



National Agenda



Early Years



Special  
Educational Needs



Innovation

## Inspection Report 2015-2016

GEMS Our Own Indian School

Curriculum: CBSE

Overall rating: Good

Read more about the school



www.khda.gov.ae

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



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

## Contents

School information .....	2
Summary for parents and the community .....	3
Main inspection report .....	10
1. Students' achievement .....	11
2. Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills .....	15
3. Teaching and assessment .....	17
4. Curriculum .....	18
5. The protection, care, guidance and support of students .....	19
Provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) .....	20
6. Leadership and management .....	21
The views of the parents, teachers and students .....	24

## School information

<b>General information</b>  	Location	Al Quoz
	Type of school	Private
	Opening year of school	1991
	Website	www.gemsoo-alquoz.com
	Telephone	04-339-1188
	Address	PO Box 26845 Dubai
	Principal	Mrs. Lalitha Suresh
	Language of instruction	English
	Inspection dates	26 to 29 October 2015
<b>Students</b>  	Gender of students	Boys and girls
	Age range	4-18
	Grades or year groups	Kindergarten 1 to Grade 12
	Number of students on roll	3,625
	Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
	Number of Emirati students	0
	Number of students with SEND	51
	Largest nationality group of students	Indian
<b>Teachers / Support staff</b>  	Number of teachers	164
	Largest nationality group of teachers	Indian
	Number of teaching assistants	6
	Teacher-student ratio	1:22
	Number of guidance counsellors	1
	Teacher turnover	19%
<b>Curriculum</b>  	Educational permit / Licence	Indian
	Main curriculum	CBSE
	External tests and examinations	CBSE
	Accreditation	CBSE
	National Agenda benchmark tests	IBT

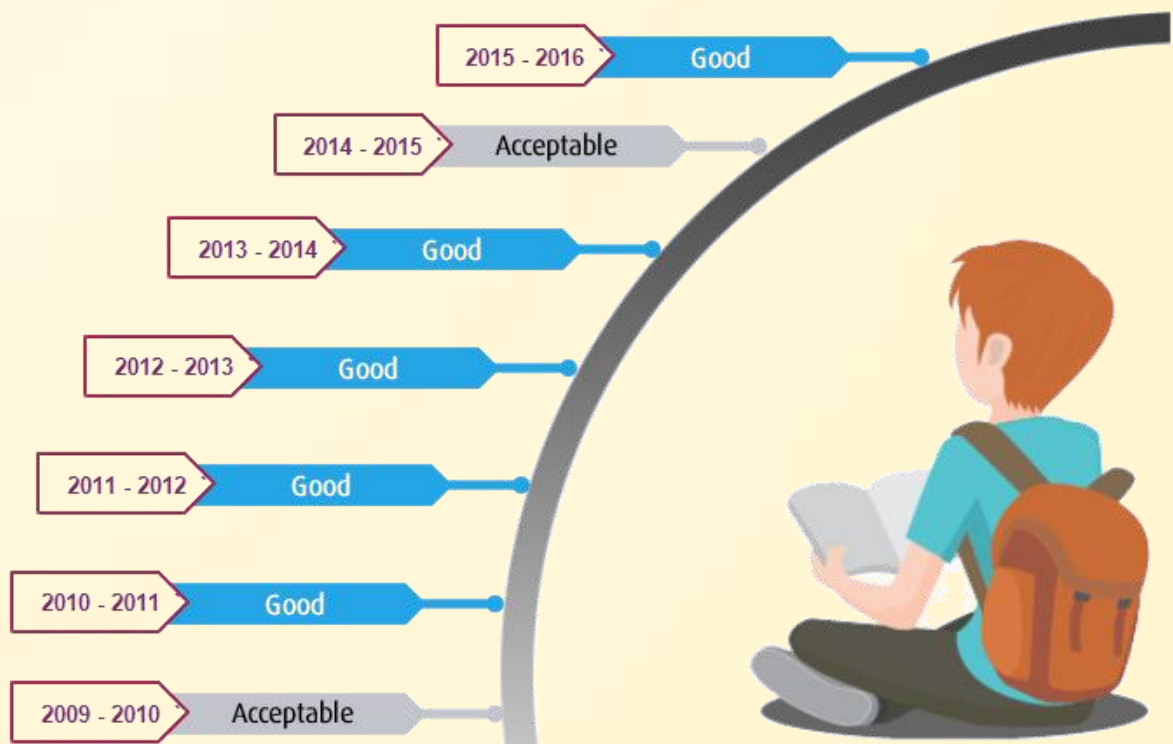


## Summary for parents and the community

**GEMS Our Own Indian School** was inspected by DSIB from 26 to 29 October 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, GEMS Our Own Indian School provided a **good** quality of education for its students.

