



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational  
needs and disabilities



Innovation

## Inspection Report 2015-2016

GEMS World Academy

Curriculum: IB

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	Al Barsha
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2008
Website	www.gemsworldacademy-dubai.com
Telephone	04-3736373
Address	Al Barsha South, Dubai PO Box 126260
Principal	Mr. Stuart Walker
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	14 to 17 March 2016

### Students



Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	3-18
Grades or year groups	Kindergarten 1 to Grade 12
Number of students on roll	2041
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	20
Number of students with SEND	120
Largest nationality group of students	American

### Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	184
Largest nationality group of teachers	American
Number of teaching assistants	80
Teacher-student ratio	1:11
Number of guidance counsellors	7
Teacher turnover	35%

### Curriculum



Educational permit / Licence	IB
Main curriculum	IB
External tests and examinations	MAP, IB
Accreditation	IBO, CIS
National Agenda benchmark tests	ISA

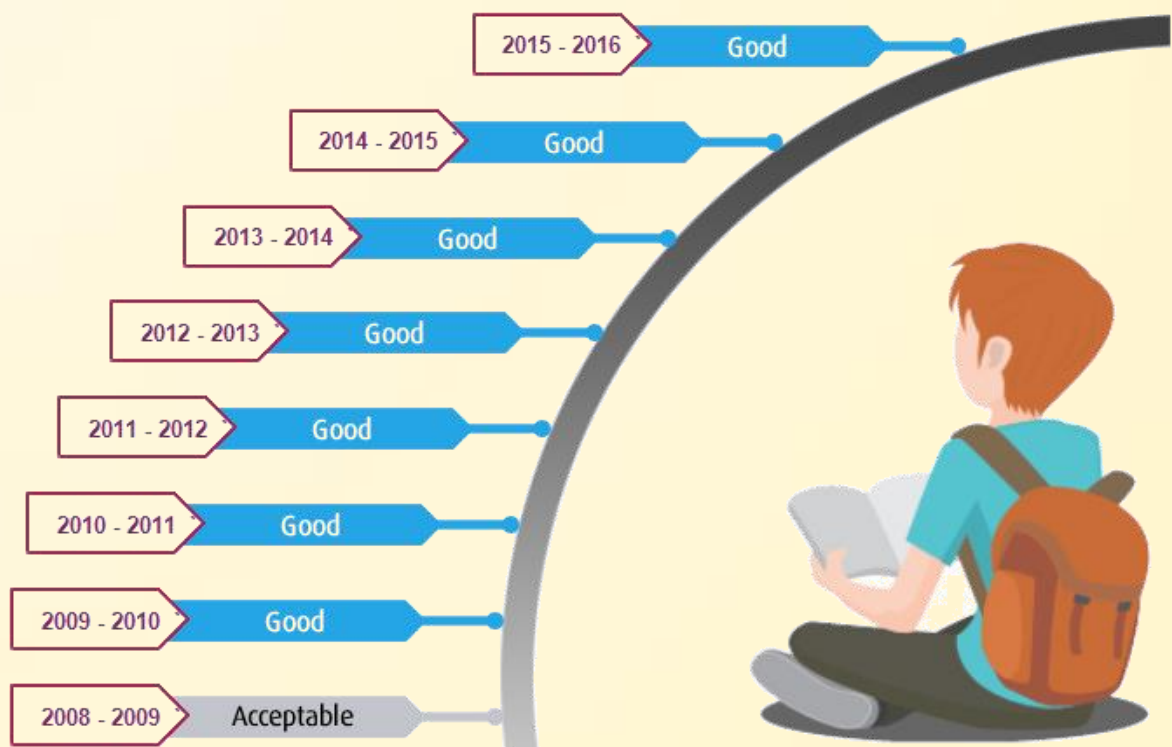


## Summary for parents and the community

**GEMS World Academy** was inspected by DSIB from 14 to 17 March 2016. 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, **GEMS World Academy** provided a **good** quality of education for its students.

- Attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science were outstanding in the KG and PYP (Primary Years Programme) phases and good or better in the upper phases except students' attainment in mathematics in DP (Diploma Programme) where it was acceptable. In Islamic education, students' progress across the school was good and their attainment was good in PYP and acceptable in the upper phases. Attainment in Arabic as a first language was acceptable at PYP and MYP (Middle Years Programme), but weak at DP. Progress was good at MYP and acceptable elsewhere. In Arabic as an additional language, attainment was acceptable and progress was good at all applicable stages. Students were generally keen to learn, particularly so at KG and PYP where learning was outstanding. Students' learning skills were good in the upper phases.
- Students' sense of responsibility was outstanding in KG and PYP, and very good in MYP and DP. Understanding of Emirati values and of other world cultures was outstanding at KG. It had improved, since the previous year, and was very good in PYP and MYP, remaining good in the upper stage. Community and environmental responsibility had declined to very good at MYP, where students seemed less aware of environmental and global issues.
- Teachers provided an outstanding experience in the early stages. Teaching was less secure at MYP and DP, which was good. Likewise, assessment practices, which were outstanding in KG and MYP, were not so strong higher up the school.
- The curriculum was outstanding throughout. Curriculum adaptation was outstanding at KG, very good in PYP and good elsewhere.
- Arrangements for health and safety were outstanding at all stages, as was the quality of support. Arrangements for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) were very good.
- Leadership had strengthened, and was very good. Self-evaluation and improvement planning remained good. The school had been too optimistic in its view of its own success in some important areas. Relationships with parents were outstanding. Governance was very good. Everyday management was very good. However, the timetabling of the school day lacked clarity and was not always effective.



