



Uptown School

Curriculum: IB

Overall Rating:

Very good



"We are keen to prepare the new generation that is ready to be creative and innovative to help us achieve our ambitions for even greater prosperity"

Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum



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## School information



### General information

Location	Mirdiff
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2012
Website	www.uptownschool.ae
Telephone	042515001
Address	Mirdif, Tripoli Street, 788181, Dubai
Principal	Christopher Bromham
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	13 to 16 February 2017

### Teachers / Support staff

Number of teachers	120
Largest nationality group of teachers	British
Number of teaching assistants	41
Teacher-student ratio	1:13
Number of guidance counsellors	3
Teacher turnover	20%

### Students

Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	3-18
Grades or year groups	KG 1-Grade 12
Number of students on roll	1377
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	31
Number of Emirati students	319
Number of students with SEND	190
Largest nationality group of students	Emirati

### Curriculum

Educational permit / Licence	IB
Main curriculum	IB / Ministry of Education (MoE)
External tests and examinations	IBT, CAT4
Accreditation	IB
National Agenda benchmark tests	IBT



## The DSIB inspection process



In order to judge the overall quality of education provided by schools, inspectors consider the six standards of performance that form the basis of the UAE School Inspection Framework (the framework). They look at children's attainment and progress in key subjects, their learning skills and their personal and social development. They judge how effective teaching and the assessment of learning are across the school. Inspectors consider how well the school's curriculum, including activities inside and outside classrooms, meet the educational needs of all students. They judge how well schools protect and support children. In addition, inspectors judge the effectiveness of leadership, which incorporates governance, management, staffing and facilities.

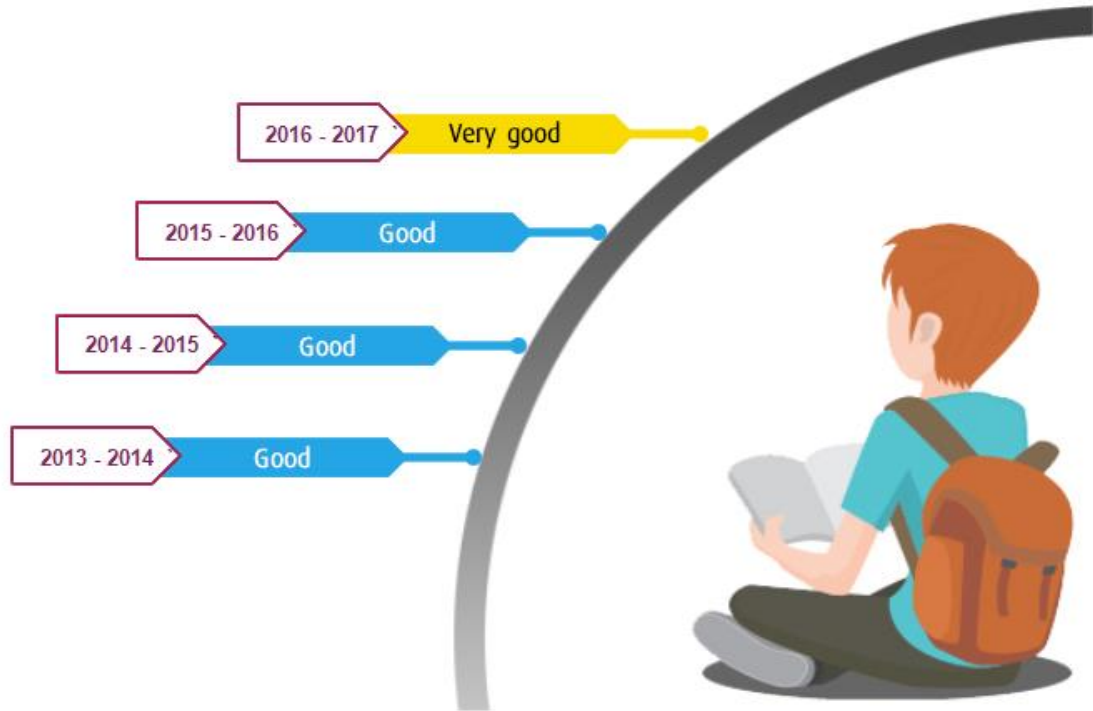
Inspection judgements are drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observation of students' learning in lessons, review of their work, discussions with students, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and review of surveys completed by parents, teachers and students.

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

DSIB inspection teams make judgements about different aspects, phases and subjects that form the work of the school, using the scale below, which is consistent with the framework.

