



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational
needs and disabilities



Innovation

Inspection Report 2015-2016

Star International School - Mirdif

Curriculum: UK

Overall rating: Acceptable

Read more about the school



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



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

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School information

General information



Location	Mirdif
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2007
Website	www.starmirdifschool.com
Telephone	04-2884644
Address	PO Box: 90848, 24B Street, Mirdif
Principal	Michael Henry
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	25 to 27 January 2016

Students



Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	4-11
Grades or year groups	Foundation Stage 2 to Year 6
Number of students on roll	399
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	28
Number of students with SEND	18
Largest nationality group of students	Arab

Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	37
Largest nationality group of teachers	British
Number of teaching assistants	26
Teacher-student ratio	1:11
Number of guidance counsellors	0
Teacher turnover	50%

Curriculum



Educational permit / Licence	UK
Main curriculum	English National Curriculum 0
External tests and examinations	GL
Accreditation	Not applicable
National Agenda benchmark tests	GL

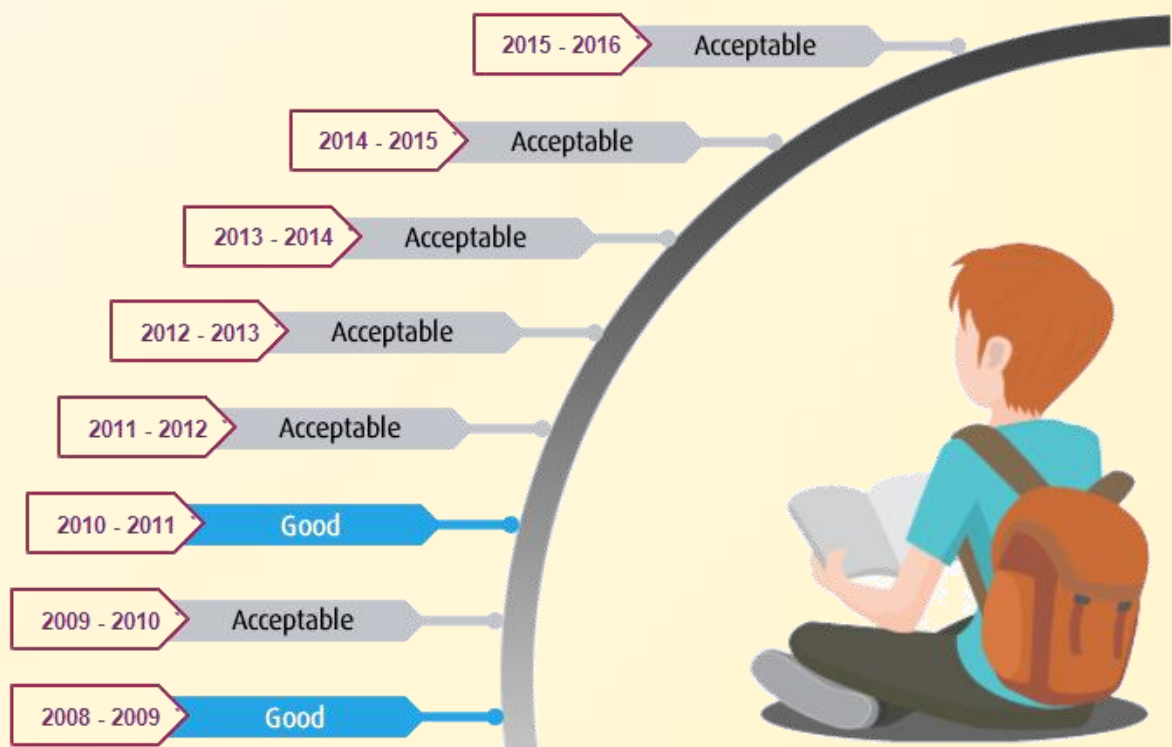


Summary for parents and the community

Star International School - Mirdif was inspected by DSIB from 25 to 27 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 **Star International School** provided an **acceptable** quality of education for its students.