- Children achieved well in the kindergarten. Particularly strong aspects of the provision were in the development of children's personal, social and emotional skills. In the primary phase, students' attainment and progress were at least good in all subjects, except Arabic as an additional language where they were acceptable. In the secondary phase, students' attainment was outstanding in mathematics and their attainment and progress in science were outstanding. Students were keen to participate in their lessons. They enjoyed working in groups and independently. They enthusiastically applied their learning to solve real-life problems. In a few lessons, they were not given the opportunity to use these skills.
- Students were unfailingly positive and polite, and gained an immense amount of pride from attending the school, describing it as a family. Students' understanding of their own cultures and that of the culture of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was strong. They cared deeply for their environment, for the community and for each other.
- Teaching was underpinned by teachers' good subject knowledge. This was a particularly strong aspect of the good and better teaching seen in the secondary phase, allowing students to achieve well. When teaching was less than good, the lessons were directed too heavily by the teacher. Tasks were not always planned carefully enough for each individual learner. As a result, students' progress slowed.
- The curriculum was reviewed to ensure that it continued to be effective in meeting students' needs. Students used a variety of learning technologies to enhance their learning and benefited from a wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities. Students who required extra support did not always have their needs well met by teachers, so consequently they made less progress than their peers.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding students were fully compliant with statutory requirements. Child protection and safeguarding arrangements were clearly defined and understood by students, parents and the staff. A high percentage of parents who responded to the KHDA survey felt their children were safe in school.
- The principal, the senior leadership team and the governing board shared a consistent, clear and ambitious vision for the school. This, in turn, was shared by the staff and many parents. There was a collective drive to ensure that the students gained the highest possible outcomes.



### What did the school do well?

- The consistently high challenge in the learning opportunities for students in mathematics and science
- Students' outstanding behaviour and overwhelmingly positive attitude toward learning, their keenness to improve, and their enjoyment and enthusiasm for school
- The outstanding health and safety arrangements
- School leaders' vision for improvement and their increasing capacity to continue to improve.





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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that they are consistently good or better by making sure that all teachers provide work that challenges students, especially the less-able and boys, so that more of them exceed the expectations inherent in the curriculum.
- Improve students' attainment and progress in learning Arabic as an additional language by sharing the best practices in the school.
- Identify innovative ways of managing all the available classroom space to ensure that students' learning is not impeded.



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

- School leaders had appointed additional staff members to help improve the quality of support for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), but they had not had time to make a positive change.
- Whilst leaders visited lessons to check the quality of support, their judgements were at times too generous and did not provide an accurate evaluation of provision.
- Students were given individual educational and behaviour plans against which their attainment was measured. These plans did not provide enough focus on developing strategies and skills to reduce the barriers to students' learning.
- There were positive relationships with parents who had regular contact with the SEND team. The school counsellor and special educators showed commitment in their work and provided advice for parents on how to support their children at home.
- Too much variability existed in the quality of learning by SEND students between lessons and subjects. The good support evident in the SEND resource centre and in some classes was not replicated across the school.

### National Agenda Parameter



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

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

#### Main points:

- The school met the registration requirements of the National Agenda Parameter. The attainment data was not sufficient to make a comprehensive judgement on the progress towards National Agenda targets.
- The school promoted awareness of the National Agenda and the National Agenda targets among its stakeholders. Planning by teachers reflected their commitment. Teachers in English, mathematics and science demonstrated their understanding of the necessary skills that students must demonstrate in order to achieve successful outcomes on international assessments. Although students could articulate their knowledge of the National Agenda, their responses about what was expected of them did not necessarily mirror their teachers' expectations. Students did not know enough about the wide range of skills that will be tested in international assessments.
- The curriculum was aligned to the TIMSS and PISA test requirements. Additional content had been incorporated and this was evident in planning documents in each grade for English, mathematics and science. The skills that are tested in international assessments had been identified in each subject. The school demonstrated a commitment to achieve a detailed understanding of the requirements in TIMSS and PISA tests. Teachers were active in engaging with the assessment practices of these examinations as part of their professional development.
- In most lessons in English, mathematics and science, teaching promoted the development of students' critical thinking as outlined in the National Agenda. This was more evident in the middle and secondary phases. Teachers were clear about the definition of critical thinking. Open-ended questions were apparent in many lessons and prompted students to access information in different ways in order to find their own lines of inquiry. Students were able to apply their learning to real life situations. Students did not fully understand what was expected in terms of critical thinking and independent learning. Consequently, students did not demonstrate the full range of skills that will be tested during international assessments.
- Many students gathered a range of information from different sources and this included research using technology. Whilst this was evident in some lessons, it was more typical of projects that students had completed as part of other opportunities that had been provided for them. Students also demonstrated imaginative skills in sharing and presenting their learning using technology. However, these skills were not fully aligned to those that will be tested in international examinations.

