



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational
needs and disabilities



Innovation

Inspection Report 2015-2016

Dar Al Marefa School

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	Mirdif
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2008
Website	www.daralmarefa.ae
Telephone	04-288-5782
Address	P.O. Box 112602
Principal	Jake Madden
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	14 to 17 March 2016

Students



Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	4 -16
Grades or year groups	Kindergaretn1 to Grade 12
Number of students on roll	675
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	562
Number of students with SEND	26
Largest nationality group of students	Emirati

Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	65
Largest nationality group of teachers	British/Syrian/Lebanese
Number of teaching assistants	19
Teacher-student ratio	1:12
Number of guidance counsellors	1
Teacher turnover	15%

Curriculum



Educational permit / Licence	International Baccalaureate (IB)
Main curriculum	IB / PYP, MYP, DP
External tests and examinations	IB, ISA, ACER
Accreditation	IB
National Agenda benchmark tests	ISA

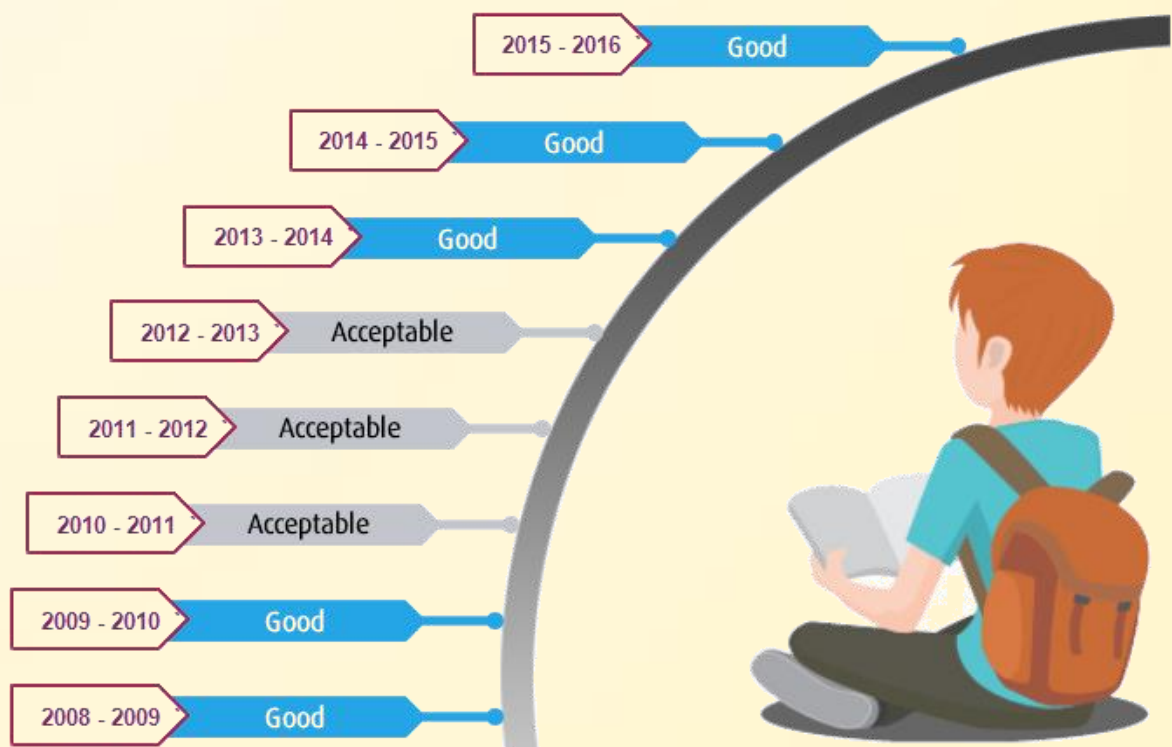


Summary for parents and the community

Dar Al Marefa School was inspected by the 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, **Dar Al Marefa School** provided a **good** quality of education for its students.