- Students' progress in the Foundation Stage was good. In the primary phase, students were making good progress in English and acceptable progress in mathematics and science. Students' learning skills were good.
- Student's personal development was very good. Their positive attitudes and very good behaviour contributed to the harmonious learning environment.
- The quality of teaching was good in the foundation stage and acceptable in the primary phase. Although there was some very effective practice, there were inconsistencies, particularly in the way teachers promoted independence and critical thinking skills.
- The quality of the curriculum was broad and balanced. It prepared students well for the next phase of their education. Curriculum adaptation was good.
- Students were well supported and good attention was paid to health and safety.
- The school was improving rapidly under the leadership of the recently appointed principal and leadership team. Leadership, the partnership with parents, governance, management, staffing, facilities and resources were good. Although acceptable, weaknesses in assessment meant that school self-evaluation was not consistently accurate.



What did the school do well?

- The principal's new and wise leadership was extremely well supported by the senior leadership team.
- The good provision in the Foundation Stage enabled children to make good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Students had positive attitudes and behaved very well.
- The provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities was good.
- Good attention was given to ensuring students were well cared for and supported.



What does the school need to do next?

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress by using assessment information consistently to better match learning tasks to the needs of all students, including the most able
- Improve the consistency of teaching across year groups and subjects by sharing good practice, particularly in promoting students' independence and critical thinking skills
- Refine school self-evaluation by ensuring assessment data provides accurate information to inform development planning.



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

- All students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) were tested using external standardised tests appropriate to their age and ability. This provided teachers with information on what the students had already learnt and what progress they should make in the future. In better lessons, this information was used effectively by teachers to plan activities for individual students.
- Parents received a written report every term. In addition, separate reports were written to confirm the progress of students who had English as an additional language. The school was in the process of further developing the reporting system to include comments on the progress made by students towards their individual targets.
- Parents were aware that they could contact class teachers and the inclusion team whenever they had concerns. Parents said they felt welcome at the school and appreciated the opportunity to seek advice and reassurance when needed.
- Parents were closely involved with the development of their child's individual education plans. They met with the inclusion team termly to discuss its content and targets. Students also contributed to the review of their support. This enhanced their self-review skills and made them more responsible for their own learning.
- The school offered parent workshops to raise awareness of key teaching areas, for example, phonics, which also benefitted students with SEND.

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 not secure.
- Whilst fully aware of the scope and purpose of the National Agenda, the new leaders and the governors had not promoted it enough to its stakeholders to fully explain the importance of participating in international testing.
- The curriculum had no alignment to the PISA and TIMSS tests for content and skills for the appropriate year groups to systematically plan for progression and continuity.
- In English, mathematics and science there was an expectation for independent work and thinking but these centred on learning subject content rather than skills. In English, students reflected on the views of others. In mathematics and science, there was a lack of opportunities to investigate open-ended questions and cross-curricular skills, such as mental calculations, the use of basic formulas and graphical interpretations.
- The majority of students had not developed an appropriate range of research skills specific to different subjects that are encouraged by the National Agenda.

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 owners had developed a new distributed leadership model of school improvement. They were yet to develop an approach to promoting a culture of innovation and recognised that the learning environment and resources required further enhancement to support a community of innovators and creators. Leaders were considering how to further develop teachers' understanding of innovation skills. Some teachers had enriched the curriculum to provide opportunities for students to be innovative.

Overall school performance

Acceptable

1. Students' achievement

		Foundation Stage	Primary
Islamic education 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable
Arabic as an additional language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Weak
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable
English 	Attainment	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Good ↑
Mathematics 	Attainment	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Acceptable
Science 	Attainment	Acceptable ↓	Weak ↓
	Progress	Good	Acceptable

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Learning skills	Good	Good ↑

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Personal development	Very good ↑	Very good ↑
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Acceptable	Good
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Acceptable	Acceptable

3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Acceptable
Assessment	Good	Acceptable

4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Good ↑
Curriculum adaptation	Good	Good ↑

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Good ↑	Good ↑
Care and support	Good ↑	Good ↑

6. Leadership and management

	All phases
The effectiveness of leadership	Good ↑
School self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
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