<b>Outstanding</b>	Quality of performance substantially exceeds the expectation of the UAE
<b>Very good</b>	Quality of performance exceeds the expectation of the UAE
<b>Good</b>	Quality of performance meets the expectation of the UAE (This is the expected level for every school in the UAE)
<b>Acceptable</b>	Quality of performance meets the minimum level of quality required in the UAE (This is the minimum level for every school in the UAE)
<b>Weak</b>	Quality of performance is below the expectation of the UAE
<b>Very weak</b>	Quality of performance is significantly below the expectation of the UAE

## Inspection journey for Uptown School



- Uptown School opened in 2012. At the time of the inspection the school had 1377 students aged from three to 18 years; across Kindergarten (KG), Primary Years Programme (Grade 1 to 5) Middle Years Programme (Grades 6 to 10) and Diploma Programme (Grade 11 and 12). The total number of students decreased by 50 from the previous year. The principal was appointed to his post in August 2015. Teacher turnover at the time of the inspection was 20 percent compared to 34 percent the previous year.
- The three previous inspections have acknowledged the school's strengths in students' attitudes, behaviour and their personal and social development, and the curriculum. More recently, inspections have also acknowledged students' good or better progress, the care, guidance and support the school provides, the productive partnerships with parents and the positive contribution of governors.
- Recent recommendations have focused on increasing students' rate of progress, improving aspects of the quality of teaching, the use of assessment, middle leadership and school self-evaluation.



## Summary of inspection findings 2016-2017



**Uptown School** was inspected by DSIB from 13 to 16 February 2017. The overall quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. The section below summarises the inspection findings for each of the six performance indicators described in the framework.

- Attainment in both Arabic and Islamic education, in both the middle years and diploma programmes are judged as acceptable. However, progress is good in these subjects. In all other key subjects, across all phases, attainment and progress are at least good. Achievement in the Middle Years Programme (MYP) in English, mathematics and science is very good. Progress in Kindergarten (KG) English, mathematics and science is very good and in the Diploma Programme (DP), progress in English and science is also very good.
- Students' personal development remains one of the strengths of the school. Relationships are very supportive and respectful. Attendance, including that during the week of the inspection, is very good. Students in the KG and Primary Years Programme (PYP) show an excellent understanding of Islamic values and knowledge of the history and culture of the UAE. In the MYP and DP, students' understanding of these areas is also very good.
- Students make at least good progress across all subjects as a result of the very good teaching that they receive. In many lessons, teachers use well-designed activities to develop students' problem solving skills. However, in the MYP, there is inconsistency in the extent to which teachers use assessment information skilfully, to identify and tackle gaps in students' knowledge, and also, in the provision of opportunities for students to take responsibility for their own learning.
- The curriculum is exceptionally well planned to support the development of students' knowledge, understanding and skills. The curriculum in the KG is imaginative and nurtures creativity in children. Curriculum options in the upper MYP phase offer students a range of personalised pathways. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are carefully constructed to guide curriculum modifications for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The needs of higher ability students are also well met.
- The school provides an exceptionally safe, secure and supportive environment for students. The school takes its responsibilities for health and safety very seriously, and procedures and practices are outstanding. The school offers excellent care and support. Older students are provided with personalised guidance towards their future academic or career choices.
- The principal has a clear vision and commitment for the school. Other senior leaders, governors and most teachers share this. The strengths and weaknesses of the school are well known. Relationships with parents and the community are outstanding. Governors provide a high level of expertise and are very closely engaged with the school. Management, staffing, facilities and resources are excellent.

### What the school does best

- Students are very enthusiastic learners and make good or better progress in all subjects. Teaching is very good in the KG, PYP and DP.
- Students' outstanding personal development and sense of social responsibility.
- The very clear strategic direction set by the governing board and the principal alongside the excellent facilities and resources and the outstanding partnerships with parents.
- The school's outstanding curriculum and support for all students, including those with SEND, and the excellent arrangements for keeping students safe and promoting healthy life styles.

### Recommendations

- ensure that teaching is consistently of a high standard, to raise attainment and accelerate progress in students' learning in Arabic as a first and additional language and also in Islamic education
- Continue to improve the impact of teaching, particularly in the MYP, by:
  - making full use of assessment information to identify and close gaps in students' knowledge and understanding
  - ensuring that students are provided with more opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Improve the effectiveness in the management of the PYP by ensuring that:
  - the responsibilities of staff with leadership roles are clearly defined
  - middle leaders have the skills needed to guide the development of teaching and learning in their respective areas of responsibility.

## 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 intention 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. In 2015, KHDA launched 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.