- Children's attainment and progress were good in the Kindergarten (KG) across all subjects. They were also good in Islamic education, Arabic as an additional language and science in the Primary Years Programme (PYP) and the Middle Years Programme (MYP). Their attainment in Arabic, English and mathematics was acceptable in the PYP, MYP and Diploma Programme (DP). Students developed good learning skills across all phases. This contributed to the good progress they were making in almost all subjects. Both attainment and progress in Islamic education in the DP were acceptable.
- Students' personal development and social responsibility were very well developed. This contributed well to the calm, orderly and purposeful atmosphere in the school. Students' enjoyment in coming to school was reflected in their good attendance. Their understanding of Islamic values and awareness of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) culture were outstanding in the KG and very good in the other phases.
- Most teachers used their good subject knowledge well to promote students' learning. In a few lessons in Arabic, teachers' expectations were too low and the learning activities were not challenging enough. The school had effective assessment systems in place and used assessments well to compare students' attainment and progress to international standards. However, teachers did not always make enough use of this information to ensure that the work provided in lessons was matched to their students' attainment levels.
- The curriculum was well planned to promote students' progress and learning from the KG through to Grade 12. A good range of enrichment activities enhanced the curriculum. The curriculum was planned to support the transition from the KG to Grade 1 and the demands of the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme. Although subject choice in the DP was limited, the school planned to offer additional subjects as the number of students in Grades 11 and 12 increases. At the time of the inspection, the time requirements for teaching Islamic education in the lower grades of the PYP and in Grade 12 were not met.
- Health and safety arrangements were outstanding in all phases of the school. Students' attendance and punctuality were monitored very effectively. Relationships between students and adults were friendly and respectful throughout the school.
- The principal had established a very effective team of senior and middle leaders. All were highly committed to continued improvement in the quality of education the school provides. All teachers were involved in the process of school self-evaluation. Leaders knew the school's strengths and where further improvement was needed well. However, the evaluations of the school's performance in some areas were too generous. School leaders had established effective communications with parents who in turn were very supportive of the school. Through reports from the principal and the very active parents' committee, governors had good knowledge of the school and the views of parents. The resources and facilities in school were appropriately varied and of good quality.



What did the school do well?

- Students made good progress in learning most of the key subjects and had good learning skills.
- Students had a strong understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures.
- Students' personal development was very good. Their very positive attitudes and behaviour contributed to the school's calm and purposeful learning environment.
- The quality of teaching, the assessment of learning and the curriculum were all good.
- The school's health and safety arrangements were outstanding.
- School improvement plans reflected strong commitment to the UAE's National Agenda objectives.



What does the school need to do next?

- Ensure compliance with the Ministry of Education's (MoE) statutory requirements with regard to the provision of Islamic education in the DP and the lower years of the PYP.
- Raise students' attainment:
 - in Arabic, by raising expectations and ensuring that the work set is suitably challenging for all groups of students
 - in English, by including learning objectives in lesson planning that are related to language skill development alongside the objectives from the units of inquiry
 - in mathematics, by developing conceptual understanding and application in practical problem solving.
- Increase the accuracy of school's self-evaluation by ensuring that there is greater consistency in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.
- Improve the use of assessment information by ensuring that:
 - full use is made of this information to identify the particular learning needs of students
 - work in lessons is closely matched to their learning needs
 - students' progress towards their individual learning objectives is accurately assessed and used to guide their next steps in learning.



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

- Most students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) received appropriate support and made at least good progress from their various starting points, both in their learning and personal development.
- Parents received helpful termly reports on their children's academic and personal development. They could obtain further information upon request.
- Communication between the school and students' homes was generally effective. Clearer statements of the additional information parents could expect and when and how often they could expect it, would support even better home-school partnership.
- Parents were involved at an appropriately early stage when concerns were raised about the identification of special educational needs. Thereafter, there was scope to help parents feel more involved as equal partners in their children's learning and development.
- The school helpfully directed parents towards appropriate sources of advice on how best to meet their child's particular needs.

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.
- Students, parents, and the staff were fully committed to the National Agenda and it was promoted throughout the school. The school had fully reviewed its curriculum to be compliant with the requirements of international testing, and used test information to routinely review and adapt the curriculum to meet students' individual needs in lessons and to help them achieve better in tests.
- National agenda parameter targets were embedded in the school's development planning, and students knew the importance of their test results in achieving success for their country as well as for the school. However, progress towards meeting the National Agenda targets was not secure. Critical thinking was not an established feature of lesson planning or delivery. The skill of inquiry was embedded into lessons.
- Students effectively used a range of resources, including learning technologies, during independent learning and inquiry during lessons, and outside of lessons.

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 Principal and key leaders were aware of the importance of the national innovation agenda, but had yet to formulate a strategic response or coordinated approach to promoting a culture of innovation across the school. In building capacity for innovation in learning, teaching and leadership, staff members were engaged in action research inquiries to develop their practices, but these had not been considered in terms of innovation. Students had regular opportunities to participate in innovative learning, but their skills were not formally developed in lessons. The curriculum promoted inquiry, independence and research, but did not promote innovation.