Foundation Stage

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


- Most children acquired appropriate levels of knowledge and understanding in language development and emergent literacy that were in line with the curriculum standards. In lessons, most demonstrated emergent levels of reading and writing independently. Assessment information from children's learning journals, classroom observations and tracking records indicated that the majority of children made significant gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding in literacy. Similarly good progress for different groups of children was closing the attainment gap.
- Children demonstrated an acceptable understanding of basic mathematic skills. The majority of children attained a good level in numeracy, although their knowledge and understanding of shape was weaker. Children's problem solving skills were emerging but inconsistent. The majority of children made better than expected progress, in mathematics, although the progress of the most able was slower.
- Children made good progress and acquired secure scientific concepts and enquiry skills, such as observing and using scientific vocabulary to explain what they saw. When given the opportunities, they demonstrated good investigative skills, although progress in these important aspects of science was slower.

Primary

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

- In Islamic education, most students were working at levels that were in-line with the national curriculum expectations. Most demonstrated knowledge of Islamic concepts and principles, such as the Pillars of Islam at an age-appropriate level. They showed appropriate knowledge of Seerah as they could retell the stories of the prophets. They could give accurate factual information about Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). Most students made expected progress although how the subject applied to their own lives was less developed.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students attained levels that were in line with national curriculum standards and this was demonstrated in internal school tests. Students made the expected progress, although there were some inconsistencies. Most students had appropriate listening and basic reading skills. Their ability to write coherent paragraphs was developing. However they were less secure in writing creatively. Students' speaking skills were weak due to excessive use of colloquial language and their lack of vocabulary. The majority of students were able to respond to poetry with understanding. Most made acceptable progress in understanding the texts being studied and in writing simple sentences using new words.
- In Arabic as an additional language, in the absence of external measures, the attainment of students was weak and especially in writing. They were able to understand a range of familiar written phrases and mostly pronounce them accurately. Most were not confident when speaking Arabic. Although they could talk about themselves and their families in short sentences, their speaking skills were generally limited to recalling memorised texts. Writing was at a basic level and mostly limited to copying text. Most students were making expected progress during lessons; however they needed much guidance from teachers to complete their work.
- In English, progress was good, with most students attaining expected standards against national and international levels. Listening skills were often good. Oral communication developed at an acceptable pace with students for whom English was an additional language often making good progress. In lower primary, most students made good progress in learning how letter sounds help to build words, although a few lacked confidence. By the middle years of primary, most students read with fluency, and some with good expression. Imaginative teaching in Years 4 and 5 resulted in students becoming increasingly skilled at writing descriptively, and learning about puns and word-play in an enjoyable way. By the end of primary, the most able students wrote imaginatively at length, although a few did not present their writing carefully.

- Most students were working at age-related standards in mathematics. Externally benchmarked tests showed that students were broadly in-line with international standards. Attainment was stronger when students used written methods to record addition and subtraction solutions, but their knowledge of multiplication and division was underdeveloped. There were variations in the progress made across different year groups. In the younger classes students' knowledge of simple equations was not secure. There was better progress in Years 4 and 5. For example, students linked their knowledge of number fractions to understand ratios and proportions. Generally, students' ability to apply their knowledge to problem solving and investigations was under-developed. In most lessons, students of all abilities made similar progress. However, the more able students were often not sufficiently challenged.
- In science, students' attainment was weak compared with national and international standards. Observations and students' workbooks indicated progress was acceptable during lessons and over time. In the better lessons, well-planned practical work enabled students to explore ideas through enquiry. However, students planning, carrying out, recording and evaluating experimental evidence for themselves were skills that had not been developed well enough. The majority of students were not able to clearly articulate what they were doing, why they were doing it and how it linked to a bigger science idea. As a result, progress was too uneven to be any better than acceptable overall.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Learning skills	Good	Good 

