



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational
needs and disabilities



Innovation

Inspection Report 2015-2016

Raffles International School - South

Curriculum: UK

Overall rating: Good

Read more about the school



www.khda.gov.ae

“Don't look
behind to
see who is
following you,
but look forward
to be ahead”



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

Contents

School information	2
Summary for parents and the community	3
Main inspection report	10
1. Students' achievement	11
2. Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills	14
3. Teaching and assessment	16
4. Curriculum	17
5. The protection, care, guidance and support of students	18
Provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)	19
6. Leadership and management	20
The views of the parents, teachers and students	23

School information

General information



Location	Umm Suqeim
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2007
Website	www.rafflesis.com
Telephone	04 4271225
Address	PO Box 122900
Principal	Michael William Clack
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	16 to 19 November 2015

Students



Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	4-14
Grades or year groups	Foundation Stage 2 to Year 10
Number of students on roll	1,693
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	125
Number of students with SEND	39
Largest nationality group of students	European

Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	143
Largest nationality group of teachers	British
Number of teaching assistants	49
Teacher-student ratio	1:11
Number of guidance counsellors	6
Teacher turnover	13%

Curriculum



Educational permit / Licence	UK
Main curriculum	UK / IGCSE
External tests and examinations	Cambridge Checkpoints; ISA; CAT 4
Accreditation	BSO, BSME; CIS
National Agenda benchmark tests	IBT

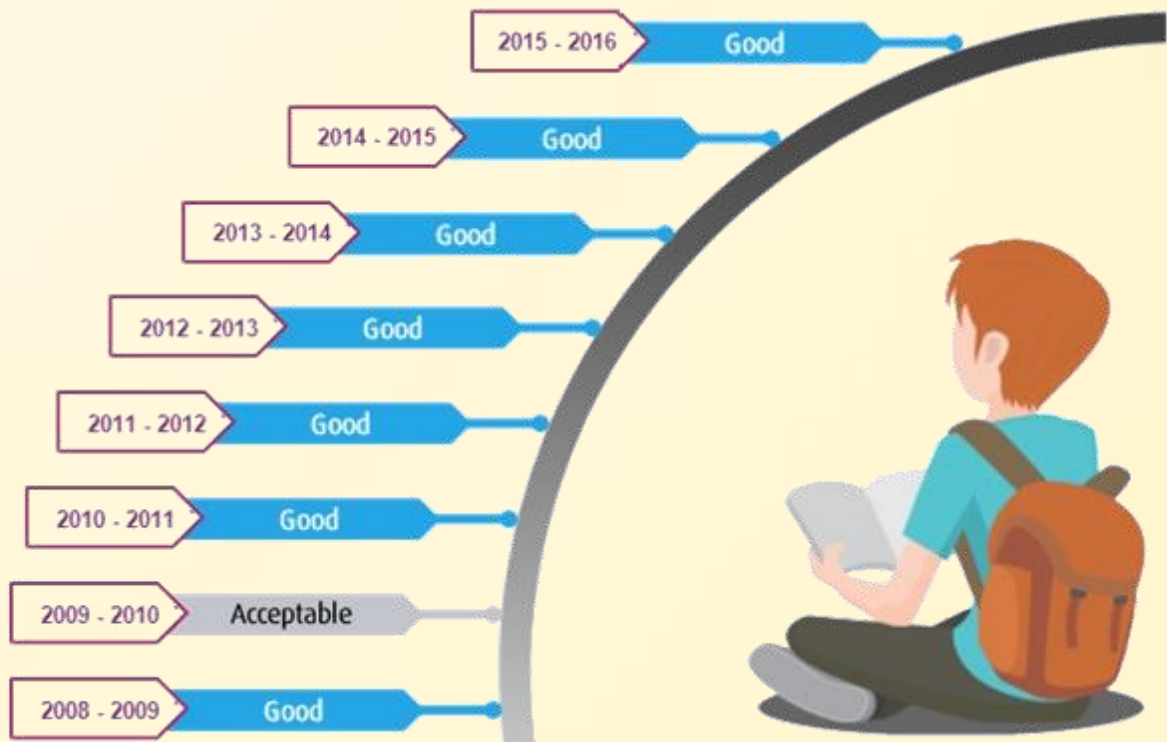


Summary for parents and the community

Raffles International School - South was inspected by DSIB from 16 to 19 November 2015. 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?

