

Al Diyafah High School...



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational  
needs and disabilities



Innovation

## Inspection Report 2015-2016

**Al Diyafah High School**

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

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## School information

### General information



Location	Al Nahda
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	1982
Website	www.diyafahschool.ae
Telephone	04-2671115
Address	PO Box 24023, Al Quasis, Dubai, UAE
Principal	Patricia Johnston
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	23 to 26 November 2015

### Students



Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	3-18
Grades or year groups	Foundation Stage 1 to Year 13
Number of students on roll	1,592
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	4
Number of students with SEND	42
Largest nationality group of students	Indian

### Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	136
Largest nationality group of teachers	Indians
Number of teaching assistants	25
Teacher-student ratio	1:12
Number of guidance counsellors	2
Teacher turnover	10%

### Curriculum



Educational permit / Licence	UK
Main curriculum	UK / IGCSE
External tests and examinations	IBT, IGCSE, CIE, Checkpoint and Edexcel
Accreditation	None
National Agenda benchmark tests	IBT

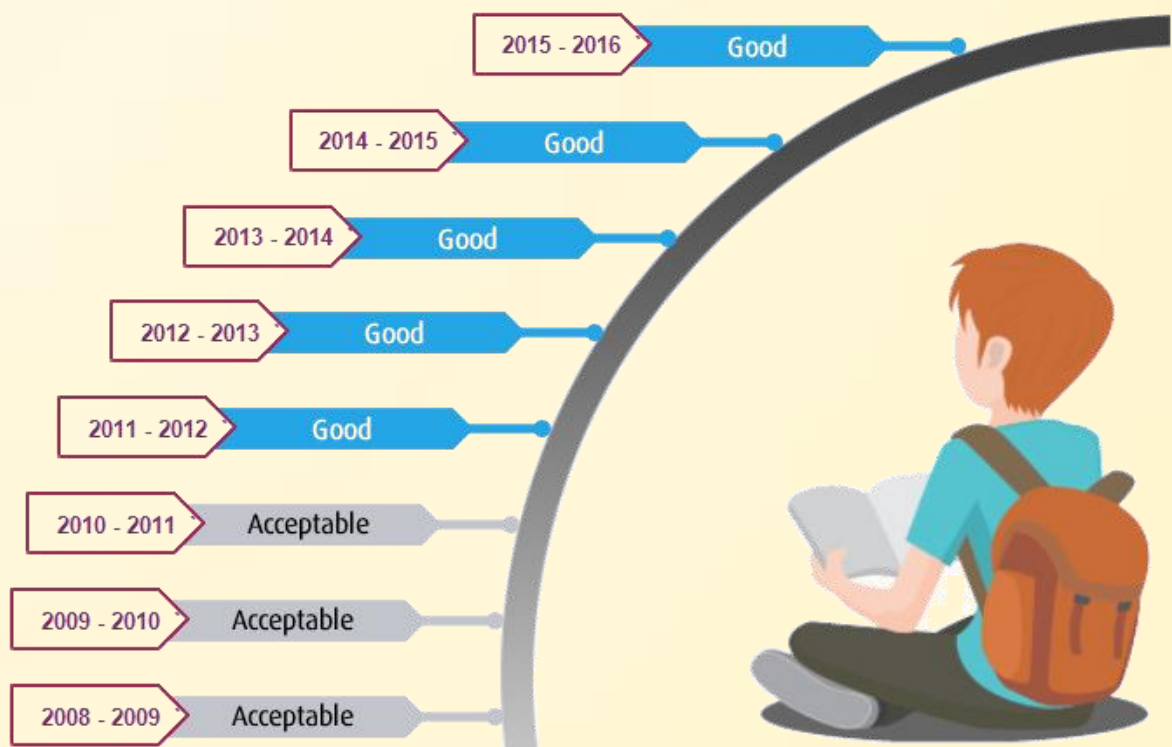


## Summary for parents and the community

**Al Diyafah High School** was inspected by DSIB from 23 to 26 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?

Overall, Al Diyafah High School provided a **good** quality of education for its students.

- Students' attainment and progress were strongest in English, science and mathematics in most phases. In Islamic education, attainment and progress were above expectations in primary and in line in the secondary and post-16. In Arabic, attainment and progress were in line, except in primary, where progress remained weak. Progress in Islamic education and Arabic for first language learners had declined in the secondary stage. It had improved for Arabic additional language learners.
- Students' independent learning skills were strong throughout the school, having improved at the Foundation Stage (FS) in mathematics and science. Older students in English were particularly skilled in independent research and critical thinking. Students increasingly made connections in their learning. They had a highly developed understanding of Islamic values as well as of Emirati and world cultures for their age.
- The quality of teaching remained strong overall. It had improved in the FS. Teachers' use of assessment was effective in the primary, secondary and post-16 phases. It remained variable in the FS, although teachers were developing a more focused approach to assessing early years learning. The school was less effective in evaluating Islamic education and Arabic.
- The curriculum was well balanced overall. It was variable in the primary phase and was relatively weak in Islamic education and in Arabic. It had improved at the FS by providing children with more appropriate early year's activities. It was very strong in the secondary and post-16 stages.
- The quality of protection and support for students was exceptionally high across all the phases. Support was appropriately designed for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Leadership had improved and developed across the school. The increased resources and recent appointments made by the board of governors and leaders were enhancing the school's ability to focus on its vision and values. The school was more directly addressing school self-evaluation, challenge and support and identifying targets for further school improvement. Links with parents were excellent.