- There was a palpable sense of enjoyment and excitement in classrooms. Students were keen to learn and had very positive relationships with their peers and their teachers. They enthusiastically listened to their teachers and were able to work independently. An over-reliance on teacher instruction sometimes meant that students were not reflective enough, and did not easily make decisions about the next steps in their learning.
- Students supported and helped each other well in pairs and larger groups. They understood how working together could be purposeful and created different answers. They were sometimes constrained in developing collaborative skills by teaching strategies that favoured students working quietly and on their own. They volunteered regularly to provide answers and were appreciative of others' answers.
- Students had many opportunities to apply skills learnt in their subjects and other planned activities across the curriculum. They often applied their language skills in mathematics to explain their reasoning. They used good communication skills in art and physical education. Students enthusiastically discussed how their learning applied to the wider world. Underdeveloped investigative skills reduced the potential to enhance English and mathematics skills in science.
- Students were sometimes very resourceful. In English, for example, they evaluated the impact of news reports and looked at photographs to gauge the effects of publicity. However, resources were not used often enough to enable the students to reflect on issues more deeply. The limited use of learning technologies meant that students were often too reliant on teachers' directions, rather than finding things out for themselves.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Personal development	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- Students had very positive attitude towards learning, and were aware of their responsibilities towards each other. Mostly, students across the school were punctual and eager to learn. They played happily during breaks. Students responded positively when offered opportunities to contribute ideas and work independently. They valued feedback on their progress from teachers and tried their best to improve.
- The school was a harmonious community. Students' behaviour was almost always exemplary. Students paid attention during lessons and were mutually supportive. Bullying was extremely rare and students generally resolved minor disputes amicably without adult intervention. Students understood the needs and differences of others, including those with SEND.
- Relationships among students and between students and staff were warm, with strong trust and mutual respect evident. Students got on with one another and with adults well. During lessons, they were quick to praise their classmates, often bursting into spontaneous applause to celebrate their achievements.
- Students from Foundation Stage onwards had a sound understanding of safe and healthy living and mostly followed the school's advice on keeping fit and healthy. They keenly participated in various sporting activities during the school day and in a range of physical activities after school.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Acceptable	Good

- Students had a clear understanding of how Islamic values influence contemporary society. They could give examples of how they appreciated the values of peace and friendship. Students knew that Islam promoted respect for elders and could talk about mosques and fasting.
- Students were well aware of the heritage and culture of the UAE. They could list and discuss some of the local traditions, landmarks and the nature of modern Dubai, for example they talked about clothes, the desert and the animals. They were less aware of the details of traditions in other cultures.
- Students had a clear appreciation of their own culture and an awareness of the variety and range of other cultures from around the world. They showed respect to students of different nationalities, languages and religions. Across the school, students' knowledge of different global cultures was not secure.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Most students, and particularly those in Years 5 and 6, were actively responsible in school and they were looking forward to extending that to the community beyond school. They were willing to be a part of the students' council and keen to express their views. There were limited opportunities for students to do voluntary work or support charities.
- Older students were aware of the requirements needed for them to achieve their academic and career goals. They made helpful contributions to science projects or other activities, but a few were, at times, only passive participants.
- Students were aware of important environmental issues. They participated well in the rather limited opportunities for promoting environmental awareness among their peers. An 'eco club' had been recently established, but the outcomes of this venture had not come to fruition.

3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Acceptable

- Teachers had secure subject knowledge. They planned purposeful lessons that provided appropriate learning activities. For example, in the Foundation Stage, most children used observations, discussions and investigative skills, to classify dinosaur bones, healthy and unhealthy food, and body parts. In the better primary lessons, teachers used their knowledge to motivate students by asking challenging questions that moved their learning on rapidly. These strengths were not consistent.
- All teachers planned their lessons well. However, learning objectives were not always student friendly and activities were too content based at times. Although different ability groups were referred to in lessons plans, teaching strategies were often aimed at the whole class and were not always successful in meeting the needs of all ability groups, especially in extending the learning of the more able.
- In the better lessons, positive interactions engaged students and they generally listened well to instructions. 'Talk partners' enabled students to discuss activities and promoted language acquisition and subject-specific vocabulary. However, in too many lessons, there was an excess of teacher talk, reducing time for meaningful student interaction and active learning.
- Teachers were generally aware of students' different abilities. They often modified activities and provided additional support for students with SEND. As a result they made good progress. However, not all teachers made enough demands of the most able students. Work was not often personalised or based on recent learning or assessment data.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers did not always provide purposeful opportunities for students to think critically and solve problems. Additionally, in some lessons students failed to comprehend and respond to questions that involved higher thinking skills. Opportunities for students to work independently and become active learners were missed.