### What did the school do well?

- Provision and children's outcomes were outstanding in the KG.
- Students' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science were outstanding in the PYP.
- Aspects of personal responsibility were particularly well developed in certain stages of the school. Students generally understood and appreciated Emirati culture and Islamic values.
- The arrangements for the health and safety of students were thorough, well-considered and entirely appropriate.
- The outstanding links with parents and the community enhanced students' overall experience.



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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in the MYP and DP to give higher attainment and progress.
- Promote communicative competence in Arabic as an additional language and continue to develop Islamic education and Arabic so as to offer a better experience for students.
- Ensure students at all stages follow the school's code of conduct and meet the behavior expectations at all times.



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

- Students with SEND made at least good and frequently very good progress in their learning. This was also true in relation to their personal, social and emotional development. They worked with increasing confidence, determination and improving skill levels.
- The school reported regularly to parents and kept them fully up to date with their child's progress.
- Parents felt that the lines of communication with the school were very open and that they could make contact with staff at any time.
- In most cases, parents were involved in the development of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and the monitoring of them. The school was considering ways in which the IEPs could be clearer, with fewer targets
- Dedicated staff in the SEND department offered good quality advice and time for consultations. They supported parents well in all contacts with the school.

### National Agenda Parameter



In 2014, H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of UAE, and Ruler of Dubai, launched the UAE National Agenda 2021, with education being a prime focus. The National Agenda includes two major objectives developed with the intent of placing the UAE among the most successful countries that provide world-class education. By 2021, it is expected that the UAE will feature in the top twenty countries in the 'Programme for International Student Assessment' (PISA) test and in the top fifteen countries in the 'Trends in Mathematics and Science Studies' (TIMSS) test.

In response to this, each participating school was issued a report on their students' performance in these international assessments and in addition, they were provided with clear targets for improving their performance. This academic year, KHDA introduced the National Agenda Parameter, which is a method for measuring and monitoring schools' progress towards achieving their individual National Agenda targets through the use of external benchmarking assessments.

#### Main points:

- The school did not fully meet the registration requirements of the National Agenda Parameter.
- Progress towards meeting the National Agenda targets was as expected.
- The school promoted the National Agenda through assemblies, meetings and discussions with students, staff and parents. Its key features had been integrated into school documents such as the school improvement plan and self-evaluation. A senior leader, in charge of teaching and learning, was also responsible for the National Agenda.
- Critical thinking, enquiry and problem solving were integral to teaching and learning throughout the school.
- Curriculum development and adaptation reflected this integration of priorities, which were visible throughout the school. They were linked to innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Students in all grades had rich opportunities to use information technology, library resources and journalistic publications.

## 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 were dedicated to innovation as a national priority. Weekly professional learning sessions developed teachers' capacity for innovation. Leaders had created a climate in which teachers were encouraged to take risks while promoting learning. The development of students' skills of innovation was a common thread throughout the school. Students were encouraged to take the initiative in planning their own projects. Through a wide range of learning technologies, students could confidently research through problem solving and critical thinking, while programmes such as design technology stimulated creativity, enquiry and analysis. The curriculum provided challenge through problem solving initiatives applied to the real world. Enrichment clubs fostered leadership and collaboration and offered opportunities for innovation.

Overall school performance

Good

1. Students' achievement

		KG	PYP	MYP	DP
<b>Islamic education</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Not applicable	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
	<b>Progress</b>	Not applicable	Good	Good ↑	Good ↑
<b>Arabic as a first language</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Weak
	<b>Progress</b>	Not applicable	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not applicable
	<b>Progress</b>	Not applicable	Good	Good	Not applicable
<b>English</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Very good ↑
	<b>Progress</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Very good ↑
<b>Mathematics</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Acceptable ↓
	<b>Progress</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good
<b>Science</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good
	<b>Progress</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
<b>Learning skills</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good

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

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Very good ↓	Very good ↓
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Good
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Outstanding	Outstanding	Very good ↓	Outstanding

## 3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good
Assessment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good

## 4. Curriculum

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Curriculum design and implementation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Curriculum adaptation	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Good	Good

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

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Care and support	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

