

**DUBAI HEIGHTS
ACADEMY**

UK CURRICULUM

**INSPECTION REPORT
2021-2022**

GOOD



Contents

Contents.....	2
School Information	3
Summary of Inspection Findings 2021-2022	4
Overall School Performance.....	6
Main Inspection Report	8

School Information

General Information	 Location	Al Barsha 2
	 Opening year of School	2017
	 Website	www.dubaiheightsacademy.com
	 Telephone	97143563333
	 Principal	Alison Margaret Lamb
	 Principal - Date appointed	9/1/2019
	 Language of Instruction	English
	 Inspection Dates	28 February to 03 March 2022
Students	 Gender of students	Boys and girls
	 Age range	3-15 years
	 Grades or year groups	FS1 – Year 8
	 Number of students on roll	240
	 Number of Emirati students	27
	 Number of students of determination	18
	 Largest nationality group of students	UK
Teachers	 Number of teachers	27
	 Largest nationality group of teachers	UK
	 Number of teaching assistants	16
	 Teacher-student ratio	1:9
	 Number of guidance counsellors	1
	 Teacher turnover	4
Curriculum	 Educational Permit/ License	UK
	 Main Curriculum	UK
	 External Tests and Examinations	GL
	 Accreditation	NA

School Journey for DUBAI HEIGHTS ACADEMY



Summary of Inspection Findings 2021-2022

The overall quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The section below summarises the inspection findings for students' outcomes, provision and leadership.

Students Outcomes

- Students' attainment in the majority of subjects across the school meets the minimum level of quality required in the UAE. The exceptions are Islamic education and the Arabic languages, where levels of attainment are below expectations. The progress of students meets UAE expectations across all phases in English, and mathematics, and in science in the primary phase. Elsewhere progress is generally acceptable, but weak in Secondary for Arabic as an additional language. Students' learning skills are good. They approach lessons with enthusiasm and enjoyment.
- Strong student personal development is a feature across all phases of the school. Students possess very positive attitudes and behave well. They have a clear appreciation of Islamic values and think the UAE and Dubai represent these values well. Students are proud of their own heritage. FS children have a less secure knowledge of other cultures.

Provision for learners

- Teaching is good across the school, with well-planned and appropriately resourced lessons. Teachers have a sound knowledge of their subjects and of how students learn. Whilst teachers know their students well, assessment data are not yet used well enough to guide teaching. Lesson differentiation is a developing feature of teacher planning. A recent initiative to improve learning skills is starting to have a positive impact on student learning.
- The well-sequenced curriculum is good in all areas of the school, providing an appropriate balance of knowledge and skills. In all learning areas, lesson objectives are rooted in appropriate curriculum standards and ensure appropriate content coverage. FS children benefit from some enriching cross-curricular projects preparing them well for the primary years. The curriculum is adapted and modified to offer accessible learning opportunities for most students. There are a few examples of innovation and cross-curricular links.
- There are positive relationships in the school, and good systems for identifying students of determination, with support being of high quality. Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) are used well. Students with gifts and talents are identified, but appropriately enhanced academic provision for those identified is not consistently provided. Across all phases of the school, students receive high levels of care and support. To maintain the good levels of safety, the school should systematically and frequently monitor all aspects of health and safety and continue to promptly rectify any potential issues.

Leadership and management

- Since 2019, the school's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has grown, both in numbers and in their leadership capacity. The refinement and development of systems continue. The school's compelling vision of inclusivity is evident in all areas. FS, Arabic and Key Stage 1 have new leaders, as do secondary mathematics and English, with a new secondary science leader to be appointed in Sept 2022. This growing school is moving forward on many fronts, with leaders overseeing many areas.

The Best Features of The School:

- A very well managed, welcoming school, which is based on values of mutual respect, tolerance, and empathy.
- Well-behaved and responsible students, who enjoy excellent relationships with teachers and their peers.
- A bold vision for an inclusive school delivering good provision and outcomes for students of determination.
- Very strong parental communication and levels of engagement.
- An emphasis on developing lifelong skills, enhancing student achievement.

Key Recommendations:

- Improve students' achievement in Islamic Education, and Arabic A and B.
- Ensure that valid and reliable assessment data is used for curriculum modification and lesson planning to meet the learning needs of all students.
- Ensure that the curriculum is adapted effectively to meet the needs of all students, especially the most able.