- Teachers were trying their best to support students' learning in Arabic by using a variety of strategies. In most classes the level of students' Arabic language prevented them reaching the expected outcomes. Teachers did not focus enough on their success in improving students' progress and learning skills, rather than simply following the recommended strategies and methodologies.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Assessment	Good	Acceptable

- The school had new internal assessment procedures with good links to the new curriculum areas of study in English and mathematics. Coherent assessment guidelines were in the process of being developed for each year group.
- International tests were used to provide an overview of students' attainment in English and mathematics. However, the information gleaned from these tests was not used effectively to influence teaching and learning well enough.
- The analysis of data was underdeveloped and arrangements to track and record progress were not embedded throughout the school. For example, the information was not used to inform which curricular areas were in need of adaptation for different groups of students.
- Assessment information was not used accurately by all teachers to influence their approach in lessons. In the best lessons, teachers pitched work at different levels; they challenged students and used effective questioning to ensure their understanding.
- Teachers had sound knowledge of students' strengths and weaknesses and often provided good support for them. The majority of teachers were using a new system for marking where they gave students feedback, ensuring they had a chance to respond. Occasionally, teachers' marking did not lead to improvements in students' work because teachers did not check that students followed the advice they had been given.

4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Good ↑

- The curriculum was aligned to the National Curriculum for England and took full account of recent changes. The curriculum was reasonably balanced in Islamic education and Arabic. In science the acquisition of knowledge received a stronger focus than that on skills. A good range of subjects ensured breadth. The Foundation Stage curriculum was enhanced by opportunities for children to learn Arabic.
- Plans for student progression were adequate in most key subjects. However, in mathematics, the statutory programmes of study were not used fully to ensure challenge for the most able students.
- The school provided appropriate options for the age range of the students. For example, opportunities for play were provided for children in the Foundation Stage in recognition of their learning styles. Opportunities for Primary students to choose to use modern technology routinely in their work were not plentiful, however.

- Recently introduced plans for linking subjects in meaningful ways were very detailed and relevant to students' interests. They included weekly guidance on subject links to promote learning. These links were often, but not always, reflected in lessons. Links between areas of learning were well established and effective in the Foundation Stage.
- Since September 2015, a rigorous review of the curriculum had focused particularly effectively on English and mathematics, the provision for students with SEND and those for whom English was an additional language. Curriculum review had been less strong in Islamic education and Arabic.
- The school followed the UAE curriculum for social studies, however there were significant omissions from the stated curriculum. The scope and sequence were disjointed hindering continuity in learning from year-to-year.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Curriculum adaptation	Good	Good ↑

- Since the previous inspection, staff had adapted the curriculum to meet the needs of almost all groups of students. Weaknesses in the provision for students with English as an additional language were no longer evident. Provision for those with SEND had notably improved. The provision for students of differing ability was not always rigorously ensured for the more able in mathematics and English.
- In a particularly high quality English lesson, Year 5 students were immersed in the creative use of language when writing an imaginative news report. Opportunities for students to be innovative and creative were not yet widespread. A wide range of extra-curricular activities was provided by school staff and some outside specialists, significantly enhancing students' personal development.
- Suitable learning experiences were built into the curriculum to enable all students to develop clear understanding of the values, culture and society of the UAE. There were social studies assemblies in the Foundation Stage, whole-school celebrations of festivals such as Eid and prominent posters in the primary phase to support students' growing awareness. The school involved parents in its planning to ensure alignments with UAE cultural values.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Good ↑	Good ↑

- The school buildings, grounds and equipment were secure and well maintained and any damage was quickly rectified. In addition to frequent site inspections, three major health and safety checks were made during the year. Detailed and comprehensive records of any incidents were kept, including how they were followed up.
- Appropriate policies and procedures relating to child protection and health and safety were revisited every year to reflect any changes in the law and the emerging needs of students and staff. The principal was an experienced designated child protection officer. Confidential case studies indicated that the policy was being implemented rigorously.