- Most children entered school as second language learners. Across the year groups, attainment and progress were mixed, ranging from weak in Arabic to outstanding in English and mathematics in the Foundation Stage.
- Students knew the implications of all forms of bullying and were confident about the actions they should take to neutralise it. Students' personal development was highly effective. Students showed positive attitudes to school life, and had an effective work ethic. They took pride in celebrating a range of cultural events.
- Most teachers were skilled at planning lessons to achieve maximum benefit for students. In less successful lessons, the implementation of plans was inadequate and lacked sufficient challenge. Almost all teachers had good rapport with students and good knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses.
- The curriculum was broad, balanced, and reflected the school's values and met English National Curriculum requirements. Cross-curricular links included global citizenship across all subjects. A range of art, sport and music activities enriched learning.
- The promotion of healthy living was an important part of the educational provision throughout the school. Students' learning was enhanced by the excellent physical environment they enjoyed. Policies and procedures were in place for safeguarding, including child protection arrangements.
- School leaders pursued excellence and total inclusion in striving for outstanding outcomes for the students; the school demonstrated a good capacity to further improve. Leaders and governors had addressed the recommendations of the previous inspection report, for example, by successfully developing a strategic plan.



What did the school do well?

- Children in the Foundation Stage demonstrated outstanding learning skills. They made outstanding progress in English and mathematics and achieved outstanding attainment in mathematics.
- Students were well-motivated, displayed good behaviour and had an enthusiastic attitude to learning. The relationships between the students themselves and all adults at the school were very good or better.
- There was strong emphasis on healthy lifestyles and healthy eating, and access to a range of physical activities for all students. There were excellent health and safety arrangements.
- The commitment, vision and sense of purpose of the school's leaders was good.
- There was very good engagement of parents in their children's education and strong relationships within the school community.
- Outstanding resources and facilities supported students' learning.



What does the school need to do next?

- Improve attainment and progress in Islamic education and Arabic as a first and additional language by ensuring teachers consistently prepare, plan and deliver lessons that offer opportunities for progression and challenge students of all abilities.
- Consistently provide more opportunities for students to develop their enquiry and critical thinking skills in the primary and secondary phases.
- Further embed the curriculum initiatives to ensure coherence across all phases.
- Raise attainment in the primary phase by sharing the very good and outstanding teaching practice.
- Sharpen the monitoring and evaluation of classroom practice by senior and middle leaders to ensure consistent accuracy and the promotion of the best features of teaching and learning.
- Further improve the progress of students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) by:
 - ensuring the goals in individual education plans (IEPs) consistently address students' barriers to learning
 - monitoring the work of shadow teachers more closely so that it consistently meets the needs of all students.



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

- The majority of students with SEND, including gifted and talented, made good progress, but this was too uneven across the school, especially for students with more pronounced difficulties.
- Reporting to parents had improved, especially in IEP (individual educational plan) review sessions which were more frequent, but IEPs required some further refinement.
- Communication with parents had improved, especially with the creation of a parent-led support forum, where parents set their own agenda.
- Parents were more involved in the creation and review of their children's IEPs, but guidance on how to support students at home was not consistently specific enough on how to overcome barriers to learning.
- Parents felt that their children were supported well by the school. This was less strong for some parents of children with more pronounced difficulties.

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 attainment data was not sufficient to make a full judgement on the progress towards meeting National Agenda targets.
- The school had made most of its stakeholders aware of National Agenda targets. Students recognised the term National Agenda and were aware that they were to be involved in benchmark tests that would be part of the development to help the school to meet its targets. Students were not fully conversant with how the National Agenda could impact on them.
- There had been adjustments to the curriculum as a result of the analysis carried out within the key subjects. However, the main thrust was to coach students for the questions they were likely to encounter when taking TIMSS and, in addition, the IBT tests which had been introduced across Years 3 to 10.
- The most effective work on critical thinking skills was seen in English across both primary and secondary phases although students did not recognise this as being linked to National Agenda. In mathematics and science in both phases promotion of critical thinking skills was much less developed. Lessons were heavily structured, containing few open-ended investigative activities. Real life examples were used in most lessons.
- There was an increasing use of technologies, particularly in English, but there was a need for further development of students' research skills. Too frequently the constraints of the activities limited the opportunities for students to explore and evaluate information to seek solutions to problems.

