



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational  
needs and disabilities



Innovation

## Inspection Report 2015-2016

North American International School

Curriculum: US

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 Mizhar
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2007
Website	www.naischool.ae
Telephone	04-2884844
Address	Al Mizhar, Dubai, UAE
Principal	Mrs. Sonia Mahajan
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	18 to 21 January 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	539
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	180
Number of students with SEND	83
Largest nationality group of students	Arab

### Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	62
Largest nationality group of teachers	Indian
Number of teaching assistants	14
Teacher-student ratio	1:20
Number of guidance counsellors	2
Teacher turnover	20%

### Curriculum



Educational permit / Licence	US
Main curriculum	US / MOE
External tests and examinations	SAT, IBT, Iowa
Accreditation	Advanced, NEASC accreditation candidate
National Agenda benchmark tests	IBT, Iowa

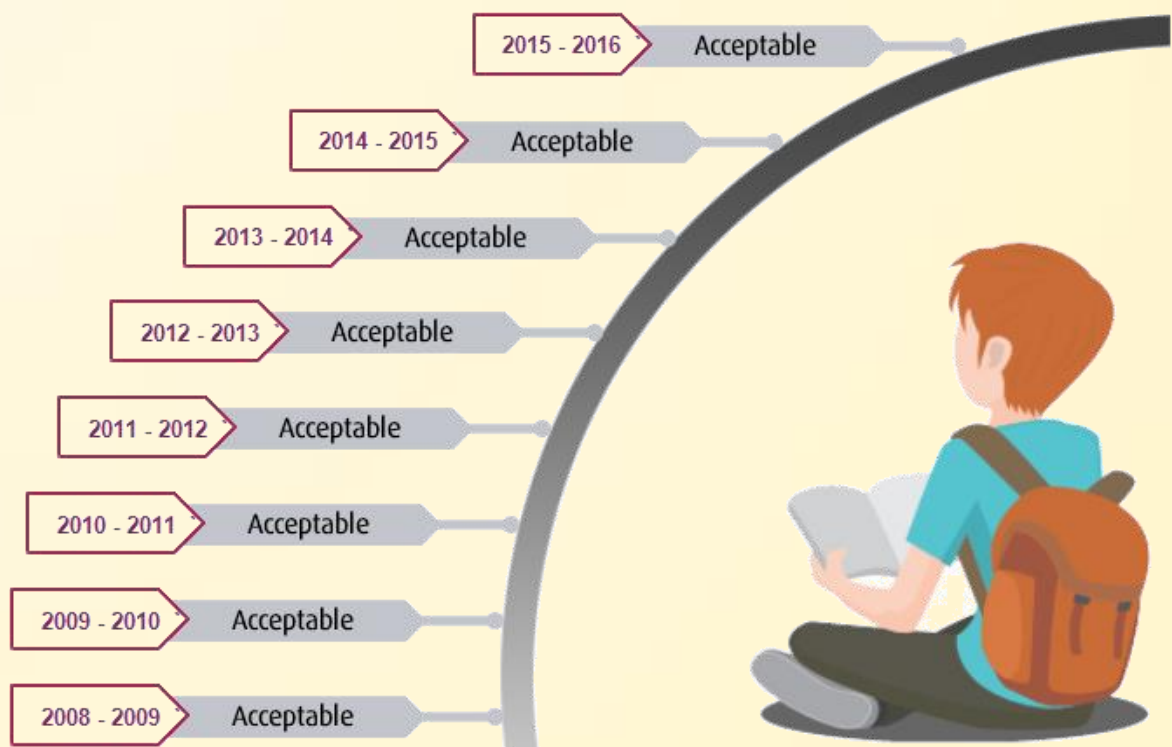


## Summary for parents and the community

**North American International School** was inspected by DSIB from 18 to 21 of January 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, the North American International School provided an **acceptable** quality of education for its students.

- Students' attainment and progress were good throughout the kindergarten (KG) and in mathematics and science across all phases. In Islamic education, the Arabic languages and in elementary and middle phases English, achievement was at expected levels. The best learning was in KG and high school. However, students had few opportunities to develop their critical thinking skills or use technology to enhance learning.
- Students' personal and social development was a strength of the school. Relationships were generally respectful and almost all students were developing an awareness of healthy lifestyles. Attendance and punctuality were good, students arrived to school on time. Students demonstrated a good understanding of Islamic values and the significance of living in a culturally diverse community. Environmental and conservation efforts were actively promoted.
- Teachers had appropriate subject knowledge. However, not all teachers across all phases had a secure knowledge of how students learned. Planning was well structured. However, it did not include a sufficiently targeted range of strategies, to meet the needs of different groups of students. Assessment information was generally used effectively to meet the needs of most students.
- The school offered a broad and balanced US curriculum aligned with the Common Core State Standards as well as the Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum for Arabic and Islamic education. The curriculum was not well modified to meet the different needs of different groups of students, such as those with special needs and disabilities (SEND). Only a few extra-curricular activities were available to students.
- The school provided a secure and safe environment for students. The school took its responsibilities for health and safety seriously. All systems were effective and understood by the whole school community. A comprehensive child protection policy was in place and relevant training was provided for staff. They had a secure understanding of all facets of the policy and the required procedures. Students with SEND required further targeted support within and outside of the classroom.
- Senior leaders were aware of the need to improve students' attainment and progress and always prioritized their strategies. The strengths and weaknesses of the school were clearly identified. Self-evaluation practices were coherent across the school. Parents expressed their confidence about communication, the quality of care and improvements the school was making. The effectiveness of the governing board was evolving. Staffing, facilities and resources were good overall. There were insufficient support personnel and teachers with sufficient international experience in US curriculum schools.