**The following section focuses on the impact of the National Agenda Parameter in meeting their targets:**

- The school meets the registration requirements for the National Agenda Parameter
- Attainment based on National Agenda Parameter testing is below expectations in mathematics & science and meets expectations in English.
- The school recently compared the results of IBT and CAT4 tests with IB internal assessment data. This has enabled the school to identify any gaps in learning and areas for improvement. Procedures for tracking progress over time are being developed. Teachers now have accurate information on which to plan and measure the effectiveness of interventions intended to raise attainment. Training in the use of such data is being provided.
- The curriculum is continually under review and development. Subject development plans are linked to the school's action plan for the National Agenda Parameter. There is an emphasis in the plan on the development of content and skills in all subjects. The school is beginning to further align learning opportunities to the requirements of PISA standards.
- Improved teaching strategies include the provision of differentiated learning objectives to meet learners' varied needs, more open-ended questioning to encourage critical discussion in lessons, application to real-life situations and the use of ICT by students to carry out research and investigations.
- Students are aware of PISA and TIMSS in the context of the National Agenda. IB personal projects contribute exceptionally well to the development of students' research skills. The display of these projects enhances learning and encourages best practice in research and presentation skills. Thematic weeks also enhance research skills through the development of cross-curricular links.

Overall, the school's progress towards achieving its National Agenda targets meets expectations



## Innovation in Education

The UAE Vision 2021 sets the aspiration 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' and provides a basis for evaluating schools in order to deliver a world-class education for all children in the UAE.









## Promoting a culture of innovation:

- Children in the KG engage purposefully in a variety of activities that allow them to be imaginative and creative learners. In a wide variety of activities students show enterprise skills. In most lessons, teachers build innovation skills through strategies that enable students to talk through their own ideas and explore innovative approaches to solving problems. Through a variety of projects, students are able to make choices based on their interests. School leaders are fully committed to innovation and respond exceptionally well to student and teacher initiatives.

### Overall school performance

Very good ↑

### 1 Students' achievement

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

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Learning skills	Very good	Very good	Very good ↑	Very good

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

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

## 3. Teaching and assessment

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

## 4. Curriculum

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

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

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





## 6. Leadership and management

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

# Main inspection report



## 1. Students' achievement

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

- In English, internal assessment information indicates that a large majority of children make better than expected progress from their starting points and a majority reach levels that are above curriculum expectations. The trend in attainment has improved in recent years. Children make rapid progress in their listening skills and demonstrate their understanding through verbal responses and when justifying their answers. By the end of the phase, the majority of children can read simple texts and decode unfamiliar words. They can write a short story with mostly accurate or at least phonetically plausible spellings and some correct punctuation.
- In mathematics, internal assessment information indicates that a large majority of children make better than expected progress from their differing starting points. A majority reach levels that are above curriculum expectations. In lessons and in their recent work, children are proficient in their use of number, for example, in counting, and in the addition and subtraction of one and two digit numbers. They have a basic understanding of measurement and can recognise and describe 2D, and some 3D shapes. They can create and interpret simple graphs and are developing the concept of multiplication and division.
- In science, internal assessment information indicates that a large majority of children make better than expected progress from their starting points. A majority reach levels that are above curriculum expectations, reflecting the trend in attainment in recent years. As a result, children can classify animals and know about the life cycle of a butterfly and what plants need to grow. Additionally, they are developing use of their senses to explore their environment, make some predictions, and are beginning to record their observations using drawings and some words.

PYP		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Good	Good
Arabic as a first language	Good	Good
Arabic as an additional language	Good	Good
English	Very good	Very good
Mathematics	Very good	Very good
Science	Good	Good

- In Islamic education, the majority of students achieve levels that are above curriculum standards. The progress of the majority is also above expectations. Students are progressing well in their memorization, recitation and understanding of verses from the Holy Qur'an. Most students have developed a secure knowledge and understanding of the key Pillars of Islam, for example of the reasons behind fasting. Students make good progress in linking Islamic values to their everyday life, such as empathy, studied in Grade 3 and cleanliness, studied in Grade 1. They know a few short Hadiths and are developing an age-appropriate understanding of their meaning.
- In Arabic as a first language, students make good progress and a majority attain levels that exceed grade level expectations. At the end of the phase, students are able to produce sequenced, grammatically correct and coherent writing. Students are able to understand and analyse a variety of texts. For example, in Grade 5, students are able to analyse characters in a story and reflect on their personality traits. Students' speaking skills in using standard Arabic are developing well.
- In Arabic as an additional language, students perform at a good level in their listening, speaking, reading and writing. They are able to decode unfamiliar texts and use context clues to infer meanings. They know and use a range of words. Students have good listening skills and generally respond with simple, correct sentences. At the upper end, of the age range, students' writing is developing well and a majority are able to write short paragraphs. Given their starting points, the majority are making good progress both in their lessons and over time.
- In English, the progress made by different groups of students, including those with SEND and those whose first language is not English, is predominantly very good when measured from their different starting points. They build their reading and speaking skills at a good pace. Writing is often imaginative, though the quality of handwriting is variable. The large majority of students' key knowledge, understanding and skills are above those typical of their age at the end of the primary phase, when compared to IB curriculum and international standards.
- In mathematics, attainment compared to IB curriculum standards is very good. The large majority of students show levels of knowledge and understanding that are above age related expectations, and show an improving ability to apply these in a range of practical applications. Individual students and groups of students, especially those with SEND and Emirati students, progress very well from their differing starting points. Students are skilled in the use of number and the measurement of area. They can also express word problems in simple algebraic expressions.