## 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 schools' leaders were enthusiastic about innovation. Leaders acknowledged innovators from within the school who had implemented a wide range of new projects which had improved the academic and social aspects of the school and the wider community. The leaders sought creative ways to network globally and bring expertise to the school. Teachers and leaders had encouraged the use of 'non-traditional' learning spaces for activities. They promoted enterprise and entrepreneurship. Learning technologies were being used to complement the curriculum. Changes to the curriculum had facilitated increased opportunities for students to develop innovation skills, including problem solving, perseverance, risk-taking and creativity.



Overall school performance

Good ↑

1. Students' achievement

		KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
<b>Islamic education</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Not applicable	Good	Good	Good
	<b>Progress</b>	Not applicable	Good	Good	Good
<b>Arabic as a first language</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
	<b>Progress</b>	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	<b>Progress</b>	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>English</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Good	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good
	<b>Progress</b>	Good	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good
<b>Mathematics</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Outstanding
	<b>Progress</b>	Good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑
<b>Science</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Good	Good ↑	Very good ↑	Outstanding ↑
	<b>Progress</b>	Good	Good ↑	Very good ↑	Outstanding ↑

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
<b>Learning skills</b>	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good	Very good ↑

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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Very good ↑	Outstanding	Very good ↑
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Outstanding

## 3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good	Very good ↑
Assessment	Acceptable	Good	Good	Very good ↑

## 4. Curriculum

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Outstanding
Curriculum adaptation	Good ↑	Good	Good	Very good ↑

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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Care and support	Good	Good	Good	Good

## 6. Leadership and management

	All phases
The effectiveness of leadership	Good ↑
School self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good ↑
Parents and the community	Very good ↑
Governance	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

### 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	Good
Mathematics	Good ↑	Good ↑
Science	Good	Good

- The majority of children demonstrated good attainment in their key language skills. From modest starting points they had progressed well, spoke with increasing confidence and fluency, read simple texts and developed their sentence writing skills. Most could listen well and follow instructions. This led to levels of attainment being slightly above those expected for their age by the time they moved on from kindergarten. Different groups of children made similar progress over time, but the progress for those with SEND was a little slower.
- Most children showed good levels of numeracy attainment for their ages which was an improvement on the previous year. This had been brought about by parallel improvements in their rates of progress. Children generally were able to count reliably, add single digit numbers and recognise key shapes and their properties. Almost all could accurately describe and recreate repeating patterns. Their written work showed well-formed numbers. As in English, the children with SEND made slightly slower progress over time than other groups.
- Children demonstrated understanding of the world around them. They generally attained good levels for their ages and made good progress, for example in learning about how different materials behave. Most could describe what they observed as they investigated topics such as magnetism or absorbency. Through role-play, they showed an awareness of different occupations and the various tasks in which they were involved. As in English and mathematics, the progress made in science over time by different groups, including those with SEND, was too varied.

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

- In Islamic education, most students were competent in explaining the meaning of a prayer and were able to memorise short Surahs from the Holy Qur'an. A majority were reaching standards that were generally above the curriculum standards prescribed by the Ministry of Education. In the absence of international benchmark measures, attainment and progress, on balance, were both judged to be good because of the explicit achievements of the students. However, students' recitation skills were not developed as well as they should have been. The lack of these skills contrasted with the progress that most students were making in understanding Islamic Etiquettes.
- In learning Arabic as an additional language, and without national and international benchmark measures, most students' speaking and listening skills were judged to be in line with general expectations. Students could converse in simple exchanges, mainly using previously learnt and recently rehearsed words. Their progress was steady in identifying and reading familiar words and adding new ones to their increasing vocabulary. However, their progress in developing writing skills was evidently weaker than the skills exhibited in speaking and reading.
- Students' attainment and progress in English was good in the primary phase as it was across the school. Results from national tests confirmed this. However, girls achieved better than boys. In this phase in English, other groups of students made similar rates of progress. Despite large classes the majority of students participated enthusiastically in teacher-led discussions, group work and individual assignments and invariably achieved success and made gains in their language acquisition. As a result, students' progress in developing their comprehension and reading skills was good.
- Students' attainment in mathematics was very good, with a large majority of students attaining levels that were above the curriculum and national standards by the end of this phase. In lessons, students were observed applying good knowledge to practical situations, for example the use of fractions in costing the sale of vegetables. Even in the absence of international benchmark measures, the explicit achievement of students in mathematics was judged to be very good, with little variation in the rates of progress by different groups.
- Students' attainment and progress as measured against the school's curriculum standards indicated that the majority were above age-related standards in science. They made better than expected gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills. Students were beginning to develop appropriate enquiry and investigation skills and were actively engaged in their learning when involved in these activities. They were able to express their ideas and understanding clearly, often using the correct scientific terms, instead of everyday language. Their attainment over the past three years had been improving and was consistently above the curriculum and national standards. Comparisons with international standards were not available.