### What did the school do well?

- The senior leadership team had established a strong and consistent vision and mission for the school's future development built around its newly formulated core values.
- The improved provision and outcomes across all key aspects in the KG phase.
- Students' attainment and progress in mathematics and science across all phases were good as was their progress in English in the high school phase. The quality of teaching and students' learning skills in the high school phase improved to good.
- Students' personal and social responsibility, the school's assessment program, curriculum quality and health and safety across all phases remained good.
- Most aspects of leadership and management were judged to be of a good quality.



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

- Eliminate all weak teaching, while improving the consistency of better quality teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring all teachers reach the same level as the school's very best teachers.
- Improve the attainment and progress in Islamic education, Arabic as a first language and as an additional language across all phases and English attainment and progress in the elementary and middle phases by:
  - increasing the level of challenge in the curriculum
  - improving the accuracy of assessment to ensure that it reflects students' genuine standards of attainment.
- Review the school's student support systems and curriculum modifications to ensure that the needs of all groups of students are met.



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

- The school's senior leadership team was fully committed to the provision for students with SEND. The school admitted a range of students with SEND. They had learning targets and individual education plans (IEPs). However, support for them in lessons was not consistent and did not ensure that they all made the expected levels of good progress.
- Parents were satisfied with the quality of support offered by the school. Guidelines for parents were clear. Their child's progress was reported to them through letters, students' diaries, telephone conversations and meetings. However, the school could do more to involve all parents as partners in their child's learning.
- The parents reported that there was a strong and timely contact with the school as often as necessary to discuss concerns. The school kept parents fully informed and encouraged regular communication.
- The school held regular meetings for parents about the progress of their child and kept parents informed about changes in learning support or targets. Parents said that they would like the opportunity to be more involved in deciding the range of learning opportunities and provision for their children.
- The head of SEND and senior leaders, helped parents understand their child's learning needs and how they could support their child's education at home.

### National Agenda Parameter



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

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

#### Main points:

- The school met the registration requirements of the National Agenda Parameter. Progress towards meeting the National Agenda targets was above expectation.
- The school's leaders and staff were well aware of the National Agenda and had a detailed knowledge of the external international tests used to measure the school's progress towards attainment targets in English, mathematics and science. Staff prepared students systematically and so the relevant student groups had a good awareness of the National Agenda. However, the school did not publicise the National Agenda well to parents and governors lacked a comprehensive knowledge of it.
- Senior staff had ensured that all teachers in English, mathematics and science had carried out their own analysis of students' strengths and weaknesses as shown in external international tests. In each subject, teachers were placing more emphasis on aspects which the tests showed needed more attention.
- Teachers were increasingly trying to incorporate more sophisticated questioning techniques and a broader range of teaching approaches to encourage the development of students' critical thinking skills. There were signs of some impact at the high school phase.
- Students had opportunities to use learning technology in lessons to find things out for themselves. In addition, teachers sometimes asked students to research a topic at home, from books or the internet, prior to studying the topic in class. However, use of technology was not always regular, or planned and executed well.



## 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:

- The school, through its vision, mission and core values statements had a secure understanding of the importance of innovation and the development of associated skills. The school had created opportunities for all students to participate in a range of in-class enrichment activities. Key staff were supporting the implementation of new initiatives, with some evidence of enhanced students' critical thinking, research and enquiry skills. Staff had been supported in their endeavors by spacious facilities, and adequate learning technologies. Examples of students' innovative work were proudly displayed throughout the school. For example, a Grade 12 student used the forensic investigation of the length of leg bones to determine the overall height of person. This required the student to use of a range of higher order thinking skills.

Overall school performance

Acceptable

1. Students' achievement





		KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Islamic education</b> 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Arabic as a first language</b> 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b> 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>English</b> 	Attainment	Good	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable	Good ↑
<b>Mathematics</b> 	Attainment	Good ↑	Good	Good ↑	Good
	Progress	Good ↑	Good	Good ↑	Good
<b>Science</b> 	Attainment	Good ↑	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Good ↑	Good	Good	Good

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Learning skills</b>	Good ↑	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good ↑

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Personal development	Good	Good	Good	Good
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good	Good	Good
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good	Good	Good

## 3. Teaching and assessment

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



## 4. Curriculum

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Good	Good	Good
Curriculum adaptation	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Good	Good	Good	Good
Care and support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