- Attainment and progress in science when measured against the school's curriculum standards shows that a majority of students are at above expected levels. Students are beginning to develop good inquiry and investigation skills. Some students require further development of their skills in data collection and analysis. Students are able to make predictions about the likely outcomes of the investigations they plan and carry out. They are able to express their ideas and understanding, often using the correct scientific language.

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

- In Islamic education, most students achieve levels that are in the curriculum expectations. Progress is good overall and most students are rapidly improving their ability to link what they are learning in the subject to real life contexts. Levels of Qur'an memorization and the accuracy of recitation have improved significantly. Students are developing a good understanding of Islamic law, particularly in the upper grades. The progress of a minority is slightly impeded by their limited Arabic language skills.
- In Arabic as a first language, students attain levels that are broadly in line with the curriculum expectations. The majority progress steadily in their key language skills. They analyse poetry and prose of suitably challenging levels. In their reading comprehension, they analyse literary figures and are generally able to support their views with some evidence from the text. Students write increasingly extended pieces. However, there are repeated grammar and usage weaknesses.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students attain levels that are in line with curriculum expectations in the key language areas. A majority of students read with confidence, especially if the text includes familiar vocabulary and phrases. Students' speaking skills are improving and most are able to engage in short exchanges, using common sentence structures. Students can produce paragraphs describing their daily routines and how to stay healthy, making a few simple connections to everyday life. Most students are progressing well in lessons and over time.
- In English, the progress of different groups of students, including those with SEND, is very good, both in lessons and over time. Where progress temporarily slows, it is sometimes because teaching is not sufficiently challenging. In general, most students develop skills that are above IB curriculum standards. This is seen in their ability to communicate their ideas orally, in writing, and in their skills when interpreting texts. The school's assessment data indicates attainment is better in the upper grades, with a steady improvement in results over the phase.
- Students mostly make rapid progress in mathematic lessons. Attainment in relation to curriculum standards, for the majority of students, is above that indicated by external benchmark tests. The understanding of chance and the manipulation of data are particularly well developed by students and seen when they calculate the probability of various events. For example, students calculate the relative chance of getting particular numbers on the throw of two dice. The majority are able to extend this by calculating odds. Results are displayed clearly using data display.

- In science, the attainment and progress of the majority of students, as measured against curriculum standards, are above the expected levels. Students' active engagement in their learning, underpins the development of effective inquiry and investigation skills; although the skills related to processing and evaluation remain under-developed. Students are able to clearly and accurately express their ideas and understanding. Many students are able to relate their learning to real-life situations and to make connections between subject areas.

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

- In Islamic education students make good progress overall and most attain levels that are in line with the curriculum expectations. They show growing confidence in reciting verses from Holy Qur'an, from memory and also use them to support their views and arguments. Their accuracy of applying Tajweed rules is steadily improving. Most students make good progress in exploring modern issues from an Islamic perspective, for example, in Grade 12, the potential threats of social media. The progress of a minority of students is adversely affected by their limited Arabic language skills.
- In Arabic as a first language, students make good progress in lessons and over time. Most students attain levels that are in line with the expectations of the MoE curriculum and the IB standard level. They analyse advanced literary texts and are able to argue their points of view, supported with evidence drawn from the texts. Some students are over dependent on the teacher for prompts to extend their written work and spoken contributions.
- In English, in comparison with IB curriculum standards, the large majority of students' knowledge, understanding and skills are above those typical of their age. The progress made by different groups of students, including those with SEND and those whose first language is not English, is predominantly very good when measured from their various starting points in learning. Most current Grade 12 students skilfully discover meanings of text beyond the literal and compare them with politics in the world today.
- Attainment and progress in mathematics is good and improving over time. Diploma students are generally well-prepared for external examinations. Students' abilities to apply their knowledge and understanding of algebraic equations and geometric shapes are above expectations, and seen when successfully applied to real-life problems. Mathematical thinking is improving through the ability of students to interpret and apply increasingly complex algebraic expressions. For example, students have a better than expected ability to formulate and apply quadratic equations in tracking profit growth in business.

- In science, the school has its first cohort sitting the DP examinations in May 2017. A small majority of students have the knowledge, skills and understanding to achieve a good or better level of attainment. Attainment is similar across all of the science disciplines. The students in Grade 12 have the practical skills needed to achieve the requirements of externally assessed, individual investigations. To achieve these outcomes most students are making better than expected progress. They are able to express their ideas and understanding clearly and when challenged, most are able to justify their understandings with sound reasoning.