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

- The majority of students had particularly sound knowledge and understanding of Islamic concepts and values, such as respect and cooperation. As in the primary phase, students in middle phase were reaching standards that were generally above the standards prescribed by the Ministry of Education curriculum. On balance, their attainment and progress were both judged to be good because the general achievements of the students were better than expected. Their recitation of the Holy Qur'an was acceptable, but a minority of students were not able to memorise the required 'surahs.'
- In learning Arabic as an additional language, students could read with reasonable accuracy and understanding. They had an adequate range of Arabic vocabulary and could listen and follow instructions. As in the primary phase, without national and international benchmark measures, most students' speaking and listening skills were judged to be in line with general expectations. Students' reading and listening skills were better developed than those of writing and speaking. Students had the potential to achieve more, but they were not given enough challenge to help them progress as quickly as they could, especially the most able.
- In English, students were attentive listeners. Without international benchmark measures, students' attainment and progress overall were judged to be good on the basis of externally moderated test results. Improvements on previous years were in the ways students expressed themselves confidently. Their reading and comprehension skills were well developed. They increasingly interrogated and understood challenging texts. The majority could justify their opinions when in group discussions. They could usually reason fluently, although their extended writing skills for a range of purposes were less well developed. Progress was good rather than very good because of the limited opportunities they were given to write at length and the variations in the progress of different groups.
- Internal test scores in mathematics were reliable through external moderation of curriculum assessments and they showed that students' attainment was very good. By the end of this phase, the large majority of students were achieving above the curriculum standards. Students' understanding of mathematical terms was developing very well and they worked out solutions very competently, for example by the use of trigonometry in digital mapping. Students' starting points were captured so it was possible to accurately identify very good progress over time for most groups.
- The large majority of students were attaining above the age-related standards in science. Students were actively engaged in learning and were developing very effective enquiry and investigation skills. They were able to clearly express their ideas and understanding using the correct scientific terms. They were able to relate their learning to real-life situations and to make some connections between subject areas. Attainment trends over the past three years had been improving and students were consistently above the curriculum and comparative national standards. The progress therefore of most groups of students was very good.

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

- The majority of students demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the Islamic Etiquettes, Zakat, morals and values that were above curriculum expectations. As in middle phase, students in the secondary phase were reaching standards that were generally above those prescribed in the Ministry of Education curriculum. However, their use of the Holy Qur'an verses as points of reference was not up to equivalent standards. Their memorisation and recitation of the Holy Qur'anic verses were at age-expected levels. As in earlier phases in the school, the attainment and progress by students were good because the general achievements of the majority of them were better than the expected levels.
- In learning Arabic as an additional language, most students' speaking, listening and reading skills were at age-related expectations. They accurately used a range of vocabulary but their writing skills were not as well developed as those in speaking, listening and reading. This was as a result of limited opportunities to practise in lessons. As in the other phases of the school, the absence of national and international benchmarks, attainment and progress was judged from the general achievements of the students giving consideration to their ages and aptitudes. Most groups made similar rates of progress over time.
- In English, students' attainment was good. CBSE examination results for the previous academic year were outstanding. Their progress in speaking and listening was good. Students expressed themselves confidently and used a range of vocabulary and accurate grammar. They enjoyed reading for a range of purposes. Their skills in reading with understanding and extended writing for different purposes were developing well. Students participated enthusiastically and the level of their questions and responses clearly demonstrated their ability to reason, evaluate and judge.
- Results of the CBSE examinations in mathematics showed that most students in Grade 10 attained well above the expected standards. In the most recent external examination in Grade 12, students' extended knowledge and skills were tested and most achieved similarly high levels. The consistently demanding levels of challenge in almost all lessons ensured that a large majority of students made rapid progress, especially when taking into account their different starting points.
- In science, most students' knowledge, skills and understanding were well above the curriculum and comparative international standards. In order to achieve this, most students were making much better than expected progress which was an improvement on previous years. Students had developed effective investigation skills in achieving the outcomes of the required practical components of their science classes. They were able to express their ideas and understanding very clearly and with sound reasoning. Their well-rehearsed and easy grasp of scientific vocabulary added to their confidence and motivation. Most groups made similar progress in science over time.