### What did the school do well?

- The quality of the curriculum at post-16, curriculum design at the secondary stage and improvements in FS in teaching, curriculum quality and design.
- The improved quality of FS children's learning skills and their progress in early mathematics and science.
- The outstanding quality of students' personal and social development in the secondary and post-16 phases of the school, and the protection and support for students across the school.
- The very positive impact of the principal and enhanced leadership shown by the recently restructured leadership team at senior and middle school levels.



### What does the school need to do next?

- Improve both teaching and students' achievement in Arabic and Islamic education by:
  - adjusting the balance of allocated time for Arabic for first language learners at Years 10 and 11 to meet Ministry of Education (MoE) requirements
  - developing assessment criteria to match curriculum expectations and to ensure consistency across these subjects.
- Ensure systems and processes for school self-evaluation are robust and rigorous in order to:
  - meet the targets for improvement identified within the school's strategic plan
  - ensure high quality teaching especially in the FS and lower primary phase
  - assess accurately students' academic outcomes to meet the needs of all groups more effectively.



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

- The monitoring of progress in mainstream lessons was inconsistent. Students made good progress when taught by specialists because planned activities were accurately matched to the levels students were working towards. This did not always happen when students worked in their classrooms. As a result, progress was not always good.
- The school worked closely with the parents of students with SEND. Teachers and counsellors contacted parents regularly and were welcomed at the school. Interviews with parents indicated that they appreciated this contact and felt valued as partners in their children's learning.
- A senior member of staff was responsible and accountable for the provision of services for students with SEND. Well-designed policies and procedures were in place for assessment upon entry. Leaders at all levels were becoming more active in improving provisions for students with SEND in the classroom.
- The school used appropriate assessments to identify the needs of students with SEND. Staff understood the main learning needs of most students and most teachers understood the KHDA categories. However, not all children's needs were consistently matched to the different categories of learning difficulty.
- There were appropriate modifications listed in most of the individual education plans (IEPs). While most teachers were aware of the modification strategies there was little evidence of their use in their planned activities and lesson plans. Students' independent learning skills were promoted when curriculum modifications were effectively applied.

### National Agenda Parameter



In 2014, H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of UAE, and Ruler of Dubai, launched the UAE National Agenda 2021, with education being a prime focus. The National Agenda includes two major objectives developed with the intent of placing the UAE among the most successful countries that provide world-class education. By 2021, it is expected that the UAE will feature in the top twenty countries in the 'Programme for International Student Assessment' (PISA) test and in the top fifteen countries in the 'Trends in Mathematics and Science Studies' (TIMSS) test.

In response to this, each participating school was issued a report on their students' performance in these international assessments and in addition, they were provided with clear targets for improving their performance. This academic year, KHDA introduced the National Agenda Parameter, which is a method for measuring and monitoring schools' progress towards achieving their individual National Agenda targets through the use of external benchmarking assessments.

#### Main points:

- The school did not meet the registration requirements of the national agenda parameter. The attainment data was not sufficient to make a full judgement on the progress towards meeting National Agenda targets
- Senior leaders and governors were committed to the National Agenda. They had worked proactively on developing key leadership structures, alongside continuous professional development for improved teaching and assessment strategies, to meet school targets in TIMSS and PISA. Parents and students had a peripheral knowledge of these targets. Displays of school targets were visible in parts of the school and themed subject weeks were introduced to open up enquiry and innovation. There was scope to embed awareness of the National Agenda through the school's website.
- Regular curriculum review and development resulted in raising the school community's awareness of the National Agenda. In English, mathematics and science, teachers, supported by their subject leaders, had identified areas for improvement in content and cognitive skills. For example, there was increased emphasis on reading, comprehension and writing in English. Mental mathematics was embedded in each lesson. In science, forming hypotheses, conducting investigations, and reporting results were developing well.
- Critical thinking was developing over time but was uneven across the school. It was not embedded in lessons through effective questioning. Students did not have adequate opportunities to develop their natural enquiry skills. Teachers had scope to encourage students further to identify areas where aspects of their learning were relevant to their life experience.
- In English, teachers regularly supported discussion, reflection and communication. Investigation, testing and analysis were common features in science. In mathematics these skills were less developed as the focus tended to be mainly on skills being applied to set questions on differentiated worksheets. The use of IT as a research tool was better in secondary than in primary. Many students were skilled in researching using the internet whether at home or in school.