Overall school performance

Good

1. Students' achievement

		KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Islamic education 	Attainment	Not applicable	Good	Good	Acceptable ↓
	Progress	Not applicable	Good	Good ↑	Acceptable ↓
Arabic as a first language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good ↑	Acceptable	Good
Arabic as an additional language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Good	Good ↑	Not applicable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good	Good	Not applicable
English 	Attainment	Good	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics 	Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Good ↑	Good ↑	Acceptable
Science 	Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Learning skills	Good	Good	Good ↑	Good ↑

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

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

3. Teaching and assessment

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

4. Curriculum

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Good	Good ↑	Good
Curriculum adaptation	Good	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	Good	Good	Good	Good

6. Leadership and management

	All phases
The effectiveness of leadership	Good
School self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good
Parents and the community	Good
Governance	Good
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

- All children were learning English as an additional language. Virtually all children entered the school with little or no background in English. They made good progress and, given their starting points, the attainment of the majority was above that expected by the time they entered Grade 1. Their progress in speaking and listening was particularly good. Children were soon able to respond to their teachers' questions and use English in conversations with other children. Most children could recognize the letters of the alphabet, and built words by matching letters and sounds. In writing, they were beginning to shape letters and spell high frequency words correctly.
- Overall, the children's attainment and progress in mathematics were good. Children developed good understanding of the concept of number. In KG1, they recognized numbers up to 10 and the majority could add single digits with a great deal of accuracy. In KG2, children could create and explain repeating patterns. They could name two-dimensional shapes and find similar shapes in their own environment. Within the units of inquiry and through daily activities, the children were developing understanding of the concepts of capacity, such as full or empty, as well as weight and length.
- Children made good progress in science and demonstrated good understanding of the world around them. Through the unit of inquiry 'Sharing the Planet,' children in KG1 learned to distinguish between living and non-living things and offered simple explanations about their differences. They were also able to correctly name various animals and say where they lived. In KG2, children were developing good understanding of the importance of recycling and how to make and use compost. They were able to identify and talk about items in their classrooms and homes that were suitable for recycling.

PYP

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students attained levels that were above the curriculum standards. All the assessments were internal and no external benchmarking was done. The majority of students knew and understood the life of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) and the major Islamic events, such as migration to Al Madeenah. They could infer lessons from the Seerah and made appropriate links to their own lives. They recited short, prescribed Surahs and applied some Tajweed rules. In relation to their starting points, the majority of students made better than expected progress in the different areas of the subject. However, their progress in the Holy Qur'an recitation and memorization was slower.
- In Arabic as a first language lessons and in their recent work, most students demonstrated levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that were in line with the curriculum standards. Students made good progress in lessons and were able to meet most of the learning objectives by the end of a lesson. Students' reading and listening skills were developing well across all grades. Listening skills were the most developed and students had little difficulty in understanding their teachers. The majority were confident readers with reasonable comprehension skills. Students did not have enough opportunity to develop their extended writing skills. Their progress in the development of grammatically accurate writing was acceptable.
- In learning Arabic as an additional language, most students were making good progress. They demonstrated levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that were above the curriculum standards. Most students were able to listen attentively and understand the complex meanings of what they heard. They were provided with many opportunities to write independently. As a result, their writing skills were above expectations. Students in the upper grades were making equally good progress in reading, writing, speaking and listening, whereas in the lower grades, speaking and listening skills were in advance of reading and writing skills.
- Students' attainment in English, as judged by the school's internal assessments, was in line with the curriculum standards. A similar picture emerged from the comparison of the school's results with a range of external standardised test data. Virtually all students were learning English as an additional language. By the time students reached Grade 5, most could follow texts at an appropriate level. They were using a functional vocabulary and showed accurate spelling of high frequency words in their extended writing. Standardised tests showed that from students' mostly low starting points in English, they made rapid progress in a short period of time. Their speaking was developing at faster rate than the other skills and girls were performing at higher levels than the boys.

- Students' attainment in mathematics was in line with the curriculum standards, although their performance in national and international assessments was consistently below the benchmark averages. In daily lessons and over time, the majority made good progress. However, in a few lessons there were inconsistencies in the progress made by groups of students, particularly those students with SEND because the work was not always matched closely enough to their needs. When this occurred, the progress by the groups affected was more likely to be only acceptable, compared with the good progress being made by their peers.
- Students' attainment in science was good. The majority of students made good progress to reach levels that were above the curriculum standards. Students had recently taken part in a science fair, when they gained experience in applying the scientific method. They had formulated and investigated their own research questions, recorded their observations and analysed their findings. Records showed that students had good opportunities to plan and carry out investigations, make and test predictions, interpret and evaluate the data and share their findings informally.