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Learning skills	Very good	Very good	Very good ↑	Very good


- Across the school, students demonstrate a high level of engagement in learning. From KG, upwards the learner profile is used to enhance students' learning skills. In almost all classrooms students are keen to learn and show that they are able to take responsibility for their own learning. They are encouraged to know and understand their strengths and areas for improvement and most act purposefully to improve.
- Students routinely work together respectfully and effectively towards common goals. This is seen in team games in physical education, in the use of technology and in problem solving in most lessons. Students interact most purposefully when tasks are challenging and they are given enough time to complete them. Most students have very well developed communication skills which enable them to engage in productive group discussion.
- Making connections to the real world is intrinsic in the planning for learning, across all grades. For example, in the KG children construct models of buildings and PYP students identify how real 3D objects are developed from 2D shapes. Through the Theory of Knowledge (TOK), most students show that they are able to make strong connections between their learning and their growing understanding of the world.
- When given the opportunity, students are innovative and enterprising. In all phases, most are adept at finding things out for themselves. Most students use learning technology very effectively, such as voice recording in KG, translating in PYP French, application development in the MYP and database construction in the DP. They show that they are skilful critical thinkers and problem-solvers when presented with open-ended, challenging tasks.

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

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students across the school are courteous and welcoming and are eager to volunteer to help each other. The learner profile provides a powerful basis for students to be self-reliant. Because teachers and peers habitually provide feedback about learning, students respond positively to constructive suggestions for improvement.

- In classrooms and in the public areas, students of all ages are exceptionally self-disciplined and are very considerate towards their peers and adults. On the rare occasions during which students' behaviour might wane slightly, their peers remind and encourage them to be more responsible. Consequently, the rare disagreements that there are between students are almost always resolved quickly between themselves.
- Relationships between staff and students are excellent. Students show sensitivity towards the needs of others. Students from all backgrounds interact well. In particular, they value the friendships of classmates of different nationalities.
- A healthy lifestyle is promoted across the school and most students appear fit and healthy. Almost all students bring healthy lunches to school. During break times a majority of students are physically active in the playground and on the sports fields. There is significant participation in the after school extra-curricular sporting activities, some of which are organised by senior students.
- Attendance is very good in all phases and continues to improve. Punctuality to school and class is exemplary, indicating that students accept the school's expectations of behaviour.

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
<b>Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding 	Very good	Very good

- Students have a particularly well developed knowledge, understanding and a deep appreciation of key Islamic values. Across all phases of the school, students demonstrate an ability to link these to features of life in Dubai and the UAE. They are able to offer many examples of the influence of Islamic values on the community.
- Students have a strong appreciation of respect for the UAE culture and heritage and recognize the influence of Islam and Arabic language on them. Students are knowledgeable about many Emirati customs and traditions and embrace all opportunities to engage in related events and activities in the school and the community.
- Students, in all phases, take pride in their own cultures, and especially so in the KG and PYP and show great respect and clear appreciation for other cultures. Students of all backgrounds interact in harmony in the school. They fully understand and appreciate the value of diversity in Dubai and the richness it brings to their life experiences.

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

- From the KG onwards, students demonstrate a high level of responsibility and commitment to school life. They actively participate in many worthwhile initiatives both inside school and outside the school. Older students, plan and engage in a variety of service activities in the wider community. Through these activities, students develop excellent leadership skills and exceptionally good citizenship skills.

- Students show an excellent work ethic. Most strive to complete their work to the highest standards. Through a variety of projects and enterprise activities they become increasingly self-reliant and develop key innovative skills. They benefit greatly from the projects they undertake and develop their planning, organisational and presentation skills.
- Students have excellent awareness of the environmental challenges that exist both locally and in the wider world. They have a particularly well developed understanding of issues such as water conservation, pollution, recycling and global warming. They organise and take part in competitions to promote a better understanding of conservation issues and offer many ideas on how to address issues such as water conservation and traffic congestion.

### 3. Teaching and assessment

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

- Teachers have a very secure knowledge of their subjects. They make very good use of their knowledge to provide students with stimulating and challenging work. In the KG children make very good progress because most teachers understand how young children learn through self-initiated activities. Throughout the school, knowledge acquisition, linked to real-life situations enables students to make good and better progress.
- Lesson plans are carefully planned and include differentiated targets related to students' attainment levels. In the best lessons, the work is suitably challenging for all groups of students. However, in a few lessons, particularly in the MYP, teaching does not sufficiently consider students' baseline attainment levels. As a result, progress slows because the work is too easy for some but too difficult for others.
- In most lessons, skilled questioning is used well to challenge students' thinking and probe understanding. This is a strong feature of teaching in most grades. In the most effective lessons, teachers use formative assessment effectively to check and reshape learning, particularly when students are working in groups.
- The individual learning needs of students are mostly well met. The most effective lessons provide students with a range of activities that enable students to learn from each other as well as from the teacher. In a few lessons in Arabic and Islamic education, teachers are unclear about how best to promote this form of student-centred learning.
- There are many examples, in all phases, of teachers providing opportunities for the promotion of critical thinking skills. The application of research and reasoning skills is built into the learning activities in these lessons and teachers confidently engage students in self-directed learning.