## Innovation in education

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

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



## Promoting a culture of innovation:







- The school leaders and new principal had a clear understanding of the importance of innovation but had not yet articulated a strategic response to the national innovation agenda. School leaders had provided a variety of resources and routines to support student innovation opportunities. The learning environment and infrastructure encouraged staff and student creativity was facilitated by the new music, art and outdoor learning areas. The curriculum and a variety of extra-curricular programmes provided many opportunities for students to explore innovation, although week-long projects limited innovation skills development to single events.



Overall school performance

Good

1. Students' achievement


		Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Islamic education</b> 	Attainment	Not applicable	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable
<b>Arabic as a first language</b> 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not applicable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable ↓	Not applicable
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b> 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not applicable
	Progress	Not applicable	Weak	Acceptable ↑	Not applicable
<b>English</b> 	Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	Very good ↓
<b>Mathematics</b> 	Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Good ↑	Good	Good	Good
<b>Science</b> 	Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Acceptable ↑	Good	Good	Good

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Learning skills</b>	Good ↑	Good	Good	Good




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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Personal development	Good	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding

## 3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Good 	Good	Good	Good
Assessment	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good



## 4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum design and implementation	Good 	Good	Good	Outstanding
Curriculum adaptation	Good 	Very good 	Outstanding	Outstanding

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Care and support	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

## 6. Leadership and management

	All phases
The effectiveness of leadership	Good
School self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
Parents and the community	Outstanding
Governance	Good 
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Good 



## Main inspection report

The Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) is responsible for inspecting and reporting on the standards reached by students and the quality of education provided in Dubai's private schools.

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



Using this scale, the *Main inspection report* contains the judgements about the different aspects, phases and subjects that form the work of the school.

It provides the reasons for the answers to the questions in the *Summary for parents and the community*:

- How well did the school perform overall?
- What did the school do well?
- What does the school need to do next?

## 1. Students' achievement

### Foundation Stage

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

- Attainment in English was in line with expectations due to good progress being made from children's low attainment on entry. Most children listened attentively and answered questions, usually with single words or short phrases on entering the FS. They joined in with songs and rhymes and enjoyed looking at pictures in storybooks to help them understand. As they moved through the phase, they extended their vocabulary and used it increasingly accurately to describe what they had learnt. They recognised letters and identified the initial sounds of familiar words. By the end of the phase, a majority could continue a rhyming pattern. They read simple words and used an increased number. The majority wrote legibly and accurately simple three-letter words. A few could write short sentences using appropriate punctuation and spelling.
- Most children arrived in school with little or no knowledge of number. Through good progress they learned to count securely to at least twenty and counted groups of objects using one-to-one correspondence. They recognised and wrote numbers, although not always correctly orientated. They developed the abstract concept of number by using manipulatives and pictorial representation to quantify amounts. By the end of the FS had reached attainment levels in line with expectations. Different groups could increasingly understand and use mathematical language. Many could add and a few could subtract 2 single-digit numbers. They were able to identify two-dimensional shapes, compare objects of different sizes and understand capacity by filling and emptying containers with sand or water.
- Attainment and progress was broadly in line with expectations. In FS 1, children enjoyed naming and describing assorted animals. They enjoyed using magnifiers to look closely at plants and models of animals. They planted their own seeds and watered them to help them grow. A few knew that plants also needed sunshine and soil to grow and could name parts of plants. By FS 2, children had a basic understanding of floating and sinking. They could name some mini-beasts and knew that they lived in different habitats and moved in different ways. Skills in scientific method, such as the ability to predict and hypothesise and draw conclusions, were not as well developed. Progress by different groups was similar.

**Primary**

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students demonstrated a sound knowledge of Islamic concepts, principles and values of Islam and Seerah that were above national curriculum standards. Their progress was also good in lessons and over time. The majority of students were developing a good understanding of the meaning of Khushoo and increasingly appreciated the hardships that the Prophet (PBUH) had during his stay in Makkah. The progress of different groups of students was similarly good across the phase.
- In Arabic as a first language, students' attainment and progress were in line with age expectations and with national curriculum standards. Most students were able to understand extended texts or speech. Their listening and speaking skills were in line with expectations. Students' responses to their teachers' question were short, using simple sentences in colloquial language. Students were not confident or skilled when engaged in lengthy conversations. Most students were able to read short paragraphs. Their writing was the least developed skill across this phase. They wrote relatively short pieces and used a limited range of vocabulary, including some colloquial terms. Sentence structures often had spelling and grammatical mistakes.
- In Arabic as an additional language the use of externally benchmarked tests were not available to moderate the school's attainment and progress against national or international levels. Most students showed appropriate listening skills but limited speaking skills. The majority used English to communicate with each other. Students were able to read familiar texts without fully understanding their meaning. This restricted their writing skills to copying words or short familiar sentences. The majority of students did not make broadly expected progress in line with age expectations. Progress for different groups was similar.
- In English, the majority of students attained levels above expected curriculum and national standards. IBT benchmarking indicated students performed in line with other students in Dubai. TIMMS data calculated students' performance as above average. Students in lower primary could blend and write simple words using letter patterns. The majority were developing fluent reading skills. Most students recognised and used appropriate parts of speech, including alliteration, to make nonsense poems. By Year 6, they were able to plan and write factual accounts using relevant vocabulary. They were less skilled in presenting their findings to an audience. Students progressed particularly well in their understanding of grammar. Students with SEND made good progress overall from their starting points.
- Students' good attainment and progress in mathematics was better in the upper primary where students could successfully use and link their knowledge to other subjects. Most upper primary students showed above age-appropriate knowledge and understanding of key mathematical skills, particularly in mental calculation. Links to real life were developing well. This was more common in the better lessons. For example, students could translate digital time to analogue time and were able to calculate travel time between various time zones on an air flight. Progress for different groups of students was better when there was sufficient challenge for all ranges of perceived abilities.