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students attained levels that were above the curriculum standards. In lessons and in their recent work, the majority of students demonstrated levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that were above the curriculum standards. They confidently explained the meaning of the prescribed Hadeeths and applied their concepts to real life situations. However, students' knowledge beyond the textbooks content was limited. In relation to their starting points, the majority of students made notable gains in learning about the different aspects of the Prophet's life (PBUH).
- In Arabic as a first language, most students demonstrated levels of knowledge, skills and understanding, both in lessons and in their recent work, that were in line with the curriculum standards. Listening was the strongest skill. Most students were able to understand extended and complex dialogue. The writing skills of most students were in line with expectations. The speaking skills of the majority were sufficiently developed to enable them to use an appropriate range of words to express their ideas. However, students' use of standard Arabic during discussion was limited. Progress in their development of speaking skills was slower than in their development of reading, writing and listening skills.
- In learning Arabic as an additional language, the majority of students demonstrated levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that were above the curriculum expectations. The majority of students were able to understand what they were told and were able to make an appropriate response. Although the writing skills of most students were within the expected levels, they were not provided with enough opportunities to write independently. They were able to use a reasonably wide range of words for expressing their ideas, although their use of standard Arabic was limited. As a result, their progress in reading and listening was in advance of their progress in speaking and writing.

- In English, the school's own assessments and international tests indicated that students' attainment was broadly in line with the curriculum expectations. The range of students' abilities was wide. Most students in Grade 6 were beginning to read aloud with intonation and were developing skills of inference. They gave clear oral explanations of their views. By Grade 10, all students were examining the devices poets used in their writing and could identify rhetorical questions. Written work was becoming more grammatically accurate, with ideas that were well organised. Speaking and listening continued to be the strongest skills. Progress by all groups of students in lessons, including those with SEND, was increasing rapidly, especially as students moved towards the end of the MYP.
- In mathematics, students' attainment in relation to the curriculum standards was acceptable over recent years, although better in the lessons observed and the work samples seen. Their knowledge and understanding, as well as their practical application of skills, were appropriate. In their daily learning, students were making good progress overall. There were some inconsistencies in the progress made by some groups of students particularly that by students with SEND, who made only acceptable progress compared with their peers. Overtime, students' attainment had been below both the national and international standards.
- Students' attainment in science was good. Girls performed better than boys on internal assessments, particularly in Grade 6. Lessons were mainly focused on revision for internal assessments and there was little investigative laboratory work. However, students' work and a variety of assessment information showed that students were making good progress over time. Students in Grade 6 clearly understood that changes in the states of matter cause the movement of particles and transformed their form and function. In Grade 10, students could discuss the environmental and political effects of using fossil fuels. Students had previously reflected on the impact of science through a disaster management interdisciplinary task, set in a real life context. Gifted and talented students were well supported and encouraged to develop their interests in science. Students with SEND made good progress because of the support they received.

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

- In Islamic education, most students attained levels that were in line with the curriculum standards. In lessons and in their recent work, most students demonstrated levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that were in line with the MoE curriculum expectations. Students in Grade 11 discussed manners when interacting with non-Muslims from an Islamic point of view, showing the importance of tolerance. They were able to provide examples from the Prophet's life (PBUH). Students in Grade 12 had just started learning about worship. Most students made gains in the different areas of the subject such as Islamic morals and values. All groups of students made at least the expected progress.

- In lessons and in students' recent work in Arabic as a first language, most demonstrated levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that were in line with the curriculum standards. Students' listening, writing and reading skills were secure. Their speaking skills were less well-developed. In speaking, most students could express their ideas and opinions. However, there was limited use of standard Arabic. This led to a lack of confidence when students were speaking. Their reading comprehension was in line with the curriculum expectations. Creative and extended writing skills were appropriate. While most students were making good progress in their listening, writing and reading skills, their progress in speaking was slower because they did not have not enough opportunities to engage in extended discussions.
- No internal assessments or standardised tests results were made available for the small number of girls who were following the English B (additional language learners) course in the DP. Close examination of previous work and attainment in lessons, indicated that students were performing in line with the expectations of the DP standards. In Grade 11 they could debate their ideas using appropriate vocabulary and good intonation. Students in Grade 12 were able to write persuasive texts to suit a range of audiences. Their progress in lessons continued to be at a good pace. They demonstrated a developing variety of writing structures, with appropriate use of vocabulary and grammatical accuracy to engage the reader.
- Students' attainment in mathematics was broadly in line with the curriculum standards. In lessons, students were able to apply their knowledge of mathematics securely and with confidence, but they were less skilled at applying their knowledge to a range of real life scenarios. Overtime, students' attainment was broadly average and therefore in line with the national and international standards. In relation to their starting points, students made acceptable progress both overtime and in lessons.
- The first small cohort of DP students was just completing their standard level science courses. Their attainment in biology and chemistry was acceptable when compared to curriculum standards and international averages. Overall, the majority of students were making good progress in relation to students' starting points. In lessons students demonstrated varied levels of knowledge and understanding. Weaknesses in English made it difficult for them to access some examination questions. During the inspection, students were not working on scientific investigation in the laboratories and there was little evidence that this was a regular feature of their learning. They did however, complete the DP mandated hours of laboratory work.