	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Assessment	Very good ↑	Good	Good	Very good ↑

- The school assessment procedures are aligned with the school's curriculum and International Baccalaureate (IB) assessment requirements. The results of these assessments are used to determine student attainment and analysed to provide an indication of overall progress.
- The school uses results of the IBT test in Grades 3 to 10, to compare their students' performance to international standards. In addition, they are now beginning to use the CAT4 assessment to provide a profile of student's ability and potential in the same grades.
- The school analyses assessment data obtained from internal, IBT and CAT4 tests and uses this information as a measure of whole grade and individual student progress. An effective procedure for tracking individual student's progress over time is now in place.
- The school makes good use of the data from internal and IBT assessments, to modify the curriculum, particularly in relation to National Agenda requirements. Teachers have access to the analysed data, but the use of these data to modify teaching is inconsistent. Consequently, the learning needs of students are not always being fully met, particularly in the MYP and the PYP.
- Most teachers, particularly in KG and DP, have a good understanding of their students' strengths and weaknesses. In the most effective lessons, this leads to personalised challenge and support through constructive individual feedback. While students are involved in some self and peer assessment, this is under-developed as a practice for improving student learning.

#### 4. Curriculum

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

- The underlying intention of the curriculum is clear, which is, to, produce students who will realise their full potential and go on to make a worthwhile contribution to the wider community. It does this by challenging them to inquire, think critically and be innovative from KG upwards. It is highly effective in fostering positive attitudes that encourage students to continue to develop their skills and understanding throughout their lives.
- A strong, coherent focus on building conceptual understanding and learning skills from KG through to the DP enhances structured progression throughout each subject. The curriculum caters for the needs of all students and equips them for seamless transition between all phases and beyond school.
- Students have choices throughout the day in KG and opportunities for pursuing their own inquiries from PYP through to the DP. The comprehensive nature of the MYP and the DP provide students with subject choices while ensuring that they benefit from learning experiences that nurture their talents, interests and aspirations.

- KG and PYP are cross-curricular by design and the MYP includes at least one cross-curricular unit in each year level. The PYP exhibition and the MYP personal project are significant cross-curricular projects for students. In the DP, Theory of Knowledge provides strong cross-curricular links and the nature of the DP creates many opportunities for cross-curricular and real-world connections in many other classes.
- Rigorous major reviews are conducted yearly in relation to students' achievements, aspirations, and UAE and national priorities. Teachers in each phase and, as necessary, between phases, meet in teams regularly to plan and review the curriculum so that the academic and personal development needs of all students are fully met.
- The UAE social studies curriculum is integrated into the IB units in the PYP and MYP. It is taught in English and Arabic to meet different student needs. Curriculum planning has started earlier during this academic year and adequately takes account of the MoE social studies standards. Teachers engage students well in lessons and establish cross-curricular links with other areas. The subject is not yet formally assessed.

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
Curriculum adaptation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Lessons are planned at all levels with strategies to cater for the diverse needs of SEND students and those for whom English is not their mother tongue. The inquiry-based nature of teaching and learning in all phases provides the framework for all groups of students to achieve to their potential. Classroom strategies that include open-ended tasks and collaborative work enable students to perform at their best.
- All students are exposed to an excellent range of opportunities to motivate and inspire them. They are required to answer meaningful questions and solve innovative, real-world problems. This all culminates, for example, in the PYP exhibition, the MYP personal project and the DP extended essay. An extensive and stimulating programme of extra-curricular activities within and outside the school significantly enhances students' academic and personal development.
- U.A.E. social studies is embedded in Arabic A and B and Islamic studies. It is also included in the PYP social studies framework and in the MYP Individuals and society subject area. DP students examine culture in Theory of Knowledge. Outside classrooms, some senior students are involved in Ministry of Youth programs and are active in organising influential Emirati citizens as guest speakers for assemblies.

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

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

- Child protection and safeguarding arrangements are clearly defined and rigorous. All staff receive child protection training and any issues are dealt with swiftly. There are highly effective procedures for safeguarding students against any kind of abuse, including bullying and cyber bullying. Students know what to do if they have a concern.
- Effective practices ensure that students are kept safe in a hygienic environment. Thorough measures to maximise the protection of students include very efficient and effective arrangements for school transport. Students are adequately supervised at all times within school and on school transport. Students' safety is given high priority by all school staff.
- Buildings and equipment are maintained in excellent condition. Comprehensive records are kept of regular fire drills and there is a lock-down procedure. Medical staff are vigilant in their care of students and detailed records are kept. They encourage students to adopt healthy lifestyles and very carefully monitor their physical development.
- The school premises, equipment and resources are excellent and very well suited to the educational needs of all students, including those with SEND and children in the KG. Students take part safely in challenging and motivating educational experiences.
- The school's highly successful promotion of safe and healthy living is an integral part of school life from KG to the DP. Well-being lessons help students to understand the benefits of a healthy diet. New arrangements for school meals offer increased healthy options. Lessons on mindfulness are particularly appreciated because of the benefits they bring to their mental well-being.