- A majority of students' attainment and progress in science was above curriculum expectations with the performance of students in lower primary grades, meeting curriculum standards. IBT test data showed that students performed in line with other schools in Dubai. Conversely, TIMMS data indicated higher performance compared to other International cohorts. The majority of students made good progress, demonstrating good knowledge, skills and understanding of scientific concepts. Most groups of students, including those with SEND, made better than expected progress.

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

- In Islamic education, most students reached expected levels of understanding of Islamic principles and values and therefore attainment and progress was in line with national curriculum standards. For example, Fiqh (Islamic Laws) and lives of the prophets were known and understood in line with general curriculum expectations. The progress of the different groups of students was also in line with what was expected. Students knew the conditions and the steps of Hajj, related travel behaviours and manners in Islam and they understood the moral lessons of the life of Prophet Nooh.
- In Arabic as a first language, students' attainment was in line with national curriculum expectations and standards. Most students listened with understanding to extended speech and used simple sentences, with most students pronouncing words and phrases correctly to give information or descriptions. Most could read accurately from extended texts but a majority of students lacked the ability to understand fully the meaning of the texts. Progress was age appropriate and acceptable in lessons, particularly in writing skills where a large majority of students showed improvements over time. They demonstrated some independence in constructing their own writing but a minority made frequent spelling and grammatical errors. Progress was similar for different groups.
- In Arabic as an additional language as in primary phase, the use of externally benchmarked tests were not available to moderate the school's attainment and progress against national or international levels. However, attainment and progress were generally acceptable. Students had well developed listening skills and were able to hold short conversations. Most students had limited comprehension skills but they were able to read unfamiliar texts accurately. They were progressing more slowly in their writing than they should, mainly because they did not use punctuation and grammar appropriately. Progress was acceptable overall for the different groups of students.
- In English, the majority of students attained levels above curriculum, national and international standards. Students were confident speakers and readily engaged in purposeful discussions using persuasive arguments. Most were skilled in their understanding of grammar and punctuation and applied their knowledge in writing for different purposes such as news articles and letters. They composed few extended pieces of imaginative writing. Their good progress was demonstrated in their development of written techniques, for example using hyperbole in every day contexts. Assessment data showed that the trends of good progress and attainment had been maintained over the last three years for the different groups of students.

- Attainment in mathematics was good overall, with high end of phase outcomes. Progress in lessons and over time was good and students showed well-developed knowledge, understanding and skills linked predominantly to set questions. The majority of students displayed good skills in measurements, algebra and trigonometry. Applications to real life were developing well. In the better lessons, students could relate their learning to situations such as the importance of ratios of sand to cement in mixing concrete and the use of simple algebraic expressions to convert temperature from Fahrenheit to Celsius. Progress for groups of students was above expected levels.
- In science, students' attainment and progress students were above age-appropriate levels across the phase. ACER international benchmark tests, IBT and TIMSS assessments confirmed the positive progress in students' knowledge and understanding which were observed in lessons. For example, students could apply scientific methods to laboratory investigations. Students formed challenging hypotheses and devised ways to test them. Progress of groups of students such as students with SEND, was also good. Progress over the past three years had maintained attainment at or above national and international standards.

Post-16		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language	Not applicable	Not applicable
Arabic as an additional language	Not applicable	Not applicable
English	Good	Very good ↓
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science	Good	Good

- In Islamic education, most students had an acceptable grasp of the subject and an understanding of important Islamic principles such as patience and perseverance. A majority of students skilfully discussed the effect of drugs on the human body and a minority could explain the rationale behind the prescribed Islamic law. Students' progress in acquiring knowledge of Islamic laws was at an age-appropriate rate. Progress in lessons and over time had maintained attainment at national curriculum standards for the different groups of students.
- In English, the majority of post-16 students attained levels above curriculum, national and international standards. Trends in students' progress were also above those expected nationally and internationally. These had been maintained over the last three years. A large majority of students were skilled in critical thinking, which they used to good effect in their analyses of texts and novels. They could identify authors' techniques and devices of persuasion, and inferred meaning. They made very good progress in developing a range of skills, including the use of technologies, to present their work to others. Students had a wide knowledge of language structure and applied this effectively in projects and course work.
- Attainment and progress in mathematics were generally above international standards. The majority of students showed good understanding of calculus and its relevance in a wide range of practical activities including business, economics, science and engineering. An analysis of students' work showed above age-related progress. Some students were better than others in their ability to understand technical concepts and in successfully applying these to a range of increasingly difficult questions. Progress in lessons and over time had maintained attainment at good levels for the different groups of students.