- The level of supervision and staffing ensured that the school environment was safe at all times. Safety checks were made frequently during the day. Bus safety was extremely well organised. Students and parents benefitted from guidance on internet safety. Risk assessments were carried out for off-site visits and all members of the physical education department were trained life-guards.
- The school promoted safe and healthy living through physical education and curriculum topics such as living and growing. The approach lacked coordination without a staff member delegated to it. The school nurse provided guidance for individual students, but there was potential for her to have a greater impact across the school.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Care and support	Good ↑	Good ↑

- The support provided for students was personalised and prioritised according to the specific gaps identified in their learning. A programme of focused interventions was then designed in either English or mathematics, or aspects of personal development. Rigorous tracking kept a close eye on students' progress.
- The positive atmosphere which pervaded the school was reflected in the effective interaction between the teachers and students. The school vision was displayed throughout the learning environment and reinforced the high expectations of behaviour.
- Students' attendance and punctuality were carefully monitored and any issues of concern were dealt with promptly by key stage leaders. The improved attendance figures were directly attributable to the school's new approach, including positive behaviour management.
- The inclusion department had developed a robust set of systems to identify students during admission who would need additional learning support. An effective referral system addressed concerns that emerged during the year. The school had developed a detailed policy towards gifted and talented students. Key staff had attended appropriate training and there were plans to implement the policy across the school.
- Effective communication between the school, parents and students ensured that the care and support given to students successfully responded to their academic and personal needs. Advice for students progressing to the next stage of their education was provided by class teachers. However, a systematic approach to students' transitions from Foundation Stage to Year 1 and from Year 6 to secondary education had not been established.

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


The overall effectiveness of provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities	Good ↑
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- The newly formed inclusion department represented a significant investment and commitment from the school's senior leadership and governors. The deployment of this specialist support team within the main school confirmed the aim of providing high quality support to those students who required it. The strong impact on students' progress of the intervention programmes were testament to their effectiveness.

- Efficient use was made of external expertise to ensure an accurate diagnosis of the students' personal development and learning needs. External reports directly supported the planning for individual students. The internal systems developed included standardised assessments to monitor developing trends, but these were at an early stage of implementation.
- The review of students' progress towards individual targets was a combination of both informal and formal feedback, such as termly meetings with the inclusion team. The school had formed effective working links with parents which ensured they could be regularly informed of their children's progress during the year.
- Most curriculum modifications enabled students to achieve targets linked to their personal development and therefore encouraged greater independence. However, the quality of these changes to the curriculum allowing better access to learning was inconsistent across the school, resulting in slower progress being made in some phases and subjects.
- A range of tracking tools had been developed to monitor learning and confirm the impact of any strategies used. When curriculum tracking in mainstream lessons was linked to the achievement of individual targets, it resulted in faster rates of progress.


6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Good 

- The recently appointed principal had played a pivotal role in driving improvements. Under his wise counsel, the newly established, highly competent, senior leadership team had been instrumental in re-establishing a strong sense of common purpose across the school. There was a resilient commitment to inclusion and a collective determination to ensure all students did as well as they could.
- The senior leadership team and others with leadership responsibilities had a thorough understanding of the requirements of the curriculum and best practice in teaching and learning. There was a purposeful learning environment focused closely on students' academic progress and personal development.
- Relationships were highly professional. Subject and year group leaders, worked closely with the special educational needs coordinator in the drive for improvement. They had played a significant part in raising staff morale and parents' attitudes to the school, which had been very low at the time of the previous inspection.
- The rapid progress made over a short period owed much to the clear grasp of what needed to be done to improve the school. Leaders had succeeded in raising personal development, the quality of learning, and improving the curriculum, care and support. The recruitment and retention of teachers were high priorities.
- School leaders had devised and led development activities with considerable success. Although improvements to the provision were not fully embedded, there had been an upward trend in students' learning and progress, reflecting a very strong capacity for further improvement.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From their very first day, the senior leadership team had made every effort to identify the school's strengths and weaknesses. They took account of the views of parents, staff and students. A potentially very useful assessment system had been introduced but was being used inconsistently to measure progress across key subjects. This skewed the picture of achievement and led to some inaccuracies in the analysis of data. Through a combination of informal visits and more structured lesson observations, leaders gained an accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning. The new leadership group was sensitive to the feelings of class teachers, and won their trust and respect. Staff were eagerly taking up opportunities for further training. School leaders had worked hard to devise and implement development plans, based on their initial reviews. These plans had specific and achievable targets. They included roles and responsibilities, the resources necessary, and indicated how progress towards each goal would be monitored and evaluated. That said, inaccuracies in assessment data meant that priorities for improvement were not fine-tuned to take full account of students' starting points. The school had addressed almost all the recommendations of the previous report. Most significantly, staff and parents held the school in much higher regard. The capacity of senior leaders to bring about change had increased considerably. 	