	KG	PYP	MYP	DP
<b>Care and support</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Exemplary staff-students relationships, based on mutual respect, are underpinned by the school's mission and values. These contribute significantly to the caring, inclusive ethos of the school. There is a highly effective pastoral system in place to support students' personal development. Students know who they can go to, for support and guidance. The support team play an important role in maintaining students' well-being.
- The school works closely with students and parents to emphasise the importance of regular attendance and punctuality. This approach is successful in promoting regular attendance. Punctuality is a strong aspect and, as a result of a determined approach from all leaders, there is no delay to learning in between lesson times. Parents are contacted promptly if their child is late or absent.

- The management of SEND is outstanding. Leaders are highly committed to ensuring that effective systems are in place to support student's individual learning needs. A wide range of assessment strategies are used to ensure the learning needs of students with SEND are accurately and quickly identified. The identification of gifted and talented students is effective and the curriculum is very well designed to meet their needs.
- The school provides outstanding support for students with SEND as well as those who are gifted and talented. Education plans are informative and very effectively used to help the students tackle their barriers to learning. As a result of accurate identification of the gifted and talented students they receive a tailored curriculum. Support is often, expertly matched to provision and appropriate and challenging targets are set
- The promotion of the well-being and personal development of students lies at the heart of the school. The positive and empathetic relationships between students and teachers ensure that teachers are very well informed and aware of students' emotional and social needs. The school counsellors work collaboratively to support students. In particular, older students are offered an extensive range of advice, guidance and information regarding pathways once they leave school.

## Inclusion

### Provision and outcomes for students with SEND

Outstanding

- Governors and leaders ensure a highly inclusive ethos and present a clear vision for and understanding of the schools' provision for SEND. Detailed policies set out clearly the responsibilities for all stake holders and provide clarity to the procedures for the identification of students with SEND.
- A wide range of assessment strategies are used to ensure the needs of students with SEND are quickly and accurately identified. Rigorous analysis of data is used together with classroom observations to ensure learning needs are met. The school uses a student-centred approach to all procedures and as a result, interventions for students with SEND are very well matched to their needs.
- The school treats the parents as important partners in the education of their children. It has put in place highly effective communication systems to regularly inform parents of the progress of their children. Parents' contribution to the school's provision for students with SEND is very highly valued.
- The curriculum is very well adapted to meet the needs of almost all students with SEND. Modification is personalised and closely matched to the strengths, interests and aptitudes of the students. Students are active participants in the learning process and are consulted at every stage. Student passports clearly identify their interests and strengths. Personal support is sensitive and exceptionally well targeted.
- A wide range of systems are used effectively to analyse and track student progress. Students are supported well in the acquisition of knowledge and skills which provides a secure basis to identify next steps in learning. Progress against personal and social goals is outstanding. Students with SEND are included in developing their educational programmes; they are aware of their targets and participate fully in their reviews.

## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Very good

- The principal provides a clear vision for this inclusive school. The senior leadership team, governors and most teachers share in this direction of travel. There is a strong commitment to raising students' attainment and progress across all curriculum areas. Leaders at all levels are fully committed to the achievement of the UAE National Agenda objectives.
- Leaders are continually focussed on improving the quality of teaching and fully understand what constitutes good and better teaching. They demonstrate a secure knowledge of the curriculum and provide students with a wide range of learning and enrichment opportunities. A purposeful learning environment effectively supports students' academic and personal development.
- The distribution of leadership responsibility to staff at all levels, together with increased accountability for students' performance, has contributed to the improvements in the school. However, middle leaders are sometimes unclear of the extent of their responsibilities for improving teaching and learning in the PYP. Relationships between staff across the school are professional and very supportive.
- Leaders demonstrate a very good understanding of the school's strengths and know what needs to improve. The school's own evaluation of its performance, is mostly accurate. Leaders are determined in their approach to tackling any obstacles to school improvement and provide staff with a wide range of opportunities to develop their professional skills.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have successfully improved important aspects of the work of the school. Purposeful leadership is having a positive effect on teaching and learning, and the progress students are making. The school is aware that more needs to be done for the full effect to be seen on outcomes in all subjects. The school is compliant with all statutory and regulatory requirements.