- In science, the majority of students achieved above age-related expectations in both their attainment and progress, when measured against national and international standards. Students were able to apply their knowledge and understanding when using investigative and research skills. Students consistently used appropriate scientific methods during experiments. They could investigate and predict results and carry out fair tests. They progressed well in their lessons, including those students with SEND. Attainment over the past three years had been consistently above national and international standards in most science subjects.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Learning skills</b>	Good ↑	Good	Good	Good

- Students were skilled independent learners. In the early stages of primary this was less well developed. In senior classes, students improved their own work through assessing their progress against external examination levels. They were able to accept and give critical evaluations. In Islamic education and Arabic, students were positive towards their language skills but relied heavily on teacher support.
- Across stages, students showed respect and responded very well to teachers and other adults. Students collaborated effectively in most classes and to a common purpose. In the secondary and post-16 phases, they communicated effectively with one another and to an audience. They worked hard together and persevered with tasks in class and in preparing interesting homework projects.
- Students made appropriate connections in their learning to the world around them and adapted well to a wide range of learning contexts. For example, they linked geography, politics and language to current affairs reports and presentations and applied mathematical and science skills in topics. In Islamic and Arabic, they made few of these connections in their learning.
- In most lessons, students solved problems and researched information from a variety of resources. Younger primary students' independent skills were insufficiently developed. In secondary and post-16, students researched and corroborated facts well in most subjects often using technologies in class and for homework. They demonstrated skills, for example in producing an enterprising school magazine as part of extra-curricular activities.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Personal development</b>	Good	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students were independent and confident, especially in the secondary and post-16 phases. They responded well to their teachers' and peers' feedback and when given the opportunity took ownership of their own learning.
- Students' behaviour was excellent around the school and during class time. Throughout the school, they demonstrated self-discipline and care for others. At the secondary and post-16 phases, students' behaviour was particularly positive and mature. A number had volunteered to help younger students in their learning or to assist teaching assistants.

- They demonstrated respectful relationships with their teachers. They interacted positively in class and were eager to respond to their teachers' questions and when working with others during group activities. They willingly offered help to their peers during different learning activities and confidently offered personal opinions, reported on group discussions or when presenting ideas to their class.
- Students were aware of the need to adopt healthy life styles. They made healthy food choices and could describe the benefits of eating well and exercise. They actively participated in sporting events and activities during and after the school day. Many were members of successful sports teams.
- Almost all students arrived at school and to class on time. Student attendance averaged 96 per cent.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding


- Students in secondary and post-16 had an excellent knowledge of Islamic values. They demonstrated a good understanding of Islamic society. They showed respect for the Muslim faith through their behaviour and dress, and in their abilities to link the moral values of Islam to their own beliefs.
- Students had a strong understanding of local traditions. This was less developed in the early primary. Students could discuss the contemporary culture of Dubai and the radical changes that had occurred. They were knowledgeable about UAE heritage. Students in the upper phases had a highly developed understanding of the application of new technologies and environmental issues in Dubai.
- Students demonstrated a strong understanding of their own culture and a well-developed awareness of other cultures around the world. They enhanced their learning through annual ethnic and language weeks, which allowed students and parents the opportunity to explore and learn about the range of nationalities within the school.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students of all ages demonstrated high levels of responsibility, and contributed actively to the school and to the wider community. This was particularly strong at the senior level where students were actively involved in a number of community initiatives, such as blood donations and charitable campaigns. This included raising funds for charity including collecting clothes for a local labour camp.
- Students had excellent work ethic. They demonstrated high quality leadership skills at the post-16 phase. They responded very well to opportunities to suggest creative and practical ideas as part of their extra-curricular and project based activities. Students led many of these initiatives, encouraged by their teachers.
- Students demonstrated high levels of awareness in relation to environmental sustainability. They participated in a number of initiatives to improve their school environment and the wider community. For examples, the 'Eco-Envoys' and 'Green Ambassadors' across the school helped in the on-going collection of recyclables like newspaper, plastic bottles, cans, batteries and the clean-up campaigns.



