision met the requirements. Gaps in the mathematics curriculum had been identified and supplementary materials were used to address them. The English curriculum was not being followed, curtailing students' learning.
- Curriculum leaders ensured that there was progression in most subjects. However, in subjects where the curriculum was not fully implemented, structured progression was not effective enough. Consequently, students were unable to reach adequate standards of attainment. This was especially the case in primary and secondary English.
- The curriculum options available for older students were adequate, allowing most to develop their talents and aspirations. Following popular demand, economics and business studies had recently been added to the range of AS- level subject choices.
- Opportunities for students to link their learning across different subjects were increasing. Stronger links were systematically planned into subjects taught in Arabic and in science, but they were at an early stage of development in the other subjects.

- The curriculum was reviewed annually. Some gaps in the curriculum had been identified and addressed. Additional courses had been introduced to better meet the needs of all students. Curriculum and subject leaders were yet not familiar enough with the demands of a UK curriculum. Therefore, the outcomes of regular reviews were limited and not all issues were identified and addressed adequately.
- The school teaches the UAE social studies as a stand-alone subject. It followed the MoE curriculum for both Arab and non-Arab students.

|                       | Foundation Stage | Primary    | Secondary  | Post-16    |
|-----------------------|------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Curriculum adaptation | Acceptable       | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

- Across the school, and in a range of subjects, teachers had made some modifications to the curriculum to provide suitable tasks and activities for different groups of students. There was good curriculum modification for students with SEND. The curriculum was not modified well to meet the needs of the more able students or those who were gifted and talented.
- The curriculum was enriched with 'enterprise' days and competitions for innovation, for example, the Solar City Project. Children in the Foundation Stage enjoyed involvement in a range of projects, often linked to developing their knowledge of the UAE. Karate was the only extra-curricular activity provided.
- Opportunities for students to develop awareness of Emirati culture and society were woven into learning in a number of subjects, particularly Islamic education and Arabic. Students had celebrated the UAE National day and the staff had used drama and traditional performances to enhance students' knowledge of cultural stories. Younger students had made some very good models to represent Emirati culture.
- In the Foundation Stage 196 children were taught Arabic as a first language. Among those, 50 non-Arab children were taught 320 minutes over eight periods per week. The curriculum followed the MoE expectations with additional resources provided by the school. Overall, the provision was age-appropriate.

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

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

- There were clearly written child protection procedures, which were shared with parents. Students and the staff were fully aware of these procedures. Effective systems were in place to protect children when using the internet and other forms of digital technology. The school had appropriate security systems.
- The buildings were well maintained. Any incident which affected students' health, safety or well-being was systematically recorded along with any subsequent actions. Appropriate medical information was shared with the staff to ensure that there was appropriate medical care provided to students at all times.

- The school premises were very clean and hygienic. The learning environment supported students' learning adequately. Rubber slabs in the outdoor area presented a tripping hazard and needed repair.
- The staff and members of the student council encouraged younger children to make healthy life choices. They promoted good hygiene, healthy eating and regular exercise. Students had ready access to fresh drinking water outside.

|                  | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary | Post-16 |
|------------------|------------------|---------|-----------|---------|
| Care and support | Good             | Good    | Good      | Good    |

- Good student and staff relationships were built upon principles of respect, care for others and courtesy. Relationships were of good quality overall and developed throughout the school from the firm bases established in the Foundation Stage. Most staff members managed behaviour confidently and competently.
- The impact of the school's procedures for encouraging and promoting good attendance were very effective. Staff members monitored the occasional late arrivals to school and ensured that they reached their class rooms.
- Students with a very broad range of SEND were admitted to the school. On entry, and often before, students' needs were identified through discussions with parents, a range of observations and external expertise, which presented an in-depth view of each student's needs. These helped the staff to tailor provision and placement in class in order to maximise progress. The identification of gifted and talented students and their particular skills was not well developed.
- Effective and well-developed provision was in place for students with SEND. Special classes, each with a small number of students, allowed specialist provision enabling good progress. Smaller classes had been created to cater for the needs of the less able students. Support for those who were gifted or talented was not well provided, resulting in these students making slower than expected progress.
- The part-time counsellor supported the well-being of students, especially the older ones. Students received a range of advice on healthy living. Corridor displays provided advice on how students could look after themselves. Teachers were developing greater knowledge of each student so that they could provide effective guidance for their future careers.