Innovation in education

The *UAE Vision 2021* sets out the National Agenda for the UAE to be among the most innovative nations in the world. The National Innovation Strategy sets the context for 'innovation' and 'innovative leadership'. It provides a basis for evaluating public and private schools in order to deliver a world-class education for all children in the UAE.

Innovation is driven by a commitment to excellence and continuous improvement. It is based on curiosity, the willingness to take risks, to experiment and to test assumptions as well as questioning and challenging the status quo. Being innovative is about looking beyond what we currently do well, identifying the great ideas of tomorrow and putting them into practice.









Promoting a culture of innovation:

- School leaders were fully committed to innovation as a national priority. They had a definition and vision statement, and teachers and students were engaged in initiatives across subjects and phases. In the Foundation Stage, students' innovation skills were strongly evident but in other sections, skills' development was inconsistent. The school had a comprehensive, well-structured and well-resourced programme for the use of learning technologies, complemented by a clearly mapped progression of knowledge and skills. This was led by the information and communication technology (ICT) team, and supported by designated student and teacher 'tech leaders'. Learning skills were emphasised across year levels and subjects, and there was school-wide curriculum mapping to promote progression.

Overall school performance

Good

1. Students' achievement

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Learning skills	Outstanding	Good	Good

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Outstanding	Good	Good
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

3. Teaching and assessment

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

4. Curriculum

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

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Care and support	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	Very good ↑
Governance	Very good ↑
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding



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	Good	Outstanding
Mathematics	Outstanding	Outstanding
Science	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓

- Most children entered school as second language learners. Their attainment in English, after a short time in school, was above expected standards and they made outstanding progress from low starting points. The majority of children still had limited speaking skills early in the year but developed greatly in confidence by its end. Children knew and could write many of the initial sounds of words. Some could blend these into three letter words. Early in the year they were not able to apply these skills to reading and writing but by the end of the year they could write and read simple sentences. They made steady progress in lessons and, with excellent attitudes to learning, most children made better than expected progress over time, including those with SEND.
- Children's attainment in mathematics was generally above that which would be expected for their age. Most could count and recognise numbers accurately, and a few could work with teen numbers also. Most were able to recognise simple shapes and put objects in order of height and length. They made outstanding progress in lessons and most children who had been in the Foundation Stage for a year, and were now in Year 1, had made better than expected progress during that year. Because teachers in the early years made good provision for children with SEND, these children also made good progress from their starting points.
- Children worked at expected levels of attainment in science for their age. In their self-chosen activities, they could test and sort objects which were magnetic and non-magnetic and make observations about the materials they were working with. Children were not able to apply their excellent learning skills, displayed during their Montessori time, to their work in the science room or outside area. Children did not use early enquiry or critical thinking skills as well as they might. Most children's progress in science was acceptable.

Primary

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

- In Islamic education, most students could list the Five Pillars of Islam and group prayer steps well. Most students' progress in understanding the Pillars of Islam was in line with Ministry of Education curriculum expectations. Students appropriately understood Islamic manners, Islamic values and morals. There was significant progress in improving understanding of morals of Islam. While the Holy Qur'an recitation skills were still developing, progress was adequate. Progress was similar across the different groups of students.
- In Arabic as a first language, attainment was below expected curriculum standards. Most students' listening and understanding skills were better than speaking and writing. They were developing their abilities to express ideas in writing and orally although production was still below expected curriculum levels. In lessons, students understood and responded appropriately to teachers' instructions. Progress in lessons for most groups was broadly in line with expectations in relation to learning objectives and starting points.
- Most students of Arabic as an additional language made steady progress in learning vocabulary and reading aloud with reasonably accurate pronunciation. Accelerated progress in learning was seen when most students constructed simple sentences to express ideas orally and in writing when supported by prompts. Ability to spell and write phrases from memory with reasonably accurate handwriting and structure was still developing. There were no external assessments and so there was only limited data on attainment trends over time.
- In English, students attained above national and international curriculum levels as confirmed by the results of external tests. All groups of students made better than expected progress, particularly those for whom English was an additional language. The majority of students listened attentively, spoke and read fluently and wrote well. They became increasingly skilled in researching information using computers and applied critical thinking well in their discussions. Year 6 students understood persuasive devices such as alliteration in advertising and used expressive grammar to create advertisements.
- Students exceeded curriculum expectations in mathematics, with progress and attainment above external benchmarks. Lower primary students were competent in mental challenges and when completing tasks. For example, Year 4 students found multiple lines of symmetry in 2D shapes and Year 5 students were knowledgeable about units of measure and how to change kilograms to grams. Attainment and progress were consistent over the past three years. Students with SEND made similarly good progress to other groups.
- Attainment and progress in science were broadly in line with expectations. Most students had an adequate understanding of key scientific concepts and theories. They could conduct simple investigations, make observations, record data and draw conclusions. Often they worked appropriately in pairs and groups, using learning technologies and linking learning to other subjects. Although project work was sometimes undertaken and was of acceptable quality, opportunities for conducting in-depth research were limited and critical thinking skills were underdeveloped. Students with SEND made similarly acceptable progress to others.