Overall School Performance

Good

1. Students' Achievement

		Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
 Islamic Education	Attainment	Not applicable	Weak	Weak
	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	Weak	Weak
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable	Weak
 English	Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Good	Good
 Mathematics	Attainment	Good	Good	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Good	Good
 Science	Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Good	Acceptable

		Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Learning skills		Good	Good	Good

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

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

3. Teaching and assessment

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

4. Curriculum

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

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

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

6. Leadership and management

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

For further information regarding the inspection process, please look at [UAE School Inspection Framework](#)

Main Inspection Report

1. Students' Achievement

Islamic Education

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Not applicable	Weak	Weak
Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Less than three quarters of students demonstrate age-appropriate knowledge and understanding of Islamic principles and values. Primary students count the obligatory elements of prayer and distinguish them from those that are voluntary. In the secondary phase, students are unable to support opinions with verses from the Holy Qur'an.
- In lessons and produced work, primary students show understanding of the good relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims from the Seerah of the Prophet (PBUH). In the secondary phase, students explain the steps of proper prayer, but only a minority can support their opinion with Noble Hadeeths.
- Students' memorisation and recitation skills are underdeveloped, particularly for non-Arab students. Nevertheless, non-Arab students have strengths in application, analysis and evaluation of topics.

For Development:

- Ensure that students, particularly boys, improve their skills to memorise, understand and recite the Holy Qur'an.
- Raise expectations by assessing rigorously, and plan lessons using the Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum standards to meet the needs of different ability groups.

Arabic as a First Language

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Not applicable	Weak	Weak
Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Most students in the primary and secondary phases, understand the main idea when they read a text or a story. They can analyse the meaning and recognise new vocabulary. A majority identify the different tenses. A minority of students, particularly amongst the girls, read confidently and produce age-appropriate independent, creative writing.
- Primary students write descriptions about their family members using simple sentences. Most secondary students understand the main and implicit ideas from literary texts, such as the rights of children to a better life. However, the use of standard Arabic and accurate grammar in expressing opinions and writing are both underdeveloped.
- The availability of books and on-line digital reading platforms bring the teaching of Arabic to life. However, the impact is restricted as students do not yet use these resources widely. The tracking, monitoring, and identification of next steps in students learning is not consistent.

For Development:

- Enhance the development of reading comprehension, speaking and independent creative writing, by ensuring that students read a range of age-appropriate Arabic literary texts at home.
- Raise teachers' expectations and challenge students to provide extended verbal responses and written work in line with the MoE curriculum standards.

Arabic as an Additional Language

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Not applicable	Weak	Weak
Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable	Weak

- A majority of students understand a limited range of high frequency words and phrases, answer simple familiar questions, and copy words and phrases confidently. A minority speak, read, and write securely. The variation between internal assessment data and observed skills is widest in the secondary phase.
- Most primary students apply letter-joining rules to form combinations of letters, and follow models to construct short, individual sentences. In their written work a minority make errors in letter joining and use incorrect masculine and feminine words. A minority of secondary students read accurately and understand the meaning of familiar texts including lesson objectives.
- The availability of reading resources in the library and other Arabic resources online, increase students' engagement. However, the ineffective use of these resources limits the development of students' language skills, particularly in the upper primary classes and the secondary phases.

For Development:

- Use accurate assessment information to plan lessons and activities that meet the needs of the different ability groups.
- Raise teachers' expectations so students are challenged to develop their linguistic skills, especially their reading, speaking and independent writing.

English

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Good	Good	Good

- Reading and comprehension attainment for most students is in line with National Curriculum for England expectations. Good progress is evident through all phases. By secondary, students become increasingly adept at scanning and skimming texts for meaning.
- Students in FS and primary phase learn new concepts quickly, develop reading skills and increasingly understand challenging texts. The standard of spoken English improves through the school with those in secondary phase able to articulate their ideas using correct tenses.
- New programmes of work have resulted in improvements in content and vocabulary use. Sentences become increasingly complex, and students show ability to expand ideas and create argument.
- The achievement of Emirati students is below that of their peers.

For Development:

- Ensure that the implementation of initiatives in phonics and literacy are supported by continual professional development of staff.
- Establish secure departmental monitoring processes to ensure that all students make stronger progress.