## 6. Leadership and management

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

### KG

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

- Children had highly developed communication skills in English. They reached very high standards in reading, writing and speaking. The school was implementing a guided reading programme which had enabled students to engage in reading which was appropriate to their levels. They had acquired a sophisticated knowledge of phonics and had applied this knowledge to read familiar and unfamiliar text. They communicated their understanding of what they had read very ably, and reported clearly what others had read. Children used their phonic skills to write words and simple sentences. They also responded to stories and events in their lives by recounting them in written format.
- In mathematics, most children could count reliably up to twenty by KG 2. They could order numbers and identify which number was greater or less than a given number. They were able to identify and sort two-dimensional shapes. They created patterns based on a number of variables including colour, shape and sequence. Most children could add and subtract single-digit numbers. They could solve simple problems using physical materials. Children were able to talk about weight, capacity, distance, time and money in simple terms and could relate these concepts to their own lives.
- In science, most children attained levels that were above the curriculum expectations. Children were acting as inquirers both within the classroom and beyond. They were engaged in cross-curricular themes linked to their everyday lives. The scientific approach was characterised by an exploration of a combination of concepts and skills, with a breadth and balance of science content. They were contained within the units of inquiry that were made up of themes such as 'How the world works'. Looking from a scientific perspective had enabled children to acquire a very good understanding of the world, for their age. The development of the ability to reflect on their scientific knowledge helped to increase a sense of responsibility about the impact of their actions on themselves, others and their world.

PYP

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

- In Islamic education, a majority of students in PYP demonstrated knowledge of Islamic concepts such as the Five Pillars of Islam and the Pillars of Iman (Faith) that were above curriculum standards. They had a good knowledge of Seerah and the life of some of the companions of the Prophet (PBUH). A majority of students had memorised additional Surahs from the Holy Qur'an and understood the meaning of the verses. They had a good knowledge of Islamic values and manners such as the six rights of Muslims over other Muslims. Non-Arab students' attainment was higher than that of first language Arabic speakers. In lessons and work samples both boys and girls made good progress.
- Students' attainment in Arabic as a first language was acceptable overall. Their listening and speaking skills were the strongest. Reading skills were appropriate, but reading comprehension and speaking using standard Arabic were less strong. Creative writing skills were developing. There were no external assessments for benchmarking in Arabic. The school's internal information did not reflect an accurate level of students' outcomes. Progress was rapid in listening, speaking and reading but slower in reading comprehension and writing. Most students made good progress in relation to their starting points.
- Most students in Arabic as an additional language had knowledge, understanding and skills in line with curriculum expectations. Most could hold a simple conversation about familiar topics. They could understand familiar words and simple phrases. Attainment was less strong in reading comprehension. Independent writing skills were weak. No external assessment for benchmarking was carried out in Arabic. In addition, the school's internal information was not always accurate enough to inform learning. The majority of students made rapid progress in relation to their starting points. Their progress was rapid in listening, responding and reading but slower in speaking with confidence and in independent writing. Students made good progress overall.
- Attainment and progress were outstanding in English. Almost all students demonstrated sophisticated literacy development. They were committed readers whose comprehension skills substantially exceeded national and international standards. They took pleasure in reading and discussing their books. Their writing skills were particularly strong. They used rich language to express their views and showed solid control of sentence structure, grammar and punctuation. By Grade 5, students were fluent writers producing lengthy texts. Their written work demonstrated increasing maturity in dealing with complicated issues in a variety of genres. They listened thoughtfully to their teachers and fellow students. Their outstanding oral language skills provided an excellent foundation for overall language development.
- Students' attainment and progress in mathematics were outstanding over time. International benchmarking supported the outstanding progress in the development of mathematical knowledge and understanding. When measured against the challenging learning objectives, attainment and progress in lessons were also outstanding. In Grade 1, students were starting to categorise and use simple graphs. By Grade 5 students were skilled in practice and theory, able to discuss and communicate mathematics confidently using accurate vocabulary. Those with SEND were well integrated and supported. They made very good progress.

- Attainment and progress in science were outstanding when compared with international and curriculum standards. Students investigated scientific ideas about magnetism and balanced forces. They communicated their findings very clearly and accurately. As they moved through the grades they developed a deeper approach to enquiry-led learning, and were able to use earlier learning to build abstract ideas such as evaporation and condensation. Most were able to explain accurately their understanding orally and in writing. The progress of students with SEND was very good.