Secondary

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

- In Islamic education, most students were able to identify and explain the Five Pillars of Faith and explain the verses of the Holy Qur'an at a satisfactory level, indicating acceptable attainment. For most students, progress in understanding the verses of the Holy Qur'an was in line with curriculum expectations. In lessons, students made acceptable progress. Generally, native Arabic speakers made slightly better progress than non-native speakers.
- In Arabic as a first language, progress from students' starting points was in line with curriculum expectations, but had not resulted in attainment being up to standard. Most students showed acceptable listening and basic responding skills. Speaking skills were underdeveloped as they could not express ideas and understanding well. Students' reading lacked confidence and fluency. They could not express understanding of texts studied. Writing was students' major weakness, characterised by poor content, excessive colloquialisms, weak sentence structure, and frequent spelling mistakes. Groups of students, including those with SEND made similar progress close to the general expectation.
- Most students of Arabic as an additional language were making significant progress in learning vocabulary. They could construct sentences in writing and orally, read and understand familiar sentences and express simple ideas. Students could follow patterns and produce adequately written scripts. Students who had studied Arabic for three years or more were below expected levels in oral communication and writing. No external assessments were used. Internal assessment data did not reflect good achievement over time. Different groups of students, including those with SEND, made similar progress.
- In English, the majority of students attained above international levels, progressing well over time. This was confirmed by external tests and examination data. Students could analyse and identify the main structural elements of poems and books and offered considered opinions on sub-themes within texts. A majority read and wrote fluently with expression, using appropriate grammar. Most listened with skill and applied critical thinking skills. Year 8 students skilfully considered moral dimensions of Blake's 'A Poison Tree.' Different groups of students made similar progress in the main aspects of English.
- Students exceeded international benchmarks and mathematics curriculum standards, showing understanding in a range of mathematical concepts. They used their skills accurately to reach conclusions, particularly in geometry. Students' attainment and progress were consistent over the last three years at slightly above the levels expected. Students' progress against lesson objectives was good, for example, when Year 9 worked on missing angle problems. Different groups of students, including those with SEND made similar progress.
- As in English and mathematics, students in science made progress which led to attainment that was above external averages and curriculum standards. Students built on their understanding of key concepts and theories. Problem solving was underdeveloped. Students used technology more frequently to enhance learning and conduct research. Most students were able to use reason, observation and investigation and knew the importance of safety rules during practical work. Different groups of students made similar progress over time.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Learning skills	Outstanding	Good	Good

- In the early years, the development of learning skills was fully embedded through the Montessori approach. Children were enthusiastic and focused, working independently and confidently with a wide range of resources. They interacted positively with teachers and peers, making connections across areas of learning and to real-life. Teachers did not always use questioning skilfully and purposefully to extend children's learning.
- Learning in primary and secondary was inconsistent and highly dependent on the quality of teaching. In better lessons, students demonstrated research and critical thinking skills. In weaker lessons, opportunities to demonstrate these skills were missing - especially in Arabic as an additional language. In most lessons, connections across areas of learning and to real-life examples were made.
- The school had a comprehensive and well-structured programme for the use of learning technologies, across Years 1 to 10, and across subjects. There was a clearly mapped progression of knowledge and skills, led by the ICT team and supported by student and teacher 'technology leaders'.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Behaviour in the early years was exemplary but it was less so in a few lessons both in the primary and secondary phases, particularly when teaching was less effective than expected. Students knew the implications of all forms of bullying and were confident about the actions to take to neutralise it.
- The personal development of students was highly effective. Students showed positive attitudes to school life and had an effective work ethic. They enjoyed school assemblies and displayed confidence when they performed and shared their thoughts.
- Students maintained strong relationships, cooperated well with adults and consistently showed care and empathy to one another.
- Students consistently maintained safe and healthy lifestyles. They made effective choices of healthy eating and took part in the variety of fitness activities on offer at school. Students actively represented their school in a range of sports' events. A significant number in the secondary phase took up one or more fitness related hobbies after school.
- Attendance rates were exemplary across all three phases and punctuality to lessons was outstanding.