## 6. Leadership and management

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



## Main inspection report

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

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



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

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

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

## 1. Students' achievement

### KG

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

- Attainment in English against the school's KG curriculum standard was good, with the majority of children attaining at levels above the curriculum standards. Evidence in lessons and in the school's own tracking data indicated that children developed good speaking, listening and early reading skills. By KG 2, children were able to speak with fluency and expression and were beginning to use consonant-vowel-consonant words to help with the acquisition of reading. They were able to talk about simple stories and answer questions from adults. Children's attainment and progress in their writing required development.
- In mathematics, children in KG 1 were able to identify shapes and apply this learning to real world experiences. Well planned lessons enabled number and shape to be connected to real life examples. A majority of children were able to add numbers and count securely. Children were able to recognize numbers to 10 and apply their knowledge to number activities. In KG 2, children were able to collect and analyze data to make picture graphs using sticker fish, jelly beans other shapes. Opportunities for children to consolidate their mathematical learning in planned group activities were variable.
- In science, children's attainment was above curriculum standards. The majority of children were able to predict, observe and record, while experimenting with matter. They understood the differences between solids, liquids and gases. By KG 2, children had developed good investigation and exploration skills. They were able to explore the effects of pollution on ocean life. They could talk about their observations in a video where turtles were eating plastic. Children could suggest ways to help stop this form of environmental destruction. Children used the various practical opportunities to make real world connections and gain an understanding of different scientific concepts. The majority made at least good progress over time.



### Elementary

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

- In Islamic education, most students were working at levels that were in-line with the curriculum expectations. Most students demonstrated knowledge of Islamic concepts and principles at an age-appropriate level. For instance, they knew about the Pillars of Islam and Faith. Most students' skills of recitation of shorter verses of the Holy Qur'an were acceptable. They exhibited increased levels of accuracy. Most students made expected progress in relation to appropriate lesson objectives. However, their progress in understanding of the value of what they were learning and how it applied to their own lives was less well developed.
- In Arabic as a first language, the attainment of most students was in line with Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum standards. The attainment level of students had been consistently acceptable over the past three years. In lessons, most students displayed appropriate listening and speaking skills. Students' reading comprehension was developing at an adequate rate. However, the development of creative writing was not consistent across the phase. By the end of this phase, girls had made better progress than boys.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students displayed acceptable language skills against curriculum standards for non-native speakers. Students' attainment levels had been acceptable for the past three years. The listening skills of most students were secure. They demonstrated sufficient ability to understand basic classroom questions and instructions. Writing was the least developed skill. Students were familiar with an appropriate range of Arabic words and by the end of Grade 5, they could use them correctly in short sentences. Students' work books showed that most made acceptable progress developing their knowledge of words and basic grammar using nouns and verbs. Generally, girls had outperformed boys, often by significant margins.
- Most students in English were learning at age appropriate levels and they knew how to apply that learning. By Grade 5, a majority of students could read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support their comprehension. They could write opinion pieces, and informative texts to examine a topic and they could convey ideas and information appropriately. Overall, their skills of extended writing were slowly developing. International Benchmark Test (IBT) results reflected a variable picture. Students in Grade 1 had strong reading comprehension, listening, spelling and language skills. However, this pattern was not repeated in other grades until Grade 5.
- Teachers linked learning activities closely to the appropriate mathematics curriculum targets, with suitable progression, and they usually explained concepts clearly. As a result, the majority of students made good progress over time from their starting points, and their attainment was above expected curriculum standards. Progress in individual lessons was more variable. At the earlier grades, students showed a good understanding of two and three-dimensional shapes. Across the phase, skills in calculation were good, but problem-solving skills were less well developed. Students performed well on a range of international benchmark tests, and their results in those tests had shown steady improvement over the last few years.

- Elementary phase students continued to build on the development of their science knowledge, skills and understandings from KG. They learned to ‘think like scientists’ and increased their scientific vocabulary. They were able to conduct age-appropriate investigations in a dedicated junior science laboratory. In Grade 1, students studied motion and participated in a problem solving activities, to determine how to best move a bucket of materials. Students in Grade 5 developed an understanding of the concept of insulation through an investigation. A majority of students across all grades in this phase made better than expected progress during lessons and over time in the development of the knowledge, skills and understanding. The results of students in IBT confirmed this.

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

- In Islamic education, most students attained at levels that were in line with MoE curriculum and national standards. Most students had a basic knowledge of the key principles of faith and worship in Islam. Most students could explain the Five Pillars of Islam with some detail. A majority of students’ Qur’an recitation and memorization skills were in line with expectations. However, linking knowledge to real life and applying the range of Islamic values in their own life was variable. Most students made the expected progress as measured against the lesson objectives. The progress of non-Arab Muslim students was better than the progress of Arab Muslims.
- In Arabic as a first language, the attainment of most students was in line with MoE curriculum standards. Students’ attainment levels had been acceptable for the previous three years and continued to be so. Evidence from lesson observations and from their work books, demonstrated a sufficient knowledge of Arabic grammar by a majority of students. Students communicated their understanding of text appropriately but most used colloquial Arabic. Students’ creative writing skills were underdeveloped, more so those of the boys’ than of the girls. Generally, against modest lesson objectives, most students progressed appropriately in developing their skills of comprehension.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students had acceptable language skills. Students listening and speaking skills were within the expected levels for non-native speakers. Students could recognize basic familiar text, and their understanding and application of basic grammar was developing at an appropriate rate. Although the majority of students could follow a model to write basic text, their ability to write Arabic text independently was insecure. Against appropriate lesson objectives, most students made expected progress developing their knowledge of words and basic phrases. They could use them correctly in a familiar context. The progress of girls in developing their writing skills was appropriate; however this was not the case of boys whose writing skills were weak. Students identified as having SEND were given low level work, consequently their progress was restricted.