**MYP**

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

- Most Muslim students demonstrated acceptable knowledge of Islamic principles and values such as faith and wisdom. They had adequate knowledge of Seerah and could talk about key events such as the emigration of the companions of the Prophet (PBUH) to Madeena. They had secure understanding of Islamic Laws. They had a basic knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Hadeeth. They were able to recite assigned longer Surahs from the Holy Qur'an following recitation rules. They also knew the meanings of the verses and made contextual reference to some of these verses and Hadeeths. In lessons and work samples, attainment of Arab students and non-Arab students was in line with curriculum standards. The majority of students made good progress in lessons and over time.
- In Arabic as a first language, students had acceptable listening skills. They mostly spoke using a reasonable range of expressions, but not always in standard Arabic. They could read familiar learnt texts with a variable level of accuracy. Their writing skills were weak due to limited opportunities and low expectations. Their progress was solid in listening and responding, but limited in speaking formal Arabic. Reading on familiar topics was progressing soundly while their writing was less well developed. The progress of different groups of students was inconsistent. There was no external assessment for benchmarking in Arabic. Internal data was not accurate enough to reflect the students' true level.
- In Arabic as an additional language, students' listening, responding and speaking skills were acceptable overall. They were able to use a reasonable range of vocabulary and common expressions in conversations about daily routines. Most could read familiar phrases and sentences with few mistakes. However, their independent writing and reading comprehension skills were less strong. Students' progress in relation to their starting points was inconsistent across the skills and year groups. Their progress was rapid in encoding words, reading familiar phrases, listening and speaking. No external assessment for benchmarking was carried out in Arabic. In addition, the school's internal information was not always sufficient to inform accurately the next steps in learning.
- Attainment and progress were good in English. Both internal and external benchmarks showed that the majority of students were attaining above national and international standards. In some classrooms, highly engaging activities supported students in developing and demonstrating strong language skills. In presenting persuasive speeches, the majority demonstrated thoughtful research and preparation. However, a significant number of students were only minimally prepared. Overall, writing showed good control of grammar, sentence structure and spelling. Good levels of analysis of literature were evidenced in the online portfolio system. Students were able to write coherently for a clearly defined audience.

- In mathematics, the majority of students displayed attainment levels that were above the expected standards. International benchmarking showed good progress in the development of knowledge and understanding. Internal assessment data supported mainly good progress over time. Attainment and progress in lessons were occasionally very good, but mostly good. Students were confident in describing their mathematics using accurate terminology. Problem solving, investigations and critical thinking assisted good attainment. Well planned lessons had led to better than expected progress against learning objectives. Those with SEND made very good progress and were well supported and integrated into classes.
- In science, attainment and progress were good when compared with national and international standards. This was true across the science subjects and across most grades. Students' attainment in investigative skills was good and improving. Sometimes their work lacked sufficient clarity and detail, leaving gaps in knowledge and understanding. For example, when learning about the carbon cycle, students could identify different stages of the cycle but were less confident about discussing the whole cycle in detail. The progress of students with SEND was good.

DP		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Acceptable	Good ↑
Arabic as a first language	Weak	Acceptable
Arabic as an additional language	Not applicable	Not applicable
English	Very good ↑	Very good ↑
Mathematics	Acceptable ↓	Good
Science	Good	Good

- In Islamic education, most students demonstrated levels of understanding of Islamic values and principles that were in line with curriculum standards. The majority made more than expected progress. They had acceptable knowledge of Islamic Laws (Fiqh) such as those related to alcohol and other intoxicants. They were able to read verses from the Holy Qur'an with appropriate recitation skills. They used contextual references from both the Holy Qur'an and the Hadeeth, and elicited moral lessons to an acceptable level. They could make appropriate links to real life situations. Students were able to interpret assigned verses from the Holy Qur'an, elicit rules from them and apply them to marriage regulations and conditional laws of the world. The majority made good progress over time.
- There was no external assessment for benchmarking used in Arabic as a first language. The internal data was not accurate enough to reflect students' true level. Most had an acceptable level of listening skills. However, speaking using standard Arabic, and reading accurately, were below age-related expectations. Progress was steady in listening and responding, but limited in speaking using standard Arabic. Students had made acceptable progress in reading for understanding, but slow progress in reading for expression. Their writing was underdeveloped, especially creative and extended writing. The progress of different groups of students was variable.
- In English, attainment and progress were very good. In both internal and external assessments the large majority of students were highly effective language users. Persuasive speeches were well crafted and presented, built on high quality analysis of research and a thorough understanding of effective presentation skills. Students demonstrated a strong personal opinion in their formal speeches and showed empathy, analysis and self-knowledge. Small group conversations were almost always focused and purposeful. Written products were consistently of high quality, demonstrating the ability to analyse and interpret text at a very high level. Students showed a clear control of the writing process, sentence structure, and grammar. Literary analysis both in writing and in conversation showed a sophisticated understanding of literature elements, themes and stylistic devices.