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

- The development of an integrated calendar combining social and cultural events with curriculum based activities was effective in developing a clear understanding and appreciation of the values of Islam, of local Emirati culture and of the multicultural nature of Dubai, which in itself was a strong feature of the school community.
- Students enjoyed living in Dubai and took pride in celebrating a range of cultural events. In school assemblies, for example, they shared singing and dancing in appreciation of the UAE and other cultures. Secondary students also made comments about how the leadership wanted the best for its people in Dubai through encouraging education and innovation.
- Initiatives such as the 'circle of culture' were appreciated by students and had begun to make visible impact. Students were increasingly asked to demonstrate their awareness and appreciation of other people's cultures. Students' understanding was yet to be internalised consistently across the whole school. They still needed to make deeper connections between their own cultures and the values and morals of others.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students were aware of their responsibility towards the school and took pride in their immediate surroundings. Most of them assumed additional tasks such as volunteering at the 'Senses Centre for special education needs' and the 'Autism Centre'. They showed they cared about charity by organising certain activities, such as the fun run and bake sales.
- Students demonstrated an excellent work ethic; they were creative, active and tried to find solutions and to make decisions, for example, through the 'Meet the Principal' sessions. Those decisions reflected their desire to work independently. Some students undertook actions leading to significant social benefits.
- Students cared for their environment; they participated in projects to improve their school environment such as recycling and saving energy. Some students extended this initiative to the wider world environment.

3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good

- Children in the early years were very engaged learners due to teachers' high expectations and quality interactions. Primary and secondary teachers knew their subjects well, confidently sharing knowledge, particularly in upper years which reflected in the students' attainment and progress. Many teachers understood how students learn best and encouraged students to discover and explore independently.
- Most teachers skilfully planned lessons to achieve maximum benefit for students. A common format included learning objectives, appropriate and targeted activities, some form of assessment and differentiated tasks to meet the needs of all learners. In less successful lessons, plans were not implemented and insufficient challenge was given. Pace was too slow in some lessons resulting in students' disinterest and loss of engagement.
- Almost all teachers demonstrated good rapport, engagement and respect with students, leading to positive outcomes. Quality questioning and dialogue to build critical thinking and problem solving skills were under-developed in many lessons, particularly in the primary phase. Most teachers' strategies ensured progression, challenging more able students and supporting others but the capability to do this varied, resulting in some students' needs not being met.
- Teachers understood the importance of developing students' critical thinking, problem-solving, innovation and independent learning skills; a minority did this highly successfully. Some teachers were reluctant to let students take responsibility for their own learning and work independently.
- Teachers used a variety of activities to engage most students in lessons, frequently using oral questioning to check understanding before moving on. Planned activities did not always meet the needs of all students.
- The range of successful teaching strategies was limited in Arabic as a first language. Effective strategies were not yet seen in every class, in all phases, to enable all students, including high achievers, to be motivated and work to their capacity.
- Teachers were aware of the need for improved teaching strategies in Arabic as an additional language lessons. In many classes, critical thinking was developing or not yet promoted.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Assessment	Good	Good	Good

- The school had worked to ensure that internal assessment processes were more coherent and consistent. The streamlined system was recently implemented and becoming embedded in practice. Teachers, students and parents, all previously consulted, were familiarising with the clear measures of progress against curriculum standards. Internal assessment processes were less coherent in Arabic as a first and additional language, and in Islamic education.
- The school had similarly reviewed its benchmarking of students' academic outcomes against external, national and international outcomes. In most subjects, benchmarks used were more concise and better-aligned, although discrepancies remained. There was no external benchmarking in place for Arabic and Islamic education. The school had made significant progress towards ensuring that its assessments reflected UK curriculum, including the expectations for the early years.