Mathematics

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Good	Good	Acceptable
Progress	Good	Good	Good

- Students across all phases typically achieve above curriculum expectations although attainment in Secondary lags behind other phases.
- FS children make a strong start in learning about numbers and shapes. Students' good progress continues through the primary and secondary phases. In the lower primary phase, students have a good working understanding of the four key operations and readily tackle open-ended problem solving. In the upper primary and lower secondary phases, students can manipulate decimals, fractions, and percentages, and many are able to successfully work with negative numbers and with probability scales.
- The strongest teachers provide clear feedback to enable students to close their learning gaps leading to levels of progress generally above expectation across all phases. Support for the improvement of individual mathematical skills, especially for higher attainers remains underdeveloped.
- The level of achievement of Emirati students is below curriculum expectation and that of their peers. Language remains a barrier to their understanding in mathematics across the primary and secondary phases.

For Development:

- Improve levels of student achievement across all phases by the better use of performance data and improved tracking, to provide focused feedback, on their next learning steps.
- Ensure greater challenge for high-attaining students by providing tasks which enable them to make connections between mathematics and other curriculum subjects and to apply their new mathematical skills and knowledge to real-life situations.

Science

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Acceptable
Progress	Good	Good	Acceptable

- In lessons and internal assessments, most students achieve levels that are in line with curriculum expectations.
- In the primary phase, the majority of students make better than expected progress in developing scientific knowledge and understanding. Practical skills, such as measuring and observing, are developing, but are not strong.
- A recent focus on scientific method has begun to have an impact on the development of practical skills. A similar focus on investigative work has yet to have an impact.
- The achievement of Emirati students is not as strong as that of their peers.

For Development:

- Improve students' practical skills, such as measuring, observing, tabulating, and recording.
- Develop students' investigative skills, such as planning an investigation, discussing variables, evaluating data, and presenting succinct, accurate outcomes.

Learning Skills

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Learning skills	Good	Good	Good

- In most subjects, students are enthusiastic, motivated, and engaged in lessons. They increasingly make connections between different areas of learning and relate these to their understanding of the world. Most students can work independently. They can focus and remain on task without their teacher’s intervention.
- The school’s progressive skills tracker system and the reporting of learning skills in students’ reports is raising the profile of learning skills in lessons. Students can communicate their learning and express themselves with growing confidence and clarity.
- Students typically use technology competently to support aspects of their learning. Most students of determination benefit from access to a range of relevant and purposeful educational technologies. There are some opportunities for students across the school to find things out for themselves, think critically and to solve problems.

For Development:

- Increase opportunities for students to develop their inquiry and research skills and ensure critical thinking and problem-solving skills are common features of learning.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Personal development	Very good	Very good	Very good

- Students behave well, have positive attitudes to work and enjoy harmonious relationships. The student house system contributes positively to strengthening students’ personal development and leadership character in the upper phases. Most students respond positively to critical feedback and have a strong sense of personal responsibility for their own learning.
- Students are sensitive to the needs of others, and volunteer as members of the Inclusion Unified Champion Team. They have initiated “break time buddies” to support their peers. They maintain a healthy lifestyle, making informed dietary and exercise choices.
- The attendance and punctuality of students is good in the lower phases but is only acceptable in the secondary phase.

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

- Students have a clear appreciation of the Islamic values of tolerance, generosity and kindness. They report that the UAE and Dubai represent these values through the welcoming and the harmonious integration of people from different backgrounds and nationalities. They understand the value of Friday prayers for Muslim people in the UAE.
- Students fully respect and appreciate the heritage and culture that influence contemporary life in the UAE. They observe the UAE National Anthem respectfully in the morning and speak highly of the Emirati people. Primary and secondary phase students are involved in a range of activities during the UAE celebrations of National Day, Martyrs Day, and religious occasions.
- Students are proud of their own heritage. They enthusiastically participate in celebrating the school's International Day. Students, most notably in Primary and Secondary, have a secure knowledge and understanding of other world cultures.

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

- Students have a positive work ethic and enjoy taking part in adult-initiated activities, such as collecting electrical items for recycling and community support initiatives, such as donating food to their community during Ramadan.
- Students are starting to take on leadership roles. A group of Year 7 students in the Evergreen Eco club have put together a proposal to purchase a hydroponic plant growing system.
- Students take care of their immediate surroundings and are aware of important environmental issues. They make use of recycling bins around the school and conserve electrical energy. Children in the FS help to grow food to feed a range of animals that they care for.