#### 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 SEND supervisor was highly committed to the creation of a fully inclusive school. Students, some with complex needs, were admitted from all parts of Dubai. The principal took a key role in these developments. Further improvements in provision had been made since the last inspection. Systems had been well established, but not all of the good practice had fully permeated all areas of the school.
- Accurate identification of students with SEND, frequently upon entry to the Foundation Stage, resulted in resources and provision being allocated quickly. Many students had complex needs and advice from outside agencies was used effectively to support them.



- The good relationships established with parents had positive effects upon students' learning, because parents were informed about how to support their children at home. There was general appreciation that the parents were eager to gain further understanding of their children's needs. The individual education plans (IEPs) were understood by parents, but some needed to be simplified with clearer goals for students to achieve.
- There were some good examples of IEPs being used to guide and evaluate students' learning. In the best examples, they were used on a daily basis to assist the delivery of the curriculum and to tailor the support to each students' needs. However, there was more work to do to ensure that the IEPs were used to support each student across all subjects.
- When there was specialist provision for students with SEND, the progress they made was good. But consistently good levels of progress were not replicated throughout the school. Senior leaders were aware of this and the adjustments to provision were working. This was especially so when students were in small classes.

## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Acceptable

- Leaders were aware of the UAE's national and Dubai's priorities. They were strongly committed to inclusion and welcomed all students into the school, whatever their ability or special needs. This was central to the school's vision and played a major part in the direction set by the principal.
- The personal development of students was promoted well by leaders at all levels. Through the provision of external training and support, leaders had begun to agree upon what constituted good teaching. They were developing the assessment system and linking it to the school's chosen curriculum. They did not have a deep enough understanding of the content or expectations of a UK curriculum.
- Communication systems had improved. Leaders at all levels met regularly and their agreed actions were delegated to the appropriate members of the staff. Roles and responsibilities had been reviewed. As a result, all leaders were aware of the school's priorities and how they contributed to the school's improvement.
- Leaders were aware that many further improvements were needed. Appointments had been made to strengthen leadership capacity. Appropriate actions had been identified and taken. However, leaders had an unrealistic view of how quickly or to what extent their actions had improved students' progress.
- Adequate school performance had been maintained in most subjects, the exception being in English. The science curriculum had been improved. The actions taken to improve students' preparation for the IGCSE examinations had resulted in improved results in some subjects, particularly physics. Assessment systems were better aligned to the curriculum and identified the gaps in students' learning.



| School self-evaluation and improvement planning  | Acceptable |
|--|------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The revised assessment system was beginning to provide the school with the data needed to measure the students' academic performances. This system had not been in place long enough to measure their progress. The leaders had a realistic view of what needed to be done to improve, but were overly optimistic regarding the effects of the actions they had already taken.</li> <li>Regular monitoring was carried to support the school's evaluation of the quality of teaching. Whilst the effects of the teaching on students' learning were noted, the weaknesses identified did not influence the overall evaluations enough. This led to an inflated view of the success of recent teacher training.</li> <li>The school did not sufficiently monitor or analyse data to identify key priorities for improvement. Action plans were detailed, but mainly focused on the recommendations of the previous inspection report. The UAE National Agenda targets were taken into account. Improvement plans were reviewed, but success was defined as 'actions taken' rather than improvement in students' achievements.</li> <li>The school had taken action to address most of the recommendations of the last inspection report. These actions had led to limited improvements over time. Many of the improvements were too recent for the intended results to be measured.</li> </ul> |            |