- In most subjects, the school analysed its assessment data in some detail to ensure that it gained good information about students' progress over time. Analysis was less coherent in enabling full understanding of the progress of groups of students across year groups and across phases. Assessment was not always fully accurate, particularly in primary science.
- Teachers' additional training to use assessment information in planning students' learning had begun to have a positive impact on progress. Its use in differentiation to meet the needs of all learners was evident in the best lessons throughout the school, particularly in the early years. This was not yet a consistently strong feature of practice in all subjects and was weaker in Arabic and Islamic education.
- Most teachers had a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of their students. Often students were involved in assessing their own work. In the best practice, teachers' feedback in class and through marking provided well-focused challenge and support to consolidate and extend learning. This particularly good practice of personalised and constructive feedback was not fully embedded throughout the school.

4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Good	Good

- Students' learning progressed well across the phases. The school had introduced an IGCSE course for Year 10 students. Progression was not as well planned for primary science, Islamic education and Arabic studies, as it was for other subjects, particularly so for students of Arabic as an additional language. The school was still adjusting its range of new curriculum initiatives to ensure continuity.
- Children in the early years exercised considerable choice in their learning. Humanities, personal and social development (PSD) and technology were integrated within the primary core subjects and art. While PSD featured in assemblies and through weekly themed class lessons, the lack of specific learning outcomes hindered consistency in these subjects. Students from Year 9 chose from seven IGCSE options, including French or Mandarin.
- The curriculum was broad, balanced, and reflected the school's values and met English National Curriculum requirements. The Montessori model was being linked to the English Early Years' curriculum and to support transition into Year 1. Students' linguistic skills were enhanced through language classes for both Arabic and non-Arabic speaking students in the Foundation Stage and at Year 1.
- Cross-curricular links included global citizenship across all subjects. A 'Bring Your Own Device' initiative promoting the use of ICT was being introduced across all age groups. A 'Young Apprentice Project', supported by parents, promoted student leadership and collaboration, in the secondary phase. A calendar of events now incorporated planned cross-curricular activities.
- The school regularly reviewed its curriculum. A school-wide mapping exercise was helping to identify links between subjects and set priorities for improvement. The school had recently focused on the coherence of the curricula in the early years while expanding the secondary curriculum to meet the requirements of IGCSE resulting from the expansion of this phase this academic year.
- The introduction of UAE social studies was identified and was proceeding in part, mainly within the aspects of the wider curriculum of humanities.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum adaptation	Good	Good	Good

- The early years' curriculum met children's needs well, including those with SEND. School leaders and middle managers monitored recently introduced year group common lesson-planning formats to support consistency. Teachers also modified the curriculum. The secondary phase English department, for example, had very successfully developed its programmes of study to promote critical thinking and to make connections in learning.
- The school was in the process of modifying its curriculum. A range of art, sport and music activities enriched learning. The school had identified the need to enhance creativity, collaboration and critical thinking. These were being increasingly linked to enterprise activities and field trips. In the best examples, critical thinking activities linked to the real world through imaginative use of video or computers.
- Topics such as 'Life in Dubai' helped students gain an understanding of Emirati culture and traditions. Links were being increasingly made through school-wide themes delivered across subjects and stages. The school did not yet teach UAE social studies as an embedded part of the curriculum. It had recently introduced lessons on basic UAE geography, history and culture.
- Provision for Arabic had been enhanced through the introduction of a 40-minute period in the early years for both the 74 native Arabic speakers and the 145 non-native speakers.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding


- Buildings and equipment were maintained in outstanding condition. The school maintained very detailed and secure records including records of incidents and subsequent actions. The outsourced catering company provided healthy options meals and snacks in a hygienic facility. The clinic was well-organised and medical records were detailed and secure.
- Students' learning was enhanced by the excellent physical environment. Throughout the school there were opportunities for students of all abilities to engage in challenging and motivating experiences.
- The promotion of healthy living was an important part of the educational provision throughout the school. The curriculum included programmes relating to a healthy diet and lifestyles. Sports and exercise were a regular part of the school's healthy living approach. There were extensive shaded areas for students to participate in physical activities and to socialise.
- Highly effective and efficient policies and procedures were in place for safeguarding, including child protection arrangements. Well-organised and delivered educational programmes alerting students of all ages to the issues of cyber-bullying and online safety were an integral aspect of students' learning.
- Security had been further enhanced with the implementation of the parents' and visitors' ID card system. There were robust security protocols to ensure the school was safe and secure. Staff ensured that the bus travel arrangements were of the highest quality regarding student and adult safety and security.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Care and support	Good	Good	Good

- Relationships between staff and students were characterised by courtesy and care, which promoted successful learning. Behaviour was managed positively and well. Occasional lapses in behaviour were managed in a positive way.
- The management of attendance was thorough and was one of the factors promoting high levels of attendance. Punctuality to school and to lessons was well managed.
- The school had effective systems in place to identify almost all students who had SEND, gifts or talents. Most gifted and talented students and those students with SEND received support that enabled them to make good progress. In withdrawal lessons, when taught by specialists, students with SEND made consistently good progress.
- Support was occasionally less effective for the small number of students who had more severe difficulties and were supported by shadow teachers.
- Students' personal development was supported very well through, for example, close links to form tutors and access to school counsellors. Careers education and guidance for older students was at the early stages of development.

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 recent appointment of an increased number of experienced, qualified staff ensured that provision of 'push-in' and 'pull-out' support for students with SEND was consistently effective. Leaders' regular meetings with school staff and monitoring of teaching had led to some improvements in students' progress in mainstream lessons. However, leaders did not consistently monitor the work of shadow teachers.
- The school had thorough systems in place that identified the needs of most SEND and gifted and talented students accurately. This allowed the school to make provision that matched their individual needs well. However, IEPs did not consistently identify students' personal, as well as academic, goals and did not provide clear enough information about addressing barriers to learning.
- The recently established support group provided a good forum for parents of children with SEND to set their own agendas. The school had increased the input of parents into the creation and regular review of IEPs. Guidance to parents on how to address their children's barriers to learning did not consistently pinpoint actions to support their children's improvement more effectively.
- The curriculum was adequately modified to meet the needs of SEND and gifted and talented students well. Where this did not happen, especially in Arabic and Islamic education, their academic progress was slow. When supported by shadow teachers, insufficient attention was paid to planning and promoting students' independence, personal development and learning skills. A number of parents noted that their children were not supported equally well by staff.

- Students with SEND made good progress when working with specialist staff and in most mainstream lessons. Progress for students working with shadow teachers was slower when insufficient account was taken of the need to encourage independence, promote involvement with other students and support personal and social, and academic development. Monitoring of progress against IEP targets and assessment of progress required further development.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Good

- At all levels of leadership, members of staff felt empowered due to the principal's strong commitment to sharing responsibilities and accountabilities. School leaders collaborated in the pursuit of excellence and total inclusion to ensure outstanding outcomes for the students.
- The principal and senior team led from the front. Middle leaders were increasingly effective in accepting responsibility and accountability for standards within their areas of responsibility. This drive for improvement was shared by most class teachers and there was good capacity to improve further.
- Morale in the school was positive; the collegial style of leadership was a strength. Through improved communications, governors and school leaders ensured all stakeholders were clear about the professional expectations, procedures and systems in the school.
- School leaders at all levels were fully committed and this underpinned the growing levels of competence. They were confident and valued the opportunities to lead and explore innovative actions to influence decision-making and improvement activities.
- Leaders had enjoyed some successes in improving areas of the school's performance; for example, an increase in the amount of very good and outstanding teaching in all phases. They acknowledged the challenge to raise and sustain teaching consistently to these standards.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Good

- Leaders at all levels engaged in comprehensive school self-evaluation covering all levels of the school's operation. The process was driven by senior leaders. Along with the growing number of middle leaders, they had developed a strong sense of ownership and accountability for raising standards of learning and teaching throughout the school.
- School leaders were using feedback from a variety of sources to improve the quality of monitoring and evaluation. This included staff at all levels, students and their parents; such collaboration was helping to inform developments. The use of internal and external assessment data was under-developed in some areas.
- The improvement planning process also promoted higher levels of stakeholder engagement. Governors were closely involved through advisors in the identification of priorities and medium and long-term plans related to the school's vision, values and aims.
- School leaders and governance had addressed the recommendations of the previous inspection report; for example, achieving success in developing a strategic plan that was shared with all stakeholders.