- In mathematics, attainment was acceptable and progress good as measured against the DP levels. Diploma results were stronger in higher level mathematics where students exceeded the world wide average. Students in the larger groups of standard level mathematics and mathematics studies performed below world averages. Diploma results over the last three years showed an upward trend. Mathematics learning was applied to the real world making the work more interesting and relevant. Students demonstrated analytical thinking skills in lessons and were able to describe their mathematical learning confidently using accurate vocabulary. Those with SEND received good support and were well integrated. They made the same progress as their fellow students.
- In science, attainment and progress were good overall by the end of Grade 12. This was true across all the sciences. An enquiry-led approach helped most students to demonstrate their understanding of the scientific method, including mathematical calculations such as those using Hess' Law. The majority of students understood complex ideas very well. Too many other students, particularly at standard level, lacked confidence due to gaps in their knowledge. Their progress slowed and did not help attainment to rise quickly enough. Enquiry skills to develop critical thinking were also only improving slowly for these students. The progress of students with SEND was good.

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Learning skills	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good

- Across all phases, students demonstrated positive attitudes to learning. In particular, children in KG and students in PYP showed a veritable hunger for learning with a determination to do well. Well-established reflection and peer-assessment procedures were in place in the best lessons and, as a result, students were learning to identify their own strengths and areas for development as well as those of their fellow students.
- Students had developed very supportive relationships. They showed self-assurance in working together and in small groups. They had gained confidence in speaking aloud in class to express their views, during discussions and when answering questions.
- Students were increasingly able to make connections between learning and the real world in a meaningful way. In one lesson, a project in the extended mathematics group linked business, marketing and music to mathematics.
- From early in KG, students were naturally inquisitive and very keen to learn. Teachers encouraged them to investigate and explore. As they progressed through the school, students were enterprising, found things out for themselves and used appropriate technologies to support their learning. Critical thinking and problem solving skills were common features of learning especially in the lower phases.

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

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Very good ↓	Very good ↓

- Students were generally mature in their dealings with one another. They demonstrated good levels of responsibility. They could be self-sufficient when required. They accepted constructive criticism well.
- Behaviour throughout the school was generally very good, but there were pockets of disaffection and low-level misbehaviour. The school had tackled unacceptable behaviour vigorously by counselling and through the promotion of positive attitudes. Leaders had taken firm action and had involved parents. In general, the school presented itself as a cohesive harmonious community.
- Students were supportive, tolerant and understanding of others. They willingly offered help to their fellow students and to visitors. Relationships were very positive, particularly in the lower school. There was an excellent rapport between students and staff.
- The school effectively facilitated the adoption of healthy lifestyles through the provision of appropriate food options and through its physical education programme. Students were aware of how to keep themselves safe. The cyber safety programme drew attention to potential dangers on the internet, but was considered infantile by some older students.
- Overall attendance was acceptable. There was a noticeable dip in attendance at Grade 12. The school had tried to ensure that parents and students were aware of the need to attend regularly and to arrive punctually, thus inculcating good habits for life after school.

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Good

- Students had a very high level of understanding and appreciation of Islamic values and the role of Islam in the UAE. They talked knowledgeably about Ramadan and mosques, and explained how people should dress modestly in public places in Dubai. They also knew about the values of Islam and explained how the UAE is a country tolerant of all people, regardless of their race or religion.
- Students showed great respect for the UAE heritage and culture. They knew about Expo 2020 and mentioned important events in the history of UAE. They also talked about the activities and celebrations they had experienced in the school such as National Day and Flag Day. However, the school did not play the National Anthem at the start of every day.
- Students appreciated the cultural diversity in the UAE. They celebrated their own cultures and showed a great respect to others. Students in all phases, including those in KG, were able to discuss other cultures and explain how they had learned a number of things about them, such as their food and clothes. Older students had a degree of superficiality in their knowledge.

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
<b>Social responsibility and innovation skills</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Very good ↓	Outstanding

- Students developed and extended their sense of responsibility from the time they joined the school. They knew that they were members of the wider local and international community. They accepted the responsibilities that this brought by raising money to help causes which they felt strongly about in less-developed countries and supporting healthcare and learning in the wider community.
- Most students demonstrated a strong work ethic. Many brought alive the school's ambition for their students to become the leaders and innovators of tomorrow. Students volunteered for work in a range of activities. They had produced a model irrigation system to address the problem of watering plants in the summer, and reducing water wastage. This project had gained interest from private funders to support further development.
- The rich range of opportunities to lead and initiate projects enabled students to make a real contribution to the conservation of the local environment, and to educate themselves and others about national and international environmental issues. They had taken action on issues such as education, global warming and resource depletion.