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
<b>Learning skills</b>	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good	Very good ↑

- Co-operative learning was a feature of most lessons. In the kindergarten, children demonstrated competent learning skills for their ages. They worked productively and with concentration, both individually and when in groups. They were happy to share resources, often helping each other if they had difficulty. Older children were keen to take responsibility and most had sufficient understanding of their work to say what they had done well.
- Older students took on leadership roles during group work. They ensured that everyone was listened to and that the learning was truly collaborative. Most students in all phases showed a genuine enthusiasm for learning and were usually successful when the lessons engaged and motivated them. Their ability to self-assess and improve their learning developed as they moved up through the school.
- A large majority of the students were able to apply their learning to meaningful contexts in the wider world and particularly to their own lives. Students were able to make connections across their learning in different subject areas, although some were slow to see the links without their teachers' guidance.
- Critical thinking, often prompted by the teachers, and the efficient use of problem solving skills were evident in lessons. Students used these skills and a range of resources and information technologies successfully to extend their learning.

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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
<b>Personal development</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- In the kindergarten, children had outstanding attitudes toward school. They were aware of the needs of others, working and playing alongside each other usually harmoniously. Students were receptive and keen to accept leadership roles. Senior students were particularly committed to assisting younger students, both informally in the playground and through carefully organised buddy programmes.
- Students were polite, conscientious, well-behaved and considerate towards one another. They showed high levels of mutual respect. Their movements around the school site were responsible, with students helping to keep the school an attractive and tidy place in which to learn. The large majority of students agreed that behaviour in and around the school was good.
- The positive relationships between students and teachers contributed to the high academic achievements. Group work was common at all levels and students worked together cooperatively, sharing opinions and modifying their work accordingly.
- Maintaining healthy lifestyles was a well-known theme within the school. Students' snacks were healthy. Conversations with students substantiated their avoidance of sugar-laden treats. Students understood the value of eating fresh produce and the benefits of regular exercise. The school further nurtured a healthy attitude through the 'green garden' programme, complete with a 'market' in which students sold school-grown produce.
- School data indicated that attendance was very good with a slight variation by gender; boys' attendance being lower than that of girls. Students were punctual to classes and were ready to begin work when lessons started.

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
<b>Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures</b>	Good	Very good ↑	Outstanding	Very good ↑

- Students had acquired a very good understanding and a genuine appreciation of how Islamic values were embedded into modern UAE society. This had been facilitated through their participation in UAE social studies lessons and in the many relevant events hosted by the school.
- An excellent understanding of the heritage and culture of the UAE had been developed by most students. They showed respect for the values of the UAE, as well as the many cultures represented in the school community. They were able to relate to the contemporary life in the UAE, being particularly aware of celebrations which the school marked.
- Students discussed their own cultures and backgrounds in depth, describing similarities and differences. They were knowledgeable and spoke with confidence about life prior to the founding of the UAE.

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
<b>Social responsibility and innovation skills</b>	Good	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Outstanding

- The school had an extensive network of community programmes; Dubai Cares, The Green Olympiad, and Eco competitions through Eco-warrior groups at all levels. Students collected eyeglasses and stationery to send to India. At all levels they were aware of Dubai's focus on the environment through Expo 2020 and the dangers of global warming as it affects the desert.
- There was a strong work ethic in the school across academic subjects and extra-curricular activities. Students were motivated and self-disciplined in classes. They were actively engaged in entrepreneurial programmes that began at the primary level and culminated in presentations at the senior level. They were confident and presented speeches well at assemblies.
- The school 'garden' initiated and maintained by students was an indication of students' environmental awareness. Recycling and energy conservation were also practised and students were aware of the need to keep their school clean and environmentally sound. Classroom lessons included out of school visits to 'clean the beach.' The promotions around Expo 2020 had increased the senior students' wider awareness of these important issues considerably.