Partnerships with parents and the community	Good 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One parent's remark, 'They have won back our hearts,' succinctly summed up the considerable improvements in relationships between home and school. Several parents were keen to point out a renewed openness and warmth. Parents were confident that their views were valued. Parents talked enthusiastically about the various curriculum workshops they had attended and how this was providing useful insights into how they could support their children's learning. Parents valued the daily opportunities for informal contact and the alternate weekly newsletters from the principal and department heads. The home/school 'communication diaries' provided a useful conduit for two-way information. Parents of children with SEND appreciated the regular contact with staff and their suggestions about how they might help at home. Teachers kept parents well informed of curriculum topics. Parents received regular updates and said they would soon know if their children were falling behind. Parents took advantage of invitations to discuss their children's progress and personal development. They much appreciated the comprehensive mid-year and end-of-year reports. The school had a well-earned reputation for raising funds for charity. Links with a local school and one in the UK were productive. The inclusion department had forged useful links with the Dubai Schools SEN Network and various external agencies. 	

Governance

Good ↑

- The governing body included representatives from teaching and non-teaching staff, parents, and representatives of local businesses. Parents were positive about how governors considered their views. As a result of consultation, for example, improvements had been made to ensure the safety of students travelling by school bus.
- Governors regularly sought assurance that the quality of teaching was effective. They received frequent reports from the principal about students' academic performance and asked insightful questions. Governors were frequent visitors, and this helped them gain first-hand impressions of the considerable improvements to the learning culture and overall ethos of the school.
- Governors had a positive influence on the school's leadership and direction. The board had ensured that plans to implement the recommendations of the previous report were fully funded. They had allocated substantial funds to allow transition from the previous principal to the new one, to expand the senior leadership team and establish an inclusion team. Staff salaries and increments had been increased. Substantial amounts had been spent to provide excellent outdoor learning and recreation areas.




Management, staffing, facilities and resources

Good ↑

- The school ran very smoothly, due, not least, to the close liaison between leaders and staff. Senior leaders met early every morning. This was followed by a whole staff briefing and then the principal and senior leaders' ensured parents and students were warmly greeted. The structure and routines of the school day were well organised.
- The school had been very successful in recruiting well-qualified teachers with a range of relevant experiences. Staff were deployed effectively and maximum use was made of the time and facilities available. Each class had the support of at least one teaching assistant.
- The school grounds, buildings and equipment were safe, well maintained and fit for purpose. Classrooms in general were spacious, bright, and equipped with high quality furniture. Specialist facilities included a large, multi-purpose gym, a pool, a spacious sports field and dedicated rooms for computing and science. Outdoor spaces were particularly impressive, including play areas with high quality safety surfaces.
- Resources had been increased. The installation of Wi-Fi across the school was enabling increased access to online resources by students. Following the introduction of the revised National Curriculum for England, school leaders were carefully reviewing the provision of resources to ensure they were sufficient to support students' learning effectively. They recognised the need for increased text and reference books, and for more readily accessible modern communication technology.

The views of the parents, teachers and students

Before the inspection, the views of the parents and teachers were surveyed. The school did not yet have eligible senior students to complete a students' survey. 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	200
	2014-2015	102
Teachers 	39	
Students 	0	

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

- Almost all parents who completed the survey indicated that children behaved well, were kept safe and were happy. The same proportion was positive about the level of supervision on the buses and with the way the school ensured cyber-safety.
- Almost all parents agreed that their children were developing good learning skills and making good progress in Islamic education, Arabic, English, mathematics and science.
- Parents were very pleased with the way the school was led and with the information they received about how their children were doing.
- Almost all parents agreed that the school successfully promoted an understanding of Islam and Islamic values.
- Almost all teachers were positive about every aspect of the school; they were unanimous in their views that students enjoyed school and behaved well.

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