### 3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
<b>Teaching for effective learning</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good

- In all areas, most teachers demonstrated very good subject knowledge. Teachers in KG and PYP had a deep understanding of pedagogy. They contextualised subject matter so that it was delivered in meaningful ways. Most teachers presented challenging work. However, in MYP and DP, expectations were not always high enough. Some teachers accepted work that was not completed or written with enough detail or precision.
- Overall, teachers used a very wide range of strategies to support learning. They prepared high-quality planning. The learning environments were generally very well organised. Technology was used very well throughout the school. Real-life application of knowledge was seen in many lessons, where students were given opportunities to play roles related to the topic which they had learned, such as that related to Islamic manners.
- Throughout the school, teachers made very effective use of on-going assessment, particularly in KG and PYP. Most teachers displayed very effective skills in their use of questioning. They motivated students to engage in critical thinking when involved in problem solving. Most teachers were very skilful in adjusting the pace of their teaching to match the learning needs of students.
- Classrooms in all sections of the school were very well organised. In KG and PYP, they were very skilfully arranged to match the curriculum framework, with differentiated learning centres to provide access to independent learning activities. Students were encouraged to engage in challenging activities to maximise their progress, but the level of challenge was not always adequate for older students.
- Most students were encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. Most teachers promoted collaborative learning and problem solving through group work. However, these approaches were less evident in MYP. Most teachers encouraged a culture of reflection which required students to think deeply about themes and ideas.

- The quality of teaching of Arabic was inconsistent across all phases. Most teachers had a secure knowledge of the subject. However, not all had an appropriate understanding of how students learn a language. There were some indications that teaching was beginning to move away from a teacher-centered approach, but not in all classes.

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
<b>Assessment</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good

- Teachers carried out regular assessments of students' progress and attainment in all key subjects. Assessments were linked to curriculum standards and produced valid data about students' progress. Moderation of assessments was evident across most subjects and phases.
- Teachers used international benchmarking wherever possible within an IB school setting. Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) was used as a tool to measure progress as well as for diagnostic purposes. Assessment results in individual subjects were carefully analysed to identify performance levels in cognitive skills and content areas. Comparisons were made with the achievements of students nationally and internationally.
- The school analysed the internal and external assessment data centrally. It was evident that not enough responsibility for the analysis had been given to middle leaders to ensure greater ownership. Data analysis identified trends, attainment patterns and individual progress, as well as areas of concern. Teachers used the data to evaluate their own performance. The data was used most effectively in KG and PYP.
- In PYP and KG the assessment information gathered was used very skilfully and effectively to support focused lesson planning and delivery. In the school's approach to students with SEND, good examples of assessment for learning, prior learning and questioning as learning tools were supporting optimum progress. In MYP and DP there was less use of assessment data to effectively influence teaching.
- In KG and in PYP, teachers had detailed knowledge of students' strengths and weaknesses. In MYP and DP this was less secure. Teachers provided regular helpful feedback and support. Written feedback in projects, portfolios and work books was most useful in KG and PYP. In MYP and DP, feedback was often provided electronically. Notebooks were not regularly marked. Effective peer- and self-assessment were evident in all phases.

#### 4. Curriculum

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
<b>Curriculum design and implementation</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The school curriculum in most subjects followed the IB guidelines. In Arabic and Islamic education, Ministry of Education curricula were in place. The curriculum had a clear rationale and was aligned to the school, Emirate and national priorities. It was highly effective in developing a balance of knowledge, skills and understanding. The school had integrated the National Agenda into the curriculum to support improved student progress.

- Progression was very well planned as students moved through the phases, meeting the needs of almost all. The weakest progression was from MYP to DP for the less academic and for students with SEND. There was still a need for a vocational pathway. Allowing the less academic to remain in school whilst studying a programme that would enable them to succeed.
- Students had a wide range of choices as they moved through the school. Older students could choose subjects suitable for their selected careers. The school tried to ensure that student choices were met, wherever possible. Enrichment topics supported work in class, and engaged and stimulated students to extend their learning experiences.
- The school offered many examples of cross-curricular themes. Frequently, in the units of inquiry, a range of subject areas would be engaged with meaningful and interesting contexts. The curriculum planning and delivery provided numerous excellent opportunities for independent research, problem solving and critical thinking.
- The review of curriculum was a dynamic and on-going process. The school had coped well in adjusting its curricula to the changing requirements of the IB and the National Agenda. Senior staff and teachers were involved in the regular and systematic review process.
- The school provided UAE social studies as a standalone subject in the MYP and DP, as well as being integrated with other subjects. A range of subjects were included such as geography, history, politics and economics which were also enhanced with many extracurricular activities and links that were made by teachers with other subjects .

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Curriculum adaptation	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Good	Good

- Across the school, teachers in English, mathematics and science adjusted their lesson plans to provide well-matched tasks and activities to meet the needs of different groups of students. The provision for students with SEND was very good. Modifications were well-planned and consistently well applied. There was improving provision for Islamic education and Arabic.
- In KG and PYP classes, there was a broad range of opportunities for students to make choices about what and how they learned. As a result, students in these stages were well-motivated and very enthusiastic in their learning. The additional options offered to DP students were having a positive impact on progress and in developing greater levels of interest.
- A good range of extra-curricular opportunities stimulated enthusiasm both inside the school and when students represented the school in local area competitions. The physical education department worked effectively to offer students further activities. Students initiated and successfully supported both local and international projects, especially through fund raising.
- The school offered two lessons per week in Arabic for children in KG2, both first language speakers and additional language learners. In addition, the school provided two sessions weekly for first language speakers separately. The programme targeted speaking and listening skills and introduced the Arabic alphabet. It served as an introduction to prepare children for Arabic in Grade one.