### 3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good	Very good ↑

- Teachers' good subject knowledge underpinned good learning. Teachers demonstrated this when explaining ideas through technical terms and step-by-step descriptions. They very effectively extended learning by asking students for explanations in detail, rather than accepting simple short answers. Effective techniques for involving students in discussions were used, but occasionally the less-able students were not given enough time to consider their answers.
- In the best lessons, teachers planned tasks whereby students built upon their prior learning and progressively developed their skills, for example in a Grade 10 lesson where students built upon their algebraic skills. Teaching often ensured that students' understanding of technical vocabulary was such that they could understand complex questions. Occasionally opportunities were missed for the less able students to learn quickly, particularly when they had clearly demonstrated understanding.
- In the kindergarten, teachers asked questions which allowed the children to develop their understanding through reasoning. For example, having established that ten was double five, a child was asked, 'How do you know?' Teachers interacted well with their students, particularly in the secondary level. A minority of lessons were heavily teacher-directed where opportunities for students to work independently and become active learners were missed.
- The majority of teachers used the school's lesson planning sheet well to help them plan work at the correct levels. They challenged students and matched resources and tasks well to the learning objectives for each lesson. However, teachers did not support students with SEND as well, so consequently these students sometimes failed to build upon the progress they had been making.
- Information technology was used well across the school to promote learning. The effective use of computers and tablets, and the ways in which teachers assessed their students' answers to questions all resulted in successful learning. For example, in a Grade 11 English lesson, students used their laptops to research, write and present their findings in 'PowerPoint' slide shows to their peers.
- The quality of teaching Arabic was varied across all phases. Although most teachers had secure subject knowledge, their understanding of how students learn was too uneven. Teacher-led lessons, with closed questions to recall information (rather than promote students' ability to explain answers fully) were overly dominant.

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Assessment	Acceptable	Good	Good	Very good ↑

- The school followed a continuous comprehensive evaluation system as recommended by the CBSE board. Students were assessed against appropriate national, international and curriculum standards. Their progress was assessed using entry level, diagnostic and summative tests. Students' achievement in the higher grades was measured helpfully twice a year, but less so in the primary phase.
- Students were prepared for the CBSE board examination in Grades 10 and 12. Those in Grade 4 and above participated in a range of aptitude tests that indicated their potential abilities. The introduction of the ACER International Benchmarking Test (IBT) was being planned for all the students during 2015-2016. The students' expected performance was mapped against international standards and shared with them.



- Assessment results were analysed effectively to track the progress of all students, both individually and as groups. Detailed analysis identified ability groups, tracked their progress over time, set targets and provided useful feedback to students and teachers. The analysis was cross-checked by heads of departments to ensure accuracy and then discussed with students. As a result of tracking, students and their teachers knew how well students were progressing in their learning.
- Assessment information was analysed and discussed with teachers. Lesson plans were modified on a continuous basis and individual targets were agreed with students to improve their performance. There were modifications made to the curriculum to include more topics and skills in order to meet the needs of students.
- Most teachers had sound knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of their students. They derived much information from the analysis of test results. This information was not used well enough in the lower phases, because there was similar challenge for all abilities and the support for lower attaining students was often minimal. Teachers used written feedback to students well to show them what improvements were needed. However, in a few cases, students did not respond to these comments, so they did not improve their work as they should. Parents were informed about their children's progress on a regular basis.

#### 4. Curriculum

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Outstanding

- The CBSE curriculum was used in ways that promoted interest and almost all students enjoyed what they were learning. Activities across the different subjects promoted creative, physical and practical experiences for students. In addition, students were offered a variety of enrichment activities to balance their various learning needs. After school hours were utilised very well for extra-curricular activities.
- Curriculum maps had been developed to ensure progression and continuity between grades, from the kindergarten to the top of the secondary phase. These were checked for accuracy to ensure that they built upon students' previous knowledge and skills. Senior school students were well prepared for board and external competitive examinations, so that they could seek entry into higher education both nationally and internationally.
- The school offered a range of subjects in order to give adequate choices for older students to study different combinations of those subjects which interested them.
- Most lessons included carefully planned cross-curricular links to different subjects and most students made useful connections between literacy, numeracy and technology. The majority of lessons supported independent learning and helped students to develop their skills of research and critical thinking.
- The curriculum was reviewed at the start of each year. Student participation was discussed in weekly meetings and adjustments made based on the feedback from teachers. The review ensured the extension of the curriculum to meet external test standards. Students with SEND and the lower ability students were identified and tracked across curriculum strands to check their progress. However, the resulting strategies did not ensure that their needs were fully met.

- The UAE social studies curriculum was taught in several ways. In the kindergarten, elements of knowledge were occasionally built into other activities. From Grades 1 to 4, it was encompassed by the environmental studies programme. Students in Grades 5 to 8 had a specific weekly lesson alongside their work for the CBSE programme. Older students focused solely upon their board examinations, but there were many connections explored through subjects such as civics, which helped students to understand the UAE in a wider social context.