- In English, students' attainment results in IBT reflected a variable picture. However, students were now beginning to progress as expected against curriculum standards, reflecting the changes in curriculum focus over the past two years. Students' listening and speaking skills were broadly acceptable. Most students understood what they had been learning as well as the rationale for that learning, and were able to apply that learning. In some grades students did not reach age-appropriate expectations in reading comprehension, capitalization punctuation and usage or expression.
- Students engaged in mathematical tasks, which were linked to appropriate curriculum targets. This helped students to make good progress over time from their starting points, although there was some inconsistency in a few lessons. Most students had knowledge, skills and understanding in line with relevant national curriculum standards, and a majority achieved beyond those standards. By Grade 8, students had built on their understanding from the elementary phase and had acquired good knowledge of more advanced geometry such as Pythagoras' Theorem and transformations. Students' skills in calculation developed well, for example in fractions and decimals, but problem-solving skills were less well developed. At this phase, students performed very well in a range of IBT and their results in those tests had shown steady improvement over the previous few years.
- A majority of students achieved at a good level in science. They increased their scientific vocabulary, and were able to handle increasingly complex ideas and concepts. They were able to continue to develop their critical thinking and problem solving skills, through research and frequent investigations. They were familiar with the scientific method and were able to generate and test their own hypotheses and draw mostly accurate conclusions. Against appropriate lessons objectives, a majority made good progress. There was little difference between the performance of boys and girls.

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

- In Islamic education, most students attained levels that were in line with curriculum and national standards. Most students had a secure knowledge about Islamic rituals. They could talk about and discussed the conditions of marriage and divorce in Islam to an acceptable level. Students' knowledge of Seerah was in line with curriculum expectations; they could talk about some of the Prophets' (PBUH) factual events. However, linking their knowledge of Islam to real life and applying the Islamic values in their life was not always evident. Most students made the expected progress as measured against the lesson objectives. However, their abilities to memorize and recite the Holy Qur'an were less well developed. Non-Arab Muslim students made better progress than Arab Muslims.
- In Arabic as a first language, the attainment of most students was within the expected levels against the MoE curriculum standards. Students could express their views on a range of topics. In lessons, girls demonstrated higher confidence in the use of standard Arabic, than the boys. Students' comprehension skills were at age-appropriate level but their ability to analyze literature was variable. Students' progress in developing creative writing skills was stronger in the girls' section, than in the boys' section.

- In Arabic as an additional language, the attainment levels of most students were within the expected levels of non-native speakers. Most students could say a few sentences about themselves. Their knowledge of Arabic vocabulary was developing at an appropriate rate. However, their ability to use that knowledge in unfamiliar contexts, particularly in the boys' section, was weak. The writing skills of girls were developing at appropriate rates. However, in comparison, the majority of boys did not make sufficient progress. Students identified as having SEND made slow progress overall.
- In English lessons, students routinely built on previous knowledge. They expanded and deepened their knowledge base with new information. Students understood irony as a literary device and compared it to previous literary devices they already knew. They were able to interpret a narrator's point of view in sophisticated texts, and interpret factual texts using synonymous phrases. Differentiated lessons allowed most students to be successful learners, as evidenced by their good progress within lessons. Most could appropriately explain their work, why they were doing it, apply it in English classes and transfer it to other curricular areas. Students' creative writing skills were developing.
- Learning activities in mathematics were linked to progressively more complex concepts and curriculum targets. Students handled the increase in demand well, making good progress relative to where they had transitioned from the middle phase. Most made appropriate progress in algebra, trigonometry, functions and graphs. A majority made better than expected progress overall. Attainment was well aligned to relevant national curriculum standards. For example, Grade 9 students understood the equation of a straight line, and Grade 12 students understood how a chord of a curve became, in the limit, a tangent to the curve. Students performed well on a range of international external tests, and their results in those tests had shown steady improvement over the previous few years.
- The attainment and progress in the sciences of biology, chemistry, and physics were good. Grade 9 students continued to build on their previous work in science. Investigations and research featured strongly in a majority of science classes. Students were able to build models of a DNA strand in Grade 9 biology classes. In Grade 12 chemistry students peer-taught a lesson on acids, bases and salts. The skills of critical thinking and problem solving were developing. By the time students completed their last year of this phase they were prepared to successfully engage in post-school science work.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Good ↑	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good ↑

- Most students demonstrated a positive attitude toward their learning. In most lessons observed, students were well engaged. When given the opportunity they took responsibility for their own learning. This was especially the case in the high school. In the KG phase, children often approached learning with joy, and they displayed enthusiasm towards their learning. Students' abilities to work independently were a developing feature across the school.
- Students' collaborative learning skills were evident in English and science across all phases. However, this was not consistent in other subjects and especially in the elementary and middle phases, where opportunities were not routinely provided. In the high school phase, students worked productively together when completing group work. They expressed their views persuasively to their peers.
- In Islamic education, English and science, students related and purposefully applied their learning to the real world. For example in a Grade 9 biology lesson, students developed a model for humans genetic DNA. However, this was not a consistent feature of the elementary and middle phases.
- Opportunities for analysis, evaluation and review were not consistent across all phases and subjects. In most subjects, the development of critical thinking was at an emergent level. Students' use of technology to support their learning and research was limited.