### 3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Good 	Good	Good	Good


- Most teachers' good subject knowledge was used effectively to ensure successful learning. At the FS and in early primary, teachers were still developing their approaches. For example, they were too teacher-directed, particularly in early mathematics and science lessons. In the upper primary, secondary and post-16 phases, teachers had better mastery of subject knowledge and teaching strategies.
- Teachers planned lessons using a recently introduced format across the school. Most ensured relevant contexts and resources, including well-judged video clips, to engage students' interest. Teachers were inconsistent in the implementation of these plans, particularly at the lower primary and in Islamic education and Arabic. In English, teachers made very effective use of IT to support learning, particularly at post-16.
- Highly supportive relationships resulted in students enjoying their learning. In the FS, teachers asked mostly closed questions that constrained children's thinking skills. Most questions in science at primary were focused on collecting information or measuring comprehension. In the upper stages, self- and peer-assessment encouraged deeper thinking, group discussions and challenge.
- Most students' needs were met through differentiated resources, topics and teaching methods. Primary teachers, while aware of the different needs of students, did not always match activities to suit these needs. In secondary and post-16, higher achieving students were suitably challenged to extend their learning and achievement, especially in English and science. This was weaker in Islamic education and Arabic.
- Most teachers across the school encouraged students to think and reflect on their responses in class. Most supported students to evaluate their own and others' learning. At upper secondary and post-16, teachers were skilled in developing critical thinking, analysis and research skills, particularly in English. In science, problem solving was a key feature of laboratory experiences. This was less well developed in mathematics.
- Most teachers of Arabic as a first language had secure subject knowledge but there were inconsistencies in teaching strategies. Learning objectives targeted the minimum level required by the MOE. Students were over-reliant on their teacher and the level of challenge and teachers' expectations were very limited.
- In Arabic as an additional language, teachers' subject knowledge was inconsistent and they have little awareness of how students learn a second language. In most lessons, students were required to complete repetitive activities. Teachers did not meet the learning needs of all groups and individuals which did not give students enough scope to develop their learning.



	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Assessment	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good



- The school had recently introduced an assessment for learning approach. FS and lower primary teachers, were still developing these techniques in order to meet the needs of all children's. In the other phases, assessment was more rigorous. Teachers regularly modified their lesson plans as a result of assessing student progress. This was inconsistent in Islamic education and in Arabic.
- The school regularly compared students' performance to that of national and international cohorts. This was not yet used at the FS. Students undertook IBT tests, performing broadly in line with other students in Dubai schools. Older students took IGCSE, AS and A level examinations achieving very high pass rates.
- School leaders and teachers had improved their analysis of student attainment and vigorously analysed data from internal and external assessments. This helped monitor the progress of individual cohorts, including students with SEND over time. They had begun to analyse the differences in attainment of boys and girls. This development was strongest in English at post-16.
- Most teachers were knowledgeable about students' strengths and development needs. Teachers were at an early stage of using the new lesson-planning format to help them assess the impact of their teaching strategies. Most ensured that differentiated lessons and tasks were tailored to the learning styles of lower achieving students. Across the grades students were developing their skills in self- and peer- assessment. This was used to very good effect in the post-16 phase.
- The level of challenge for the highest achievers was more inconsistent in the FS and primary stages. At post-16 lessons in almost all subjects, teachers ensured suitably challenging and supportive tasks for all ability groups. In Islamic education and both Arabic subjects, assessment was less well developed.

#### 4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum design and implementation	Good 	Good	Good	Outstanding

- The curriculum was based on the English National Curriculum with Islamic education and Arabic meeting MoE requirements. Both curriculums had clear rationales aimed at nurturing caring, confident and competent 21st century learners. FS children, were learning increasingly through play, discovery and problem solving. At the other grades, programmes of study had recently been adapted to meet the revised English national curriculum.
- The school had adjusted the time allocated to Arabic. It had yet to monitor the impact on Years 10 and 11 Arabic for first language learners. Almost all subjects ensured well-planned continuity and progression. FS children's transition to primary had improved. Their needs were inconsistently met in the lower primary and insufficient account was taken of students' prior achievements in Arabic.
- The increased numbers continuing into post-16 were offered considerable curriculum choices. Computer studies had been added to the IGCSE options. Physical education and English language had been introduced at post-16. Post-16 students followed an online programme for business management. They benefited from workshops and talks from guest speakers to guide them in their option and career choices.