| Partnerships with parents and the community   | Good |
|---|------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There were regular opportunities for parents to be involved in the school through the Mothers' Council, participation in surveys, and attendance at school events. Parents' views were actively sought by the parent representative on the Board of Governors and their suggestions helped to influence priorities for improvement planning. Parents felt valued as members of the school community and consequently were highly supportive.</li> <li>The school used a range of ways to communicate with parents about any forthcoming events, to report absences and inform them about students' achievements. Any parental concerns were responded to rapidly by teachers and senior leaders and resolved effectively. Parents of students with SEND experienced positive partnership with the school.</li> <li>The school provided parents with regular written reports about their children's academic performances. These included final grades for each subject, but comments about students' academic, personal and social development were limited. Parents were not sufficiently informed about the skills that required improvement or the next steps in learning for their children.</li> <li>The school made regular contributions to national charities and humanitarian organizations such as Emirates Red Crescent. Productive links within the local community including businesses, schools and the special needs centres had positive effects upon students' learning and development.</li> </ul> |      |

| Governance  | Acceptable |
|---|------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The board of governors included representation from a range of stakeholders with varied expertise. They were increasingly involved in the school's life, supporting aspects of staff training, making presentations and observing lessons. Consequently, the board's first-hand knowledge was increasing and they had a better understanding of the views of students, teachers and parents than previously.</li> <li>Governors had requested regular updates from the school's leaders and access to the analysis of examination data. They had contributed positively and robustly to the school's self-evaluation. However, their monitoring was not rigorous enough. They did not hold the leaders sufficiently to account, especially in relation to the delivery of the UK curriculum and the overall quality of the school's performance.</li> <li>The governors influenced the school's leadership and direction and were increasingly involved in decision-making and in setting priorities for improvement. They ensured that resources were available to address the key weaknesses and contributed to staffing decisions and recruitment. The board of governors had strengthened its involvement, but the effects were not evident and overall, the school's performance had not improved.</li> </ul> |            |

| Management, staffing, facilities and resources  | Acceptable |
|---|------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school had effective procedures, understood by most students and the staff, which ensured smooth daily operation. The deployment of teachers and support assistants had positive effects on the progress of students with SEND. The timetable provided an effective balance of lessons across different subjects, but in the Foundation Stage its rigid application sometimes impeded the children's learning.</li> <li>Most teachers' qualifications met the KHDA's minimum requirements, but only a minority had further professional qualifications. The school had provided training, but the quantity and quality of it varied. In the Foundation Stage and in science training had enhanced the learning by students. Training had not effectively equipped all teachers with the skills to develop student-centred and enquiry based learning.</li> <li>The school premises were adequate and in the Foundation Stage provided a stimulating environment. Specialist facilities such as the sports hall and the science laboratory were mostly adequate. The information technology room was inadequately furnished; students were required to sit on inappropriate benches.</li> <li>The limited availability of learning technology meant that there was inconsistent use across different subjects. The library had increased the number of books available in Arabic and in English for the younger students. Changes in textbooks and the supporting resources had positive effects on students' learning in science.</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><br>  | 2015-2016 | 311 |
|   | 2014-2015 | 223 |
| <b>Teachers</b><br>  | 70        |     |
| <b>Students</b><br> | 52        |     |

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

- Most parents who responded to the survey were satisfied with the quality of education provided by the school. Senior students responding to their survey were less positive, with only half agreeing that the education they received was good.
- Most parents and teachers agreed that students behaved well. A large minority of students did not agree. Almost all parents agreed that their children were safe in school.
- Most parents agreed that their children made good progress. A large minority of parents and students were not aware of the rate of progress being made in Arabic.
- Almost all teachers and most parents agreed that the school was well led. They were confident that their views were listened to.
- A large majority of students did not agree that the school provided adequate resources to support their learning.

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)