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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Personal development	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Students' attitudes were positive in all phases. Students reflected a great pride in their school and were especially respectful of their school's environment. Students in all classrooms were mostly positive and they also responded well to critical feedback from teachers and peers. They were somewhat self-reliant, understanding procedures and expectations in classrooms and throughout the school.
- Students responded well to adults, whether teachers, general workers, visitors or parents. They were open, polite, respectful, and engaged easily in conversation. Students noted that bullying was extremely rare and was addressed immediately and appropriately when it did occur. Recently, the school had held an 'anti-bullying week', which was an informative and productive event for students and their parents.
- There was an acceptance of diversity and a celebration of differences. Students were extremely sensitive to one another's needs. Students with learning and with physical differences were treated with respect and equality. Students from many different countries felt at home in the school. Respectful relationships were a hallmark of the school, acknowledged by students in all phases.
- Students were very excited about extra-curricular activities that promoted healthy lifestyles. Opportunities for outdoor sports were highlighted. Students understood the rationale behind healthy snacks in the canteen and most were aware of the importance of making safe and healthy choices. Some students who were overweight were working with the nurse to understand deeper aspects of nutrition and to incorporate healthier choices into their diets.
- Attendance was very good at 96 per cent. Students arrived to school and lessons on time. During lesson observations, there were very few instances of students' tardiness to class.

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

- Students had a good understanding of the influence of Islamic values on the modern society in Dubai. They were aware of the importance of Islam in the modern society of Dubai, and they respected and appreciated Islamic tradition. They could talk about some Islamic values.
- Students were knowledgeable about the heritage and culture that underpins and influences contemporary life in the UAE. They described some of the main sporting activities such as camel racing, horse racing and falconry. Students were able to talk about some of the main features of Dubai such as famous buildings and parks. They were able to discuss in detail the features of Dubai as multi-cultural society.
- Students demonstrated a clear understanding of, and fully appreciated and celebrated, their own culture. However, there was a limited awareness of the diversity of cultures from around the world.



	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Social responsibility and innovation skills</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Students understood their part in the school community. Even the youngest learners had classroom tasks and acted as classroom monitors. Older students volunteered in several ways as part of their forty-hour community service requirement. Students participated in clean-up campaigns at local parks and worked with the elderly and the disabled. Opportunities for volunteering in a non-school setting and for involvement were fewer for younger students.
- Most students demonstrated a positive work ethic. They were active in charity campaigns and in the planning of activities to benefit those less fortunate. Students helped organize a blanket drive for people living in Nepal and sought donations for Syrian refugees.
- Students in all grades had high levels of environmental awareness. They investigated conservation and the environment in their lessons. They put into practice what they had learned in various ways. They participated in recycling drives to collect newspapers, acted as 'green monitors' in their classrooms and designed and produced posters about conservation and recycling. In addition, they brought and nourished plants in the school's organic garden.

### 3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Teaching for effective learning</b>	Good ↑	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good ↑

- Teachers' knowledge of the relevant academic concepts was strong in English, mathematics and science, and secure in Islamic education for those teachers who taught non-Arab Muslims. Teachers in the KG were aware of how children learnt best, and applied their knowledge well. In the other phases, this aspect was positive overall, particularly in the high school phase.
- Teachers' lesson plans set out appropriate key points, including what the students would learn, the resources they would need to complete their tasks and the teaching and learning approaches to be adopted. Teachers did not always implement the plans to full effect, particularly in Islamic education. Lesson planning in the KG was best when children's learning activities were closely linked to the lesson objectives.
- Teachers were increasingly posing questions which made students reflect and think for themselves. In the best examples, teachers generated meaningful discussions. For example in an English lesson in the high school phase, the teacher and students enjoyed a dialogue about the meaning and use of irony in literature. The quality of questioning was, overall, inconsistent across phases and subjects.
- Teachers often gave students in their class the same tasks, with the expectation that different groups of students would produce different outcomes. This approach meant that work was not always well matched to the needs of all groups of students. Some teachers planned differentiated tasks and resources to meet the needs of different groups of learners. The implementation of the plans was inconsistent.
- Teachers were increasingly focused on developing students' deeper thinking, including their critical thinking and independent learning. Some signs of impact were beginning to appear, particularly in the high school phase. Some critical thinking and problem-solving tasks only involved short responses or a small number of steps and did not offer sufficient levels of challenge.