For Development:

- Enable more students to initiate and lead an increased range of opportunities to support the development of their responsibility and skills of innovation.
- Increase the range of opportunities for all students to play a more active part in supporting sustainability and conservation.

3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good

- Teachers possess a good knowledge of their subjects and in the best examples successfully move student learning forward at a brisk pace. Lessons are planned in detail, with several success criteria used to clarify the expected learning.
- Teachers’ open questions, enable students to think, reflect and offer considered responses. In the best examples, teachers encourage students’ dialogue and ask probing questions, to challenge and to extend learning. As a result of this, students gain confidence and improve their rates of progress.
- Teachers demonstrate their awareness of the needs of individuals and different groups of students. Ongoing assessment to inform teaching is inconsistent and therefore the work presented is not always sufficiently demanding. Teachers provide increasing opportunities for students to develop skills of independence and collaboration.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- A school-wide approach to recording and reporting achievement has positively impacted student learning. The implementation is personalised and enhanced by both the student voice and parental feedback. Senior and middle leaders seek to ensure that data are increasingly reliable and inform teachers' classroom practices.
- Internal and external assessment information is gradually becoming more aligned, although gaps in the core subjects remain. Across all phases and subjects, there remains an inconsistency in ensuring that teaching and learning strategies are as fully informed as possible to improve outcomes for all groups of students.
- Formative marking and feedback in students' exercise books are well developed, with very good examples in a number of, but not all subjects. Students value the oral and written feedback they receive. The identification of students' individual learning needs is not sufficiently well established to ensure that all students making optimal progress.

For Development:

- Ensure that the school's assessment data and teachers' classroom information are used consistently to inform their planning, interventions and extension work for all students, particularly Emirati and higher-attaining students.

4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Good	Good

- The curriculum is effectively embedded in the school's vision and provides an appropriate balance of knowledge and skills acquisition. It is well sequenced. Learning objectives are securely based on curriculum standards and ensure appropriate content coverage in all subjects. Children in the FS benefit from some enriching cross-curricular projects preparing them well for their primary years.
- Leaders have sustained a continuous review of the curriculum which ensures a successful transition between the phases. The curriculum is underpinned in classrooms by the school's distinctive Learning & Skills Programme, linked to its core values.
- The secondary curriculum for small numbers of students, is in a developmental phase. The school has well-judged plans to ensure the viability of a breadth of IGCSE courses, alongside a suite of appropriate vocational pathways.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum adaptation	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- The curriculum is adapted and modified to offer accessible learning opportunities to children and students from across the school. However, the consistency of implementing these modifications to fully meet the needs of all groups is still developing. More remains to be done in linking all modifications in curriculum with Emirati culture and UAE society.
- The school provides opportunities for students to be involved in an array of projects, such as computer literacy and coding, linked to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). These projects help develop students' entrepreneurial thinking and instil a culture of innovation. There are fewer examples of innovation and cross-curricular working observed in classrooms. Across the school, the first forty-five minutes of the day offers a focus on reading and mathematics.
- The curriculum is enriched by activities and clubs, several of which in the arts and humanities, are led successfully by students. Some promote meaningful understanding of the heritage and the future ambitions of the UAE.

For Development:

- Ensure that all students, including those with accurately identified special learning needs, have successful access to suitable curriculum choices.
- Ensure that all teachers include cross-curricular and applied learning opportunities in their planning to support students' citizenship, national and global awareness, and lifelong learning skills.

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

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

- Regularly reviewed safeguarding procedures are in place and known to students and staff. The school is effective in protecting students from all forms of bullying and students are frequently reminded about internet safety. Across all phases of the school students receive high levels of care and support.
- The school provides a safe, hygienic, and secure environment. However, systematic reviews to ensure all safety measures are fully secure, remain to be embedded in the school. Security levels around the school are high. Supervision of students is effective, including on school transport. For those with physical disabilities, lifts are readily available enabling accessibility to all areas of the school.
- Medical care is provided by an onsite doctor and nurse. Secure records are maintained. During the inspection some minor health and safety issues were identified and where possible, were rapidly rectified by the school.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Care and support	Very good	Very good	Very good

- Teachers know their students very well and understand their needs. Students are very welcoming, friendly, and keen to please. The relationships they have developed with their peers and with staff are highly positive. Attendance is monitored very closely. Most lesson transitions are managed effectively, although there are occasional delays.
- The school has good systems for identifying students of determination and as a result their support is well placed. Specialist support is of a high quality. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are accurately informed and indicate specific modifications and support for identified students.
- Students with gifts and talents are identified, but additional academic provision is inconsistent. Student well-being and pastoral support are strengths of the school. Guidance to improve work through marking and feedback is variable.