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

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The school's procedures and policies for the care and welfare of students were of very high quality, and thorough. All teachers were made aware of the policies and procedures for child protection. Teachers promoted positive behaviour, though not always effectively enough. The new senior staff had inherited some incidents of extreme misbehaviour which they had successfully tackled with urgency.
- The school offered a welcoming environment. Supervision was discreet but effective. Safety checks were regular. A nurse was in attendance during any athletics activities.
- The buildings were in an excellent state of repair. A rolling programme of decoration ensured that the facilities were kept safe and attractive. Staff maintained detailed medical notes and records of any incidents.
- The premises were of very high quality. Classrooms, common areas and outside facilities were entirely appropriate and conducive to learning, sporting activities, exercise and relaxation. They were suitable for all educational needs.
- The school successfully promoted healthy living and participation in sporting activities. Many students took advantage of the superb sporting opportunities on offer.

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Care and support	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Robust policies, supported the school in developing outstanding relationships between staff and students. Occasionally, in study time, a small number of older students were unproductive.
- Good management systems were in place to monitor, regulate and support the development of regular attendance and punctuality. There was effective monitoring of lateness and procedures were rigorous.
- The school had very effective systems in place for identifying, screening, monitoring and reviewing the needs of students with SEND. In addition, there had been good progress in the identification and provision for more able students, including those who have gifts and talents, with the use of individual plans and small-group extension work within mainstream classes.
- At every stage, the school worked very well with parents to ensure that they were fully involved with the work of their children and that they were better equipped to support them at home. They understood, through good communication, the range of intervention work, the nurturing, care and guidance that were used to support their children. They were grateful for the additional work and attention which their children who had SEND received.
- The well-being of all students was closely monitored. The effective team of counsellors provided very good guidance and support to students and fully involved parents in any proposals for support and in decision-making. The identification of any students potentially at risk was quickly highlighted through the vigilance of all teachers.

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

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

Very good ↑

- The leadership of the SEND department was committed, hard-working, very well organised and caring. Leaders were dedicated to ensuring a holistic approach to students' development. This impacted positively on all staff. They made effective use of external specialists when necessary to provide enhanced support for students. The department was developing the work of all adults working within learning support.
- The school had implemented secure identification procedures. Leaders were monitoring the work of each student to ensure that progress was being made at an appropriately challenging level. Staff had an improved awareness of the needs of their students as a result of increased training. In addition, teachers used IEPs and learning support documents (LSDs) which gave effective guidance to all staff involved.
- The school worked very well with parents to ensure that they were fully briefed on their child's needs, intervention work and progress. Parents were involved at every stage. They received good quality information from the school so that they were able to give support at home. They were keen to have more sessions where they could develop their knowledge and assist learning more effectively.
- The curriculum had been modified appropriately to provide students with good quality support, intervention and additional teaching. In many instances there was a personalised approach to the curriculum which generated good progress, particularly for students with significant needs.
- Progress was very good for most students with SEND. Differentiation of work within classrooms was very good, especially in KG and PYP, where it was a natural part of each lesson. Students were very confident in their learning throughout the school.

## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Very good ↑

- The Head of School and his senior colleagues shared an ambitious overall strategy for the development of the school. They were all committed to the pursuit of excellence in academic matters and in developing young peoples' values, sense of worth and personal standards. They were fully aware of the National Agenda, which chimed very well with their own school priorities.
- Leaders were fully aware of the IB curriculum and subscribed to its methodology and delivery. They had moved decisively since their recent appointment to raise the profile of the school and to try to ensure that all students at all levels were purposeful, effective ambassadors of their ideals. The development of a culture of intellectual inquiry, of challenge and of questioning was at the heart of their agenda.
- The Head of School had very effectively developed an atmosphere of trust among teachers, students, and parents. Teachers felt empowered under his guidance. He was very ably supported by his senior team. All had involved their colleagues in decision making, in consultation over the direction of the school, and in the formulation of policy. Leaders had made their colleagues accountable, and they appreciated that.
- Very soon after his appointment, the Head of School had taken decisive action to take the school forward. He had quickly ensured the appointment of a key addition to his restructured team, the Deputy with responsibility for pastoral care. Thus strengthened, the team had increased its potential for being an effective, efficient driver of change, and had contributed extensively to the strengthening of morale among teachers.

- In a very short period of time, the restructured management team had taken decisive steps towards developing a harmonious hard-working corporate body. They were faced with strengthening the corporate identity of the student body and were in the process of turning the situation around skilfully and sensitively.