- Teaching in Arabic as a first language was generally acceptable. Lessons were engaging, but expectations were modest. Teachers had sufficient subject knowledge. However, their competency in teaching language skills was not always evident. The quality of teaching in Arabic as an additional language was inconsistent. In a few lessons, expectations were appropriate and teachers knew how students learn language. This was not the case in most lessons.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Assessment	Good	Good	Good ↑	Good ↑

- Internal assessments across the school were mostly good and well linked to the standards and stated curriculum. They measured students' progress well and provided accurate and almost always valid data on which to make instructional decisions and to inform instruction. However, in Arabic and Islamic education, internal assessments were not consistently linked to curriculum standards.
- The school benchmarked students' outcomes against national and international norms. TIMSS, PISA and PIRLS were administered to assess attainment and progress and allowed the school to compare its results to those for other students in Dubai and beyond. The school administered the IBT tests in Grades 3 to 10 and the Iowa tests in Grades 1 to 12 in English, mathematics and science.
- Data were well analyzed and recorded and made available to administrators and teachers. It was tracked over time and the effectiveness of its interpretation both in terms of individual and group progress, was increasing. The systems for doing this were well in place, but data were not always analyzed as deeply as it might have and alignment with international benchmarks was sometimes not robust.
- Although considerable data were available to teachers about their students' performance, it was not yet fully utilized by teachers to inform instruction. Teachers were not always sure how to effectively use data to plan and differentiate instruction for all students. This was particularly true for students with SEND. In Arabic and Islamic education the use of data was not particularly effective.
- Teachers knew their students well and addressed their strengths and weaknesses in planning lessons and providing feedback. However, the marking of work, did not consistently provide sufficient information about what steps students needed to take to improve. Students, even those in Grade 1, often assessed their own work and occasionally that of their peers.

#### 4. Curriculum

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Good	Good	Good

- The curriculum was aligned with and followed North Carolina State Standards (other than KG which was based on the New York state), and Common Core Standards. The school's leadership had developed a broad-based, relevant, and age appropriate curriculum with every lesson objective, assignment, and assessment tied to an element of a specific standard. Students developed skills, knowledge and understandings based on those standards.

- Evidence observed in students books, validated that learning built well on students' previous knowledge. Students accessed previous knowledge as they learned and integrated new skills and understanding. In every phase, lesson activities and tasks were differentiated into three levels. Students with SEND with learning issues were mainly incorporated into the lower ability group rather than having individually prepared assignments.
- High school phase students were provided with some curriculum choice. Courses in travel and tourism and introduction to financial management were added to the senior students' curriculum this year in response to interests and aspirations. Students expressed an interest in learning Spanish, either as a curriculum option or an extra-curricular activity.
- While cross-curricular links were noted on every lesson plan, there were varying degrees of integration across phases. Some were managed very well, including science links in a lesson on word contractions, and linking the theme of energy in music with work being done in social studies. However, in some classes, although links were noted, they were not clearly established within the work of lessons.
- The curriculum was formally reviewed twice annually. Data from external exams were also analysed. Data from this analysis informed the curriculum, creating a more experiential based science curriculum and the overall writing project now integrated throughout the English curriculum.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum adaptation	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- The delivery of a differentiated curriculum was inconsistent across the school. There was insufficient application of extension activity for the most able, nor sufficient adaptation for those students with SEND. In the best lessons, the classroom teachers had differentiated the curriculum to maximize student learning. In the best classes, children were challenged and the engaging activities promoted higher order thinking skills.
- Students had opportunities to participate in a range of innovative projects. The school took part in environmental projects and students were involved in an environment awareness week. The students as 'eco-transformers' pledged to be nature buddies and some participated in the Green Hope Conference on Climate Change. The school recognized the need for more open-ended tasks enabling students to further develop critical thinking skills.
- Students' knowledge and appreciation of the UAE was integrated into curriculum topics and learning. Students participated in a range of opportunities to develop their understanding of UAE's values, culture and society. Evidence was well displayed on notice boards throughout all phases of the school.
- The school offered Arabic lessons to all students in the KG phase. Students in KG 1 had two 40 minutes lessons per week, while students in KG 2 had three lessons. The program focused on letters and word formation and followed the same theme covered in the entire KG phase every week.