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum adaptation	Good ↑	Good	Good	Very good ↑

- The curriculum was designed to be inclusive and was modified to suit the needs of most of the students. Almost all lessons challenged the most able groups but did not always appropriately challenge and support the less able students.
- The curriculum included a variety of enterprising, innovative and interesting activities at appropriate intervals. A majority of students chose to participate in the extra-curricular activities. There were planned opportunities for the majority of students to engage with the local community through projects such as the cleanliness campaign, awareness programmes, fund raising, discussions and debates with international students.
- The UAE social studies were provided across all phases. Programmes such as visits to an Arab cafeteria, museums and mosques, celebration of Eid, National Day, Arabic week, UAE culture day, enhanced students' understanding of the UAE's values, cultures and society. Students respected and supported those who fasted during Ramadan. With the support of the Arabic department, students had developed an Arabic dictionary.
- The school offered one 35-minute session per week in Arabic for Kindergarten 2 children. The programme targeted speaking and listening skills; for example, basic greetings and forms of introduction. The programme was preparation for children entering Grade 1.

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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Teachers and the whole staff were aware of, understood and applied the child care policy. The school had a draft policy for information, communication and technology that identified the potential dangers of internet and social media use, including cyber-bullying. This had yet to be linked to the child-care policy.
- The school environment was safe and hygienic. Students were carefully supervised and monitored throughout the day. There were clear and effective procedures, particularly for kindergarten children. Very effective record keeping gave confidence in the school's busing provision.
- The facilities and resources were maintained in excellent condition throughout. The school had systems in place to deal with any maintenance issues promptly and detailed records were kept.

- The school had restricted space in many of the classrooms. These spaces, combined with the large number of students in most classes, limited effective teaching and collaborative group work.
- The school very effectively promoted a safe and healthy lifestyle and in addition provided a range of physical activities for all students.

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Care and support	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Relationships between the staff and students were strong. Mutual respect was evident and behaviour management strategies were effectively and routinely implemented.
- The school had well refined systems to promote very good attendance and punctuality. Parents were contacted promptly and required to explain any absence from school.
- A range of strategies and diagnostic tools were used for the early identification of students at risk of underperformance due to medical or learning needs. Contributions from teachers, students and parents were made to assist in the accurate assessment of needs. Support plans for each student were implemented, but these varied in their usefulness for modifying provision. Students who had demonstrated excellence in academic or other activities were placed on a register of gifted and talented individuals.
- The support provided for students with SEND was inconsistent. Whilst effective support was evident in some lessons and in the small group activities led by the SEND team, good practice was not embedded across the whole school. This resulted in some variations in the progress made by these students. Conversely, in many subjects there was appropriate challenge to extend the learning of the gifted and talented students.
- The personal and academic guidance provided by the school counsellor, phase supervisors and other staff members was strong. Students were well known as individuals and the staff showed genuine care and commitment to their well-being. There were well-organised events to support students in their career and academic choices. Students were able to seek out a staff member to discuss more individual concerns.

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

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


Acceptable

- There had been an increased commitment by the school to improve the provision for students with SEND. The specialist team had recently been expanded and five SEND coordinators appointed to work across all phases. The impact of this additional resource on students' progress at the time of the inspection was limited.
- Some systems were in place to monitor the learning experiences of students in their lessons, but these were not sufficiently robust to accurately evaluate the quality of provision and make secure judgements about students' learning against the KHDA descriptors.

- The commitment and enthusiasm of the SEND team resulted in good knowledge and understanding of the students with whom they worked. Staff members had developed positive relationships with parents. There was regular communication by telephone and e-mail. Parents were generally satisfied with the quality of support offered by the school and were provided with guidance on how to support their children at home.
- Many students benefited from the use of individual educational and behaviour plans. However, these were often too focused upon modified curriculum attainment targets and not sufficiently linked to the development of skills and strategies to reduce barriers to learning.
- The good support provided by the SEND specialist team with their targeted groups of students was not consistently replicated across the school. This resulted in students' progress being too varied.

## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Good 

- The principal led this inclusive school well by example. The senior leadership team communicated high expectations and ambition. The sense of teamwork and pride in the school was strong. Plans for improvements reflected the national priorities. The staff and students understood their roles and took responsibility for realising the school's vision.
- Staff members felt valued and listened to and commented that they were able to influence the school's direction. They recognised and appreciated the opportunities for training and professional development.
- Relationships and communications throughout the school community were professional and productive. Staff members were aware of what was required of them. Lines of accountability were secure.
- Senior leaders had improved the quality of teaching and students' achievement since the previous inspection. The monitoring of teaching was effective because subject and phase leaders were well trained in gathering a wide range of information about individual teachers' performance. Leaders used the information well to identify development points and training needs. This demonstrated the school's good capacity to continue to improve.
- Leaders had been successful in ensuring improvements in key aspects of the work of the school. Subject and phase leaders were increasingly effective because they were well supported and trained through regular meetings. They were also held accountable for their work in improving outcomes for students. Senior leaders had ensured compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements.