- Overall, well-planned links between subjects deepened students' understanding of what they had learned. FS topics, IT, social studies and planned theme weeks provided opportunities for students to demonstrate their skills across subjects. English language was enhanced particularly effectively across subjects. One student, for example, wrote an imaginative poem using mathematical terminology. Links were less apparent in Arabic.
- Regular curriculum review improved its effectiveness. Last year's recommendations were being met to improve provision in the FS. Options and enrichment programmes had been extended significantly to address the requirements of the National Agenda. In response to a request from parents, students could now study eight IGCSE subjects instead of seven.
- The school taught and assessed UAE social studies as a discrete subject from Grade 1-9. In Grade 11 the school provided economics as an elective course for students. In The early years social studies was embedded as a national identity theme in lesson plans. Social provision was successful as it allowed students to acquire more knowledge and better understanding of UAE.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum adaptation	Good 	Very good 	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Teachers were increasingly successful in modifying the curriculum to meet the needs of students. This was particularly strong in the secondary and post-16 phases to meet the needs of students with SEND and those who were gifted and talented. Teachers were still developing these skills in the Foundation stage, in the lower primary phase and in Arabic lessons.
- Students benefited from enhanced learning opportunities. After school clubs supported science, technology, the arts and entrepreneurship. Visits and visitors broadened their outlook on the world beyond school. Their involvement in community outreach fostered tolerance, respect and trust. Students developed leadership through caring for the environment and each other. Their future decisions were supported through a high quality careers programme.
- The social studies programme provided rich opportunities to learn about the UAE. Students benefited from lessons on local politics and governance and a community outreach programme through projects such as 'Charity Water' and 'Dubai Cares'.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students of all ages had benefited from well-organised and enthusiastically taught educational programmes alerting students of all ages to the issues of cyber-bullying and online safety. Highly effective and efficient policies and procedures were in place for safeguarding, including child protection arrangements.
- The school safety and security arrangements were of the highest quality. The students' council helped staff monitor dispersal and bus travel arrangements and ensured that corridors and assembly areas were clear and free from obstructions. The facilities were inclusive with the school having made provisions to accommodate a student with a temporary physical disability at ground floor level.
- Premises and resources were maintained in outstanding condition. The school management kept very detailed and secure records including records of incidents and subsequent actions. The clinic was very well-organised and medical records were detailed and secure.
- The learning environment met the needs of students, especially in terms of the Foundation Stage outdoor facilities. The premises were inclusive, exceptionally clean and well maintained.
- The school promoted healthy living very effectively. Medical and nursing staff provided very useful additional advice for students and parents. The curriculum included quality health and lifestyle programmes. Sport and exercise were a regular part of the school's healthy living approach. There were very good shaded areas to help students participating in physical activities and when socialising.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Care and support	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Staff-student relationships were extremely positive, respectful and purposeful. Students and parents were aware of the school's high expectations regarding behaviour. The few behaviour issues that arose were handled very well through a comprehensive referral system. The school policy on bullying appropriately included guidance on cyber bullying and this was well communicated to students and staff.
- The school used quality communications with parents to support attendance and punctuality. Systems for following up absence or late arrival at school were extremely effective and efficient.
- The school ensured an inclusive approach. Staff welcomed and supported students with a range of SEND. They used the robust systems in place to refer and identify students' needs.
- Specialist staff led the identification process; they ensured their colleagues were appropriately trained and sensitive in meeting students' special needs, including those who were gifted and talented.
- Counsellors provided excellent advice and support for students. They helped facilitate the ease of transfer for students between the different levels of the school.

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

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

Good

- Qualified and experienced specialist staff supported students with SEND. Classroom teachers' skills in addressing students' needs varied, impacting upon the effectiveness of the well led, dedicated and focused specialist team. School leaders monitored classroom provision for students with SEND more closely following a comprehensive review of policies and procedures. These guided assessment upon entry and at later stages in their learning and development.
- The school used increasingly rigorous procedures to identify the needs of students new to the school. Teacher referrals were supported through using a range of school assessments and inputs from external agencies. Staff effectively identified students' difficulties, initiated interventions and provided additional support. They understood and could identify the main learning needs of most students referring appropriately to KHDA categories.
- Parents of students with SEND were encouraged to visit the school and parent interviews indicated that they welcomed this contact. Parents were encouraged to become involved in their child's education programme. The impact of their contributions was evolving over time. The teachers and counsellors formally and informally contacted parents on a regular and consistent basis.
- Staff ensured numerous and appropriate modification strategies in most of the detailed IEPs for students with SEND. Most teachers were aware of these modifications but were inconsistent in applying them.
- Students with SEND made good progress when working with specialist staff and in a minority of mainstream lessons across the subject areas. Systems to monitor and track the progress of students with SEND were increasingly more effective; more skilled use of this information was required to consistently impact upon lesson planning or to provide feedback on progress.

## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Good

- There had been significant changes to senior and middle management since the previous inspection. The new principal had made a strong impact by linking the school's inclusive values to a vision for improvement and sharing it. New and established staff joined in this commitment. The principal, working with the school governors, had enhanced the leadership by revising and focusing responsibilities more clearly on school improvement priorities.
- The school had established a clear and collective focus on developing school policies and procedures, enhancing the curriculum, lesson planning and teaching and learning. Senior and middle leaders were effectively targeting improvements in learning. They were increasingly sharing best practice, by applying consistent approaches to managing the phases and departments within the school. This was particularly effective in the FS and in the leadership of the English department.