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Learning skills	Good	Good	Good ↑	Good ↑

- Students' engagement in their learning was strong in most curriculum areas. They were genuinely absorbed in the interesting tasks and challenges that they were set, such as their contributions to the science fair and their exhibitions. Students benefited from the opportunities given for reflection on their learning after lessons. Most students were skilled in working independently and made good use of the available resources to support their learning.
- When given the opportunity, nearly all students were capable of collaborating with their peers to good effect. They used these opportunities to develop language skills and new learning. When the collaboration was well monitored by their teachers, as in science in the MYP and DP, this led to a deep grasp of concepts. The majority of students were able to clearly explain what they were doing and its purpose. For example, presentations were used in science to good effect.

- The majority of students could understand how their learning was related to the world and were able to apply it to different situations. The thematic nature of the PYP ensured that curriculum areas were linked. However, this was not always made explicit to all students and the application of skills in other areas was not systematically built upon. An excellent example of linkage was seen in a Grade 7 design lesson in which students produced packs to promote younger students' understanding of the need for cyber-safety.
- The development of critical thinking, enquiry and problem solving skills varied across subjects. The development of these skills was particularly strong in the DP and in science, English and Islamic education. Research was a feature of many lessons; the use of mobile devices in the MYP and DP was frequent although, on occasion, tasks were not challenging enough and time was too short. At times, students were not given enough opportunities to discuss and refine their ideas before engaging in research activities.

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

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Personal development	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- Students across all grades had very positive attitudes towards school. They demonstrated confidence in the ways in which they participated in assemblies. They responded well to constructive feedback from their peers and their teachers.
- Students showed respect towards adults and to each other. Very good behaviour, both in classrooms and in the public areas of the school, was the norm. Students' adherence to the school rules and their very good behaviour made significant contributions to what was a harmonious learning community.
- Relationships amongst students and between students and adults were very good. Students were actively involved in a range of charitable activities, for example, supporting breast-cancer awareness. They were encouraged to participate in activities related to environmental protection.
- Students across the school from the KG upwards steadily grew in their understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They usually made sensible choices about healthy eating and participated willingly in physical education and sporting activities. Students were well informed of the risks associated with use of the internet.
- Students' enjoyment of school was demonstrated by their regular attendance. Students usually arrived at school and to lessons on time.

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

- Students in all phases had secure understanding and appreciation of Islamic values. They could provide a variety of examples of how these values influenced people's lives. They celebrated Islamic events and participated in some volunteer and charity work.

- Emirati heritage and culture were well known and understood by the students. They identified and explained the local traditions and heritage and recognized their importance and values to people in the UAE. Students celebrated national events such as UAE National Day, the Flag Day and Martyr's Day. Students' knowledge and understanding were enhanced by visits, for example to the Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Culture.
- Students demonstrated deep awareness, understanding and appreciation of their own cultures. They could describe and explain the common elements between cultures and provided basic details. However, their awareness and understanding of cultural diversity and breadth, including music, art, and literature from around the world was limited specially the older students.

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Students were responsible and contributed to the life of the school and the wider community, including volunteer activities. They had some responsibilities within the school and were able to voice their opinions and suggestions through the Student Council. Students arranged a number of fund raising activities for Cancer Awareness Week. They participated in other activities such as 'Chevron Competitions.'
- Students had a positive work ethic. They were active participants and hosts. As part of Service as Action they were responsible for independently planning, preparing and implementing activities such as the PYP exhibition, science fair and cleanliness campaign.
- Students cared for their school and took part in activities to improve its environment. They showed understanding of environmental sustainability and participated in recycling projects such as a 'Can Collection Day' and a 'Clean-up the World' campaign. Their engagement in projects to support conservation in the local community was, however, limited.

3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good ↑	Good

- Teachers' subject knowledge was strong in all subjects. Most teachers helped students acquire a subject-specific vocabulary and understood that students had a range of learning styles. Teachers' understanding of the IB philosophy was secure; nearly all had appropriate training. Most teachers in the KG had good awareness that young children learned best through exploration and guided choices.
- Lesson planning was consistent within subjects and phases, benefiting from teachers' good collaboration. Lesson plans identified learning objectives, linked assessment strategies and, less often, the different ability groups. Learning objectives were sometimes in the form of the work to be done rather than the skills to be developed. Classrooms were bright and many displays supported learning well. In the better lessons, a variety of resources, including technology, were well used.