#### School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Good

- The school, and the GEMS organisation, had established extensive procedures for the monitoring of its work. They included not only internal monitoring of teaching, but also visits to evaluate aspects of management, carried out by a team of staff from other GEMS schools. All teachers were monitored during their first year of appointment. As teachers became more experienced, they could opt for tailored staff development.
- While the programme of evaluation embraced all staff at some time, it was not accurate enough. Given that the performance of students dipped noticeably at the MYP and DP stage, the school's analysis and subsequent action had not yet resulted in significant improvements. The school's self-evaluation had not succeeded in identifying the underlying cause. Action was still needed.
- Within the school's development plan there was a focus on improving attainment at MYP. But there was not a focus on the basic improvement of fundamental classroom practice within the parameters of the IB philosophy. Self-evaluation was not always sufficiently focused on what was happening in the classroom.
- The recommendations of the previous report had been addressed, but the outcomes had not yet been fully delivered. The school had invested considerably in Islamic education and Arabic, and had employed the services of an outside consultancy. The results of this intervention were not yet evident. It was also work in progress still to establish alternative pathways for lower attaining students in the senior school.

#### Partnerships with parents and the community

Outstanding

- The school's very strong links ensured high quality involvement with local and international communities and enterprises. Students had chosen the charities which they wished to support and had energetically done so. They were assisting in the construction of a new school in Nepal, and were helping with the special needs centre in Dubai.
- Parents were very involved in the life and work of the school. There were regular informative meetings to discuss students' progress. Parents appreciated the facility to speak to teachers, particularly in the elementary stage. They were made very welcome in the school and considered themselves to be partners.
- The open meetings which had been held were highly commended. Parents now felt fully involved. Although they considered that they were generally well informed, they thought that they could be given more consistent information about what their children needed to do to improve.
- Parents felt that they did not know enough about their children's personal and emotional development at the MYP and DP stages, at the time when they were developing into young adults. Nevertheless, they felt very strongly that they could find all the information they needed through direct communication with the school.

## Governance

Very good ↑

- The GEMS organisation had very good systems for checking parents' views, but did not yet have parental representation on a governing board. However, parents' views were considered and acted upon.
- The governing board had a well-developed system for rigorous evaluation of the school. A sophisticated system of monitoring and support ensured that the school was well served. Governors knew the school very well and were fully acquainted with the performance of students. They were objective evaluators and critical friends, who ensured that the school had prospered and advanced.
- The organisation had listened to the Head of School and had acceded to his request for additional staffing. This had had an immediate effect on provision for students, and, equally importantly, on staff morale. The organisation had well considered plans for the future of the school.




## Management, staffing, facilities and resources

Very good ↓

- The daily life of the school was efficiently managed. However, the use of the six day phase had led to confusion. Younger children were reported to be concerned because they were not sure which day of the cycle was operating. There had been problems with timetabling at the start of the school year. Some students had been unsure of what they were doing during the day.
- The school was very well staffed. On appointment, the Head of School had reviewed staffing and the teacher-student contact time. He had been successful in extending staffing particularly in the secondary school. Teachers were well qualified. They were ably assisted by teaching assistants.
- Classrooms and other teaching and learning areas were of very high quality and very well equipped. The whole campus was conducive to learning and personal development. Very high quality resources were readily available. The school had embarked on a programme to develop and extend the use of tablet computers after its success with the 'Bring your own Device' scheme. Technology was used extensively and imaginatively.
- Science and technology rooms were very well equipped. Art and music rooms facilitated creativity. Extensive specialist facilities included a spacious library, with a welcoming study and reference area. Although the library was well stocked, Arabic books were very limited. Overall, students benefitted greatly from the high quality accommodation.

## 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	354
	2014-2015	151
<b>Teachers</b> 	108	
<b>Students</b> 	204	

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

- Most parents, who responded to the survey, expressed very positive views about almost all aspects of the work of the school.
- Where they were less positive, adverse comments centred on the quality of teaching and on the syllabus in Arabic. A small number compared very unfavourably the progress which their children were making in a modern European language with progress in Arabic. A few suggested that the content of the Arabic language syllabus needed revision.
- In written comments, some parents expressed concerns about bullying, both in and out of class, and on the school's perceived lack of ability to alter such behaviour.
- The recent, frequent changes in senior management were a cause for concern for some, as was their perception that the school was being run more as a business enterprise than an educational establishment.
- About three quarters of students who responded were satisfied with the quality of education offered. Roughly two thirds felt that they were not making good progress in Arabic, either as native speakers or as learners. This was in stark contrast to the very high degree of satisfaction expressed with progress in English, mathematics and science.
- A significant minority of students expressed concerns about behaviour in the school, and about the fact that the school did not deal effectively with extreme misbehaviour.
- A large minority claimed that they did not have appropriate opportunities to learn about Emirati heritage and traditions.
- Students were generally positive in their views of teaching and the curriculum.
- Most teachers, who responded, had very positive opinions about the school.
- A few felt that students did not behave well.

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)