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Good	Good	Good	Good

- The school had adequate formal procedures for safeguarding students, including a well-designed child protection policy. The counsellor, who had a very wide range of responsibilities, dealt with all child protection situations, whether referred by teachers, medical, staff or self-reported. Bullying, whether direct or by internet or social media, was rare in the school. When reported, it was handled immediately and appropriately by the school.
- The school provided a safe environment from arrival through to dismissal. The school was clean and attractive, the bathrooms were hygienic and the classrooms were fully accessible. Staff members were evident throughout the school, from supporting arriving KG and elementary students into the building, to monitoring and guiding them through to dismissal time.
- The school buildings and equipment were sufficient and well maintained. Students' health records were securely stored, maintaining the confidentiality of students. Records of incidents and subsequent actions were well maintained.
- All students were accommodated within the safe and secure physical environment. A lift provided access to upper floor levels of the school. Science laboratories complied with all safety requirements including the storage of chemicals, and the use of goggles, eyewash stations, and fume cupboards. The environment was clean, and enhanced by bright and attractive displays of student work.
- The school provided regular thorough health examinations of students, including eye, ear and weight checks annually. The doctor and nurse worked with both students and parents to provide information about healthy living choices. They presented programs on nutrition and exercise to guide students and parents in making healthy choices. Nutritional and healthy food choices were available in the school canteen.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Care and support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Staff-student relationships were underpinned by the schools mission statement and core values. Teachers knew the students well and were generally aware of their individual needs. Teachers in KG were able to effectively developed children's personal and social learning skills. Positive behaviour was promoted and managed well by all staff. Students knew the rules and regulations and the large majority took responsibility for their own behaviour.
- The school kept accurate records on attendance and punctuality. The school took immediate action when students were repeatedly late or absent. Parents were contacted promptly.
- Early identification and screening before entry was seen as a key factor in the provision for students with SEND. The school had established baselines and made use of a variety of formal and informal identification procedures. These were matched to interventions and support. Gifted and talented students were identified through the results of external and internal assessments and teacher observation.



- The school had systems to support students with SEND. In the best classes, identification procedures were matched to interventions and support. However, this was inconsistent. Some students with SEND were withdrawn from lessons for individual support or small group activities. The differentiated lesson planning did not always offer enough challenge to support the learning needs of the gifted and talented students and ensure consistently good achievement.
- The school staff monitored the well-being of all students. Transition procedures to different phases were well managed. The lead staff member for students with SEND was also responsible for the advice and guidance for students. This had an impact on the quality of support offered to senior students in their career choices and higher education pathways. Their requirements and options were not fully explored or understood.

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

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


Acceptable

- The school's senior leadership team was fully committed to the provision for students with SEND. The school admitted a range of students with SEND. Leaders effectively promoted an inclusive ethos, demonstrating a commitment to support all students. The school's admissions and SEND policies were clear, comprehensive and effective. Clear timescales were in place to support early identification and to meet the needs of students with SEND.
- The school understood the importance of in depth identification of students with SEND. The SEND department provided teachers and learning assistants with appropriate professional development to ensure they had the appropriate knowledge and skills. Most support and targets matched the needs of the student, but in some cases this was not reviewed or evaluated regularly enough and as a result provision was inaccurate and inconsistent.
- Parents worked closely with the SEND department and school leadership team to coordinate the support for their child. Parents were satisfied with the support offered by the school and were provided with guidance for support at home. An area for improvement was to involve parents more in the process of identification, as well as the setting of targets and reviewing of IEPs.
- Teachers made some appropriate modifications to the curriculum for students with SEND. However differentiation in class was variable and often did not fully match the students' needs. Curriculum modifications lacked rigor. For most students targets were linked to teaching objectives. However, the delivery often hindered progress. The support for students was inconsistent across classes and there was limited evidence of careful, targeted prompting or proactive tracking.
- Assessment information was used by staff in their planning. Assessment results indicated that the majority of students with SEND had successfully met the curriculum expectations. The teachers and SEN department tracked the progress of the individual students and in the best lessons set targets based around learning skills and competencies. Where support was good this was matched by progress.




## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Good 

- The school's leaders had redefined the schools guiding documents. The revised mission, vision and core values were aspirational. They acknowledged the UAE National Agenda by incorporating entrepreneurship, innovation, research and goals to support increased student attainment and progress. The school's guiding statements had been actively promoted throughout the school and its community, and were beginning to become embedded into the everyday life of the school.
- All of the school's leaders were effective in supporting the evolving learning culture. Most of the middle managers were committed to improved student learning outcomes, within their areas of responsibility. A majority were developing their understanding of the curriculum and the best practices in teaching, student learning and the assessment of students' work.
- Throughout the school, effective and professional relationships and communication existed. Levels of consultation were high. Leadership was distributive and all leaders acknowledged a collective responsibility for the improvement of student learning. Students' progress was monitored and gaps in learning identified. Teachers were observed and the quality of their teaching assessed. The collegial nature of leadership supported the positive tone throughout the school.
- The senior leadership team including the principal demonstrated a developing level of professional competence that ensured continuous improvement. They exhibited a commitment to innovation and had implemented a number of strategies to ensure improved student learning outcomes, throughout the school. Students had been provided with leadership opportunities within class and at school council level.
- The school leaders had maintained an expected level of school performance and improved a number of key aspects of the school. All statutory and regulatory requirements had been met. However, some senior students did not receive appropriate levels of careers advice and guidance.

### School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Good 

- The school had used a broad range of data in its self-evaluation process to identify the school strengths and areas requiring development. It had analyzed its International benchmark and Iowa test results and its attendance data. It considered the previous Inspection and accreditation recommendations. Its evaluation was, as a consequence, comprehensive and formed the basis of the school's school improvement plans.
- The school effectively and systematically monitored the teaching and learning across all phases. Conferences to discuss individual teachers teaching strengths and areas for development occurred. Support was provided through personal help through professional development sessions. However, a number of the schools judgments of teaching quality were too generous. The Arabic and Islamic teachers were not assessed using the same criteria as all of the other teachers.
- The school's school improvement planning document was comprehensive and based on the DSIB inspection and NEASC accreditation recommendations and a range of strategies identified through the schools' self-evaluation processes. The resultant actions were well-targeted and measurable. They adequately addressed the school's UAE National priorities and its strategies for improved community relationships.