For Development:

- Ensure there is systematic and frequent monitoring of all aspects of health and safety to identify and promptly rectify any potential issues.
- Extend the challenge of the more able students by providing them with increased opportunities to excel.

Inclusion of students of determination

Provision and outcomes for students of determination

Good

- Leaders communicate a highly inclusive ethos and are committed to implementing a strong vision of inclusive practice. They demonstrate a determination and developing capacity to achieve. High-quality inclusive support services and skilled specialist staff contribute significantly to the positive experiences of students of determination. There is scope for the school's improvement planning for inclusive education to set more targeted goals.
- Well-developed identification procedures and monitoring systems inform a provision that is responsive to student need and ability. IEPs are carefully considered and well-constructed. Their implementation is not always consistently applied within classroom practice. Specialist interventions are of a high quality and support students to overcome barriers to learning.
- Parent partnership is prioritised as an important enabler to enhance student progress. Parents are fully involved in the development of their children's IEPs and have access to information and support that enhances their ability to support their children's learning.
- Many learning support assistants are sufficiently skilled and provide sensitive and effective support. Occasionally though, assistants are not sufficiently effective in enabling students to achieve in line with their potential. For some students who access specially supported and modified lessons, learning opportunities are engaging and for the most part, appropriately challenging. In regular classrooms, the quality of learning support and differentiated teaching practice does not always meet students' needs.
- Student achievement is tracked and monitored against personalised academic and personal development targets. The school's system for measuring students' success is developing and is becoming increasingly accurate. It demonstrates that most students make good and sometimes better progress from their starting points over time. Systems to monitor and evaluate the progress of students with the most complex needs requires further development.

For Development:

- Review, revise and refine the school's inclusive education strategy to ensure that high-quality inclusive provision is consistently available in classrooms, as well as through access to specialist support and intervention services.
- Enhance existing systems to track, monitor and evaluate the progress of all students of determination, and, for those who experience the most significant barriers to learning.

6. Leadership and management

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

- Leaders at all levels share and support the school's vision. There is common understanding amongst the SLT of what constitutes high-quality teaching, learning and assessment. Delegated leadership ensures that leaders across the school are involved with learning and achievement outcomes and are accountable for these. The principal takes responsibility for the quality and impact of provision for students of determination. The school's improvement agenda is led by the SLT. The impact improvements have is effectively monitored. The school is compliant with all regulatory requirements.
- The self-evaluation process uses data from external and internal sources. The views of staff, students and parents are accessed. There is an appropriate emphasis on student learning outcomes, and this gives the school a firm base from which it plans its improvement agenda. Time-sensitive targets, which are attainable and realistic, are regularly reviewed. Notable improvements, such as an increased focus on learning skills, have resulted from this process. There is scope for the monitoring of teaching and learning to be more focused on student achievement.
- Parents play an active part in the life of the school and feel welcome when they attend. They are represented on the Governing Board and their views are listened to during school reviews and improvement planning exercises. Home-school communication systems are sound and appreciated by parents. The achievements of their children are reported regularly, in written and verbal form and they are aware of how they can help to improve their children's learning. Links with other communities have been negatively impacted by the current pandemic.
- The governors meet regularly, using their varied expertise to evaluate progress and support the school in its journey. They are well informed about the school and discuss information with school leaders, holding them to account for students' achievement and personal development. They ensure that parents are kept up to date about developments in the school. They actively support the school's leaders to meet the school's compelling vision. Further work is now needed to ensure all essential leaderships posts are filled.
- The school runs smoothly, with very strong systems and structures being embedded into the day-to-day operational management of the school. Parents are informed about all events. Premises and facilities are modern, accessible, and well-suited to support learning. Technology is plentiful. Specialist equipment, such as the sensory suite, is very well suited to enhance the learning of students of determination.

For Development:

- Systematically monitor standards of teaching and assessment in the school and ensure that this results in improved outcomes for students.
- Re-establish and foster links with other schools and organisations, locally, nationally, and internationally, especially as the school grows.
- Ensure that staff deployment and ongoing continuing professional development enhances student achievement.

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 QA.Schools@khda.gov.ae