- Interactions were strongest in Arabic as an additional language, science and English, where most teachers used open-ended questions to probe students' understanding. In many lessons, when teachers planned opportunities for students to discuss and collaborate, students were able to learn from each other and consolidated their own understanding.
- Some teachers successfully matched work to the different needs of their students. However, at times, it was teachers' expectations rather than a specific task that matched to students' abilities. Some teachers were not giving sufficient consideration to those who were finding the work difficult, or not challenging those who found the work easy. Strategies for teaching science included a strong focus on inquiry learning.
- Opportunities for students to inquire and think critically, central to the IB programme, varied across subjects and grades. These skills were well developed in many of the lessons in science, English and Islamic education in the PYP and MYP, and were a strong feature in the core subjects in the DP. Not enough opportunities for independent learning were provided in Islamic education and Arabic lessons.
- The quality of teaching in Arabic both as a first language and an additional language was good across the school, except in MYP Arabic as a first language lessons where it was acceptable where there were less opportunities for meaningful discussion.

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Assessment	Good	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good ↑

- The school aligned its internal assessments well to the IB programme. These provided reliable measures of students' attainment. Improvements in the design and use of internal assessment procedures and systems had resulted in leaders being able to check students' attainment in different subjects. This information was used to identify which curriculum areas were in need of adaptation for certain groups of students.
- Leaders made good use of international and national benchmarks to compare how well students were achieving against the particular standards and expectations. These included the targets set by the KHDA for students' success on international assessments. Comparisons with external benchmarks gave internal assessments greater validity. The data the school gathered was used well to track the attainment and progress of individual students.
- Rigorous analyses of students' performance enabled progress to be tracked systematically. As a result, a clear picture of how individuals and groups were performing over time was seen. This information was used to identify where additional support was needed to improve students' learning outcomes. Rubrics were used to similar effect to track children's progress in the Kindergarten.
- Teachers had access to good quality assessment information about their students to help them plan their lessons. However, the use of assessment information in lesson planning was inconsistent. While some used this information effectively to ensure that the work set was matched to students differing needs, this was not consistently found across all grades, particularly in the PYP. Feedback given to students on their progress during lessons was also inconsistent. In general, there were not enough checks on students understanding so that mistakes could be identified and corrected as the lessons went on.

4. Curriculum

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Good	Good ↑	Good

- The curriculum had a clear rationale based on the IB philosophy. It was particularly effective in providing opportunities for students to direct their own learning through inquiry and research. In the MYP and DP, in particular, there were many opportunities for students to work independently and develop critical thinking skills. Class activities, which were regularly linked to real-life situations, promoted interest and engagement amongst almost all students. At the time of the inspection the school was not compliant with the requirement for the provision of Islamic education in Grade 12 and in the lower grades of the PYP.
- The PYP curriculum had been realigned so that skills were learned in logical sequence. Across the school, the curriculum built upon students' previous learning and prepared them well for the next phases of their education. The school had improved transition by ensuring specialist teachers were in charge of the unit of inquiry in the PYP. Regular meetings between teachers facilitated the transfer of relevant student and curriculum information across phases.
- Subject choice in the DP was limited because of the small number of students currently enrolled. However, plans were in place to increase the range of options, both in the DP and MYP, in the next school year. Students regularly made informed choices in their learning in the classroom, formulating their own research questions, for example, in preparation for the Science Fair.
- Interdisciplinary units, trans-disciplinary themes and units of inquiry were key features of the curriculum. These were well-planned by specialist teachers, mapped against the skills and based on related concepts. All classroom activities were linked to the learner profiles, promoting an awareness of a global community.
- Regular reviews of the curriculum and continuous refinement of units of inquiry ensured that provision in almost all subjects met the needs of most students. Examples included an increase in the time given for mathematics teaching, changes in content to cover the requirements of external examinations and modification to the scope and sequence of Arabic and Islamic curricula. However, not enough account was taken of students' own reflections on their work in curriculum planning.
- The curriculum of social studies was based on MOE curriculum in grades 1-9 and taught in Arabic. It was integrated within other subjects and projects in upper school. Students had the opportunity to explore UAE heritage and culture through links that were increasingly made with real life situations and examples.

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Curriculum adaptation	Good	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good

- Across all phases of the school, teachers suitably amended the curriculum to meet the needs of most groups of students. The KG children, being introduced to English, and those students in later phases who required additional English language support, were well-catered for. Students identified as gifted and talented benefitted from very suitable personalised learning. Students with SEND were generally well-supported.