- The school had partly met most of last year's DSIB Inspection recommendations. It had been successful in demonstrating steady improvements over time in a few key areas in KG and the overall quality of its teaching had improved. There had been improved opportunities for independent learning and investigation. The school had better utilized its assessment data to inform lesson planning and teaching.

#### Partnerships with parents and the community

Good

- Parents spoke highly of the school and its welcoming environment. A strong parents association met regularly and acted as an effective conduit between the school's management and its parent body. Parents attended school events such as the reading day and the international day. They were regularly surveyed to gauge their opinions. They also had an active voice through their representatives on the governing board.
- Parents were appreciative of the regular circulars and publications which the school provided. Important future school events were communicated in both Arabic and English. In addition, students' diaries were extensively used by teachers and parents as a reliable means of communication. The principal was proactive in meeting parents and supported them in providing timely solutions to their children's educational, social and personal problems.
- The school's attainment and progress reports to parents were regular and comprehensive. In the KG phase the reports listed and judged children's progress across a broad range of skills. In the higher phases, students' achievements in a range of key subjects, along with their personal development, were graded. These judgements were supported by an extended written commentary, which included a few required next steps for learning.
- The school made a few contributions to local national and international communities. The school's events had been used to raise funds. However, links with other schools were in their developmental stages.

#### Governance




Acceptable

- The school's governing board was broadly representative of the stakeholders of its community. A number of members were new to post this year. The board's meeting agendas included items such as educational data, as well as operational items. The board regularly surveyed parents, students and staff to ascertain their views about a broad range of performance indicators. This information provided them with pointers about the effectiveness of the schools operations.
- The governing board monitored the schools performance periodically. They considered the outcomes of the schools Iowa and IBT testing and other assessment information. They received reports from the principal about the schools progress in meeting genuinely challenging targets for improvement. However, the effectiveness of their rigorous evaluative process was restricted because the board met infrequently, thus reducing the timeliness of debate.
- The board was pro-active in its support for improved learning resources. They had ensured that all statutory requirements were met. As the board had evolved, its impact on the overall performance of the school had increased. However, the board was yet to support the school in its endeavor's to increase the number of internationally experienced teaching and support staff.

Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The day-to-day operations of the school were effectively delegated and were crisp and efficient. There were clearly stated policies and flexible processes and systems for day to day planning, communication and decision making. Students, staff and parents had confidence in the consistency of these operations.</li> <li>• The school was generously staffed. Class sizes were small and teachers were supported by a high number of support staff. However, about a third of the teachers were new to the school. Most were suitably qualified, but not all had a teaching qualification. High school students did not have the benefit of a full-time careers guidance counselor.</li> <li>• The school used its extensive facilities and space creatively to enhance students learning and sustain their interest. Display space was populated with a broad array of high quality students' work. Furnishings were suitable and allowed for a range of different activities, such as small group work. Specialist rooms included science and computer laboratories, music and language rooms and a well-resourced library.</li> <li>• The school possessed a good range of learning resources. The KG phase had ample resources, but with only a few computers available for in-class use. In the higher phases there were ample manipulative, interactive and physical materials to encourage students to look for evidence and link concepts to real-life situations. However, the school did not have classroom based computers for independent research and project work.</li> </ul>	

## The views of the parents, teachers and students

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

Responses to the surveys		
Responses received	Number	
<b>Parents*</b> 	2015-2016	137
	2014-2015	83
<b>Teachers</b> 	45	
<b>Students</b> 	84	

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

- A large minority of parents completed the KHDA survey this year, almost double the number of the previous year. Around half of the teachers and almost all eligible students completed their surveys.
- Most parents, who completed the survey, were satisfied with the quality of education provided to their child by the school. Parents were extremely positive the progress their child made in Islamic education, English, mathematics and science. Almost all parents supported this view.
- All parents who completed the survey agreed that their child enjoyed school, was well prepared for the next stages in their education and life, would get a recognized qualification at the end of their schooling.
- All parents agreed that their child was safe while at school, that the school was well led, and that their child's academic reports and parents' meetings with teachers felt them informed about how their child was progressing.
- The parental responses regarding the quality of provision for students with SEND were extremely positive.
- Most students were satisfied with the quality of education available at the school. Most agreed that they were making good progress in Islamic education, English and science. A large majority agreed that they were making good progress in mathematics.
- Most students agreed that their teachers were skilled and well qualified, and teachers helped them learn well most of the time, through a good range of subjects.
- Most students agreed that they would get a recognized qualification at the completion of their schooling, were safe and treated fairly while at school. Teachers were positively supportive of all aspects of the schools provision for its students. Most agreed that students were well behaved, and that they enjoyed school. All agreed that students were safe at school, and that parents and students were kept up to date about students' progress.

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)