Partnerships with parents and the community

Very good ↑

- The school had considerable success in involving parents in their children's learning. Senior leaders had listened carefully to parents' views, gathered through extensive consultation, and had designed and run activities for a sustained period to help parents support their children more effectively. For example, they provided a basic Arabic course for non-Arabic speaking parents so they could help their children at home.
- Parent representatives on the advisory council to the governors made a significant contribution at strategic level, through reporting their findings and the unfiltered views of students directly to the governing body. These were taken into account within the planning process. The school had also taken account of parents' views expressed through the consultation process.
- The school had developed very good strategies to keep parents informed about their children's learning. This process had been shaped by consultations with parents. This had included regular information about the curriculum students follow.
- Communication with the parents of children with SEND had improved, with the introduction of a parent-led support group. Parents had regular termly opportunities to review their children's progress with specialist staff. However, guidance on how to help children overcome barriers to learning was not specific enough, especially children with severe difficulties. Reporting to parents on students' academic progress was regular and enhanced by parent conferences. Parents welcomed having an additional interim report, but many found it of limited value.
- The school had formed strong, positive partnerships, including with other schools, which positively impacted learning. For example, when parents of children for whom English was a second language asked how to support children at home, the school involved an international partner to train them and teaching staff in effective methods. Results in English as an additional language had improved significantly.

Governance

Very good ↑

- The improved high quality and frequent communications between the board, advisory council and all stakeholders ensured that members had an extensive and detailed knowledge of the school's performance and potential areas for improvement.
- Board and advisory council members were closely involved in school self-evaluation processes and instrumental in the drive towards consistently high standards. The principal and senior leaders were held accountable for the school's performance. They were supported by the advisory council and members of the board in setting achievable and challenging improvement goals.
- The board had direct influence on the school's performance through the provision of high quality training opportunities at all levels of staffing, and a continually improving recruitment and retention of staff process. The number of middle leaders had been increased to support monitoring and evaluation processes. Governors ensured students benefited from high quality resources.




Management, staffing, facilities and resources

Outstanding

- School day-to-day management was outstanding. Policies and procedures were in place and well-understood by all. Efficient monitoring of maintenance, cleaning and transport contracts ensured excellent level of service. Information was readily available to parents and visitors to keep them up to date with developments, for example new classroom extension plans. Smooth transitions ensured students enjoyed maximum access to planned educational experiences.
- School leaders and administrators managed the turnover of staff well and new members of staff were given appropriate induction to the school. All teachers took part in regular and wide-ranging professional training. Most teachers were well qualified with appropriate experience in their subjects; they were knowledgeable about students' developmental stages and learning.
- School premises provided an excellent, stimulating learning environment. Children in the Foundation Stage benefited from high quality outdoor activity areas. The auditorium, large gymnasium, additional games halls and swimming pools provided facilities to support the curriculum. There were designated work areas for staff and social settings around the school for students. Students' vivid artwork was displayed throughout buildings to great effect.
- The school provided an excellent range of resources which supported all aspects of the curriculum. Teachers and students had access to information technologies in class and specialist settings, including interactive white boards, computers and tablets. The attractive library resources were available to all age groups. A spacious central library encouraged students' independent use of resources.

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	184
	2014-2015	367
Teachers 	104	
Students 	0	

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

- Overall, most parents agreed that school inspection had led to school improvements and had helped them to understand the quality of education in the school.
- Almost all felt their children made good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- All parents and teachers said that students enjoyed school. They agreed that students developed a good awareness of other cultures.
- Parents believed that their children had opportunities to learn about community and environmental responsibility. Almost all parents and teachers felt that parents and students were kept up to date about student progress, and that students were safe in school. A large minority of parents did not know about or did not agree that students benefited from an anti-cyber bullying programme.
- Almost all parents and teachers considered that the school was led well, although a minority of parents and teachers felt that the school did not listen to or act on their views.
- Most teachers said that the school had discussed National Agenda targets with them but a minority did not know about TIMSS results.
- A few teachers said that they were not included in the process of school self-evaluation.

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