## School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Good ↑

- Leaders knew the strengths and areas for development well. However, a few achievement judgments by leaders were too generous because there was not enough consideration of the slow progress that different groups of students were making.
- Senior leaders regularly observed teaching, reviewed the quality of work in students' books and looked at the progress that the majority of students were making. However, they did not place enough emphasis on how teachers catered for the needs of all students in lessons; the emphasis was rather more on their planning than execution. Training, support, and coaching were provided for teaching that was not up to the required standard.
- The school improvement plan had appropriate priorities and was underpinned by the accurate analysis of assessment information and monitoring of the school's work. The plan included a clear and specific timetable of actions to tackle the areas for development. The action plan promoted the school's rapid improvement and identified leaders responsible for each action. The provision for checking and evaluating the difference that actions had made were less clear.
- The school had successfully addressed the majority of the recommendations from the previous inspection report. However, leaders had not achieved a clear focus on improving the outcomes for students learning Arabic as an additional language.

## Partnerships with parents and the community

Very good ↑

- Parents in the kindergarten were able to consult with teachers if they had any queries. Parents could also access their children's records on the GEMS Learning Gateway (My Learning). The school's website encouraged parents to help children with the early skills of literacy and numeracy.
- The school had developed a wide range of links with other schools and local business that were used effectively to widen students' experiences. These helped them to put learning into real life contexts, for example through inter-school matches and visits to local shops and restaurants.
- Parents were very supportive of the school. They considered that their children were happy and enjoyed learning. They felt that teachers were very approachable and quickly resolved any issues. The parent-school committee was a valuable channel for gathering views and suggestions. Parents said that they were active participants of the school's decision-making processes.
- The vast majority of parents believed communications were very strong and highly effective because there were well established systems in place. For example, parents received termly reports on their children's progress, in addition to meetings to discuss reports with teachers.



## Governance

Good ↑

- The governing board consisted of representatives of the GEMS organisation. Elected representative from the parent-school committee regularly met with representatives from the governing board to gather and exchange views. The board's knowledge of the school was broad-based and detailed, benefiting students and teachers.
- The governing board had made very effective changes in senior leaders, including the appointment of an experienced vice-principal. The school received effective and continuing support from the board, including senior advisors who regularly visited and evaluated the work of the school.
- Governors had a range of skills that allowed them to offer high levels of support and challenge to school leaders. They shared their high aspirations successfully with the staff, students and parents. As a result, the school community had worked together, improving aspects of the school. Statutory requirements were met. Arrangements made the school a safe place.




## Management, staffing, facilities and resources

Good ↑

- Efficient procedures and timetables were in place to support the smooth daily operation of the school. Students acted as hall monitors and helped with the movement of students between lessons, ensuring good levels of care and safety.
- Teachers were academically well-qualified and suitably deployed. The school identified professional development needs and many teachers had benefited from participation in both internal and external courses. Newly appointed teachers had successfully completed an induction programme.
- The building and surrounding areas were of good quality and well maintained by an efficient ancillary staff. The school had restricted space in many of the classrooms. These spaces, coupled with the high number of students in most classes, limited teaching, especially for collaborative group work. The school had begun addressing this issue, for example by restricting admission to the kindergarten.
- Many classrooms had displays of curriculum-related work produced by students. These fostered a positive atmosphere for learning. Technology was used effectively by teachers and students to supplement learning. Subject departments had acquired appropriate resources and developed resource banks. The school had a large selection of books, but had not reviewed the provision of library books to support learning in both Arabic and Islamic education.

## 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	1437
	2014-2015	949
<b>Teachers</b> 	152	
<b>Students</b> 	1131	

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

- Overall, responses to the surveys indicated high levels of satisfaction.
- Almost all parents who responded to their survey believed that their children enjoyed school, and an even higher percentage felt their children were safe in school.
- Almost all parents indicated that their children were developing a good range of skills, were offered a range of subjects and that teachers supported them to improve.
- Almost all parents considered the school was well led.
- The vast majority of parents were pleased with the progress made by their children in English, mathematics and science. Regarding Arabic as an additional language, the proportion who indicated that progress was good was just over half.
- Almost students who responded to their survey were satisfied with the quality of education they received at the school.
- The large majority of students indicated the school dealt well with bullying and students behaved well in the school.
- The teachers who responded were very positive about most aspects of the life and work of the school.

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)