- The school's IB programme effectively supported students from the KG onwards to become increasingly thoughtful and active learners. In Grade 5, for example, exhibitions prompted students' creative thinking on many topical issues, including the environment. The MYP students participated in enriching activities included a Model United Nations debate about international issues. Opportunities for involvement with the local community were underdeveloped in all phases of the school.
- Across the school, a range of curricular contributions, including UAE social studies, promoted students' understanding of the UAE's past and present. These were effectively supplemented by a variety of trips and visits. The school's promotion of the UAE's national agenda helped students appreciate the important contributions their academic progress would make to the country's future.
- The school offered a 75-minute daily lesson for all of the 178 Arab and non-Arab children in KG. The school's programme was in line with MOE curriculum.

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

- Safeguarding was highly effective in the school. All of the required policies were in place and shared with parents and the community. Students were given clear guidance on the need to be safe when using the internet.
- The school provided a safe and secure learning environment. The school policies and procedures ensured that both the staff and students felt safe at all times. Staff members were vigilant at bus arrival and departure times.
- The school buildings and premises were well maintained. Safety checks were frequent and rigorously carried out across the school's facilities. All students' medical records and medicines were securely stored.
- The facilities were adequate for the needs of all students. Elevators gave access to the upper floors for students with physical disabilities.
- The school's canteen offered a range of healthy food options. Curriculum units on health, hygiene, nutrition and fitness all promoted awareness of the need for a healthy lifestyle.

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Care and support	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Across the school, teachers were caring and respectful of students. Clear statements set out the school's high expectations of students' behaviour and the consequences if any behaviour fell below these expectations. Sensible arrangements helped students to reflect on how to avoid repeating any inappropriate behaviour.

- The support staff checked students' attendance daily and quickly alerted parents to instances of absence. Lateness was carefully checked and parents were informed. As a result, students' attendance was good. Almost all were punctual at the start of the school day and to lessons during the day.
- The school had effective arrangements for identifying students with SEND. Teachers across the school were also alert to those with particular gifts and talents among the student body. When appropriate, staff members supported parents to obtain independent professional advice.
- The school provided effective support for most of the students identified as having SEND. Additionally, the school had provided effective support for those particularly gifted or talented to pursue their interests and ambitions. As a result of the support provided, most students made measurable progress from their starting points over time both in their academic learning and in their personal development.
- A range of helpful advice, at all phases, prepared students well to deal with changes as they moved up through the school. Although students could obtain careers advice from the staff and library programmes, there was no special careers adviser. The school counsellor provided personalised advice and guidance in response to individual students' requests.

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

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

Good

- The SEND staff worked well as a team. They were well-led by the Head of the PYP, who provided authoritative leadership. The SEND staff was knowledgeable, and provided good advice to teachers across the KG, PYP and MYP about suitable strategies to support students in classes.
- The school had accurately identified a wide range of special needs amongst its students. Parents and classroom teachers played equally important roles in the early identification of needs. When necessary, the school directed parents towards appropriate independent professional advice for the identification of particular needs.
- Parents were formally involved from the earliest stages of the process of exploring, assessing and planning to meet the needs of their children. Parents valued termly reports on their children's academic progress. However, there was no clear statement about the frequency and nature of any additional communication parents could expect to receive. This constrained the effectiveness of the school and parent partnership to support students' progress.
- Most students benefitted from a suitable range of well-planned personalised support in lessons. Adults' purposeful relationships with students almost always promoted progress. However, in a few contexts, these productive arrangements distanced students from their teachers. While strategies and targets in the Individual Education Plans (IEPs) were helpful, they lacked sufficient focus on developing students' independence in learning.
- Most students with SEND made at least good progress from their identified starting points, both in their learning and personal development. The SEND staff knew their students' strengths and development needs very well. Teachers and the support staff generally tracked and monitored students' progress in lessons. A collective understanding of assessment findings by all teachers was not evident.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Good

- With the full support of other senior leaders, the principal set a clear vision for the future of the school. This vision was shared and understood throughout the school. Leaders were committed to the principle of inclusion of all students. Staff members understood their roles and responsibilities and there was a strong sense of teamwork. Full support was given to the UAE's national and Dubai's priorities, which were seen as central to the achievement of the school's targets and firmly embedded in all improvement planning.
- Senior leaders had secure knowledge of the curriculum and the most appropriate teaching strategies needed to achieve the curriculum objectives. Well-considered structures had been put in place to support the development of good quality teaching and learning. In most areas of the school's work, expectations of students' personal and academic development were high.
- Relationships throughout the school community were positive and productive, and staff morale was high. The staffing structure distributed leadership responsibility to all levels. Within this structure, middle leaders were effective in fostering improvements in their areas of responsibility.
- Under the thoughtful direction of the principal, senior and middle leaders demonstrated the required expertise to continue to improve the school. They understood the school improvement priorities and how they could contribute to the journey of school improvement.
- School leaders had successfully improved key aspects of the school's work. Although more remained to be done, improvements in teaching, learning and assessment had positive effects upon students' progress in most subjects. This demonstrated the school's capacity for further improvement. The school was not fully compliant with the statutory requirements for Islamic education at the time of the inspection.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Good