### School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Very good

- Senior leaders adopt systematic and rigorous self-evaluation to accurately identify the school's strengths and areas where improvement is needed. Both internal and external assessment information are carefully analysed and used to guide improvement and strategic planning. Although teaching in Arabic and Islamic Education remains inconsistent there is evidence of improvement.
- Checks on the quality of teaching and learning by senior leaders are effectively managed. Middle leaders are fully engaged in the monitoring of teaching and accountable for its impact on student outcomes. This monitoring enables strengths in teaching to be identified and shared and support provided for teachers' professional development. Professional development is effectively linked to the school's improvement priorities.
- Accurate self-evaluation gives the school a firm platform on which to base its improvement plans. Detailed subject plans are linked to the whole school improvement plan and specify the action to be taken to improve provision and performance. All plans take appropriate account of UAE and national priorities.



- The school acted promptly on the both the main recommendations made in the previous report and on the minor weaknesses identified in the detail. Although all the actions identified in a post-inspection action plan have resulted in improvement, not all have had time to become fully embedded.

#### Partnerships with parents and the community

Outstanding

- Parents are highly supportive and highly involved in the life of the school. Their views are valued and considered in school planning. Parents appreciate the way in which they are welcomed, in every phase, and make valuable contributions to their children's learning experiences. They do this, for example, by giving talks on their personal interests or professional expertise.
- There is a strong partnership between parents and teachers. Communications between school and home ensure parents are well informed about their children's learning. Communications related to individual children demonstrate teachers' openness and concern for the development of the whole child.
- Through regular reports and meetings, parents are kept well informed about their children's academic and personal progress. Reporting includes reviews of progress plus identification of the next steps in learning. Parents are very positive about the approachability of teachers and senior staff.
- The school is involved extensively with the local community. For example, in partnering local schools in musical productions and sporting events. There are also links with charitable agencies for which students plan and engage in a variety of fundraising, activities. Parent and student involvement in community service includes a wide range of worthwhile activities.

#### Governance

Outstanding

- Regular visits, reports from the principal and detailed analyses of assessment information, ensure that governors have an excellent knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the school's performance. Through the advisory board, governors are well informed of the views of all stakeholders. This information has underpinned the significant contributions governors have made to the improvements in the quality of education provided at the school.
- Governors systematically monitor the work of the school and particularly the quality of leadership in it. They are committed to ensuring that students of all aptitudes and abilities fulfil their academic and personal potential. They hold the school's leaders fully to account for the school's performance.
- The governing board has a strong influence on the school's leadership and direction. Governors provide a high level of expertise for the benefit of the school and students. They provide a budget that enables the school to be staffed and resourced to a very high standard. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

**Management, staffing, facilities and resources**




Outstanding

- The school is very well organised and runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Timetables are well-constructed, ensuring the available time is used efficiently to optimise learning.
- There is an appropriate number of staff to fulfil the vision of the school. All benefit from an ethos which promotes mutual support, and the contributions of several staff who are respected examiners for the IB programme are particularly highly valued. Regular training programmes ensure teachers effectively promote the IB learner profile for students.
- The premises are of the highest quality and designed according to each phase's stage of development. Corridors and stairways are wide and facilitate ease of movement for students with physical disabilities. Learning areas are bright and spacious. Specialist facilities now offer additional opportunities for older students in sport, the arts, technology and science.
- High quality resources are used very effectively to enhance and enrich learning. The libraries have a plentiful supply of reading materials and students and teachers have access to a rich source of information through the Taaleem's network and online resources.

## The views of parents, teachers and senior students

### The views of parents, teachers and senior students

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

Responses to the surveys		
Responses received	Number	
 <b>Parents*</b>	2016-2017	251
	2015-2016	146
 <b>Teachers</b>	85	
 <b>Students</b>	0	

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

- Virtually all parents who responded to the survey are satisfied with the quality of education the school provides. They think that the school is well led and that their children are kept safe, well taught and enjoy school.
- Parents feel that behaviour is good and that their children are taught how to be safe when using the internet.
- Most parents feel that their children are being encouraged to become creative and curious. They are developing an awareness of UAE and other cultures and are being helped to become environmentally responsible.
- A minority of parents feel that the school does not listen to their views or do enough to promote literacy in Arabic. A few feel that there are not enough extra-curricular activities.
- Teacher responses were mostly positive. Almost all feel that students are kept safe, enjoy school, are well taught and make good progress. They think that good support is provided for students' well-being and that students with SEND are provided with good support. Most enjoy working at the school. A minority indicated concerns about aspects of school management and opportunities for professional development.

## What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the inspection report. This should address:

- recommendations from DSIB
- areas identified by the school as requiring improvement
- other external reports or sources of information that comment on the work of the school
- priorities arising from the school's unique characteristics.

The next school inspection will report on changes made by the school.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau  
Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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