- Leaders across the school were increasingly aware of the need for further development. They had responded very positively to the considerable focus on review and school self-evaluation developed by the principal. This was enhancing their capacity to support continuous improvement. Leadership skills were being developed through regular consultation with teachers, sharing of improvement objectives and establishing school committees linked to clear agendas for change.
- Increasingly, leaders at all levels were identifying strengths and areas for development linked to measurable targets against which impact could be measured. School leaders had maintained the high levels of school performance in external examinations while carrying out a major restructuring of leadership, curriculum, teaching and learning.
- The principal had established strong working relationships with the senior leadership team and middle managers. There had been a concerted focus on addressing the recommendations of the last inspection. Increasingly, school leaders were holding themselves and other school staff more accountable for school performance.

#### School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Acceptable

- The school had taken positive action to improve its approach to self-evaluation following the last inspection. The principal had driven this forward across the school resulting in a greater understanding of review and improvement planning. The enhanced focus on continuous review had identified appropriately challenging targets for improvement.
- The school approach to observing teaching and learning had improved. More regular and focused observations were enhanced by a recently developed set of evaluative criteria. This informed discussion, professional development and targets for further improvement. It was developing more consistency in teaching and learning, particularly in the FS and in the upper primary and post-16 phases in English.
- School plans contained appropriate and challenging targets for improvement. They reflected the extensive review work carried out since the last inspection. The principal had enhanced staff contributions to these plans. As a result, most heads of section and departments were beginning to use their actions plans well to develop aspects of learning.
- The school had made significant progress in meeting the recommendations of the last inspection. This was particularly evident in the FS. A head of Arabic had been appointed and supported through training. Although, the appointment had yet to impact fully on the quality of teaching, assessment and learning.

#### Partnerships with parents and the community


Outstanding

- The very active parent council met termly with school leaders and liaised well with the wider parental body. Members had been appointed as a result of open elections, ensuring a wider representation of parent views. The council regularly consulted parents through meetings and on-line surveys.
- The principal held coffee mornings to gather parents' views. Parents had responded very positively to this initiative. They were very positive about the information they received on weekly learning activities through the school's monthly magazine. The parent council had established a website e-mail link to increase interaction with parents.




- The school encouraged parents to support learning. Parents visited classrooms and helped evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and received regular and informative reports on their children's progress. The reports were clear and provided helpful advice on next steps in learning through written comments in course books or through parent-teacher notebooks. They were able to discuss their children's progress through termly meetings and the school's 'open door' policy.
- Parents and members of the local community supported the school's 'Go Green' and 'I PLEDGE' initiatives to support water and energy conservation. The revised parent council policy and guidelines provided further opportunities for volunteering opportunities, including directly supporting learning. Parents contributed to internship and industrial and commercial visits to enhance students' learning.

## Governance

Good 

- The board of governors included a balance of academic and non-academic members. The chair of the board had a high profile in the school and regularly consulted both formally and informally with staff and parents. The chair of the parent council had been an active member of the board since her appointment at the beginning of the session.
- The governors had been pro-active in appointing new school leaders, including the principal, as well as restructuring roles and responsibilities to focus more effectively on school improvement. They were monitoring the impact of the agreed school improvement plans more effectively, including scrutinising students' attainment information and evaluating teachers' professional reviews and development.
- Governors both supported and challenged school leaders. They had provided educational resources, enhanced school leadership posts and funded professional developments in Arabic and assessment for learning teaching techniques. They had stabilised staffing through reducing the number of teachers leaving the school. This was impacting positively, as had the appointments at head of subject level, on the quality of teaching and learning.




## Management, staffing, facilities and resources

Good 

- The school was well managed and had benefited from revised procedures and policies aimed at enhancing learning. The timetables were well constructed and provide adequate time for each of the key subjects. Staff ensured efficient and effective management of facilities and resources.
- Almost all teachers were well qualified and were deployed effectively. Their expertise had been enhanced through a well-planned programme of professional development. The stable staffing levels, were helping to ensure greater consistency in teaching. Staff deployment was efficiently supporting students' progress.
- The school had recently opened a new extension and an attractive play area, which was supporting children's learning in the FS, by providing valuable classroom space. In the upper grades, laboratory facilities, IT suites, music, and art rooms provided adequate opportunity for a wide range activities.
- The school's resources had been enhanced and linked to school initiatives on reading writing and mental mathematics. Improvements in the use of IT included a 'Bring Your Own Device' (BYOD) initiative that increasingly encouraged the use of electronic tablets to support students' research, creativity and problem-solving skills.

## 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	
<b>Parents*</b> 	2015-2016	457
	2014-2015	385
<b>Teachers</b> 	90	
<b>Students</b> 	407	

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

- All teachers and most parents and students who responded to the questionnaire were either positive or very positive about the school.
- Almost all parents, and most students felt that progress was good in English, mathematics and science.
- Most thought that progress was good in Arabic as a first language and in Islamic education.
- While most parents believed that progress was good in Arabic as an additional language, less than half of the students who studied the subject agreed.
- Almost all students, thought that their teachers effectively supported their learning and provided them with advice on how to improve.
- All teachers, and almost all parents and students, believed that the school provided a safe and secure environment and that the school was well led.

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).