- Rigorous procedures for the systematic evaluation of the school's performance, including the use of assessment information, had been introduced. As a result, leaders knew the school's strengths and areas for improvement well. However, a number of judgements were generous because, in a rapidly expanding school, the amount of time needed to achieve consistency in performance had been underestimated.
- Checks on the quality of teaching and learning were effectively managed. Middle leaders were fully engaged in the daily monitoring of teaching and teachers themselves were encouraged to observe each other's teaching. These checks provided useful information on the effects of teaching on students' achievement. However, not enough emphasis was placed on how teachers provided for the needs of students of different abilities in lessons.
- The school's improvement plan identified appropriate improvement priorities. The plan included a suitable timetable of actions to be taken to tackle the areas for improvement. The plan also identified the leaders who were responsible for each action. Systems for evaluating progress on the plan were yet to be fully developed.

- Improvements in the school had accelerated since the last inspection. With the full support of other senior staff members, the principal had significantly improved the quality of middle leadership. This, in turn, had positive effects upon the quality of the curriculum, teaching, learning, and students' progress. Although these improvements were not seen in students' attainment in some subjects, almost all aspects of the school were on an upward trajectory.

Partnerships with parents and the community

Good

- The parents' committee was made up of parents of children from across the school. The committee was very well organised and met monthly. Through reports of their meetings, school leaders and the board were informed of parents' views. Parents said that they were confident that account was taken of their views.
- Parents believed that communication between the school and their homes was effective. Through the school website, newsletters and informal contact with the staff they felt that they were kept well informed. Parents said that they would welcome more opportunities to be involved with the school, for example by accompanying school parties when they made visits to places of interest.
- Parents were very satisfied with the information they received from the school about their children's progress, although they would like more information on how they could help at home. However, they recognised that this information was available on the school portal.
- Parents said that they received clear information on their children's achievement and what they needed to do in order take the next steps in their learning.
- There was a growing range of links with the locality, the region and beyond. As befitting an outward looking school community, the school had been involved in the management of an international education conference. Students have also achieved success in national sporting competitions and were regularly involved in charitable fund raising events.

Governance




Good

- The governing board was made up of the school's owners and members with specialist knowledge, skills and expertise of benefit to the school. Through regular reports from the principal and the parents' committee, the board had a good knowledge of the school's performance and areas where improvement was needed.
- The school received good support from the board. Governors clearly understood the importance of monitoring the progress and personal development of all students so that they were able to maximize their potential. However, members of the board were mostly reliant on written reports and lacked the more detailed information that would be obtained from regular visits to the school.
- Through its vision to create an open minded, tolerant learning community with clear values, the governing board had successfully established the principles that guided the school's direction.
- Governors had ensured that in most areas, staffing and resources had been increased to match the increased size of the school. For example, successful new appointments at the middle management level had made significant contributions to the school's increasing effectiveness.

Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The daily management of the school was effective and efficient in all important aspects; this led to positive learning experiences for almost all students. Almost all teachers organised lessons so that learning time was optimised. Displays around the school and online learning platforms celebrated students' achievement and kept the school community well informed. • Almost all teachers were suitably qualified and trained in the IB philosophy. They benefitted from regular professional development to meet their personalised needs. Leaders had a desire to encourage a culture wherein teachers took responsibility for their own development, for example by means of high quality, published research. Although this supported the promotion of leaders in this rapidly expanding school, there were still a small number of leadership positions either unfilled or with too wide a range of responsibilities. • The school premises were safe and secure and well suited to supporting the needs of students and the curriculum. Appropriate space was available for students in classrooms. Staff hubs had been established to facilitate collaborative planning. The provision of technology was very good and some students brought their own devices to facilitate regular research in lessons. • Resources were mostly well matched to the educational needs of students. Investment had led to a variety and breadth in materials and library resources, and these helped students across the school engage in learning as well as provide curriculum breadth. The school used their resources flexibly when necessary, for example, the limited laboratory facilities, to ensure maximum capacity. 	

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	
Parents* 	2015-2016	74
	2014-2015	87
Teachers 	46	
Students 	10	

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

- Only about 20 per cent of parents responded to their survey
- Most were pleased with almost all aspects of the work of the school. Almost all who responded indicated that their children were making good progress in English, while most agreed that they were making good progress in Islamic education, Arabic, mathematics and science.
- Almost all believed that their children were safe in school and that they received regular information on their progress.
- Teachers were positive in their opinions about the school's provision and outcomes.
- Too few senior students responded to represent the opinions of this group.

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