

دبي

المعرفة Knowledge

Dubai Arabian American Pr...



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational
needs and disabilities



Innovation

Inspection Report 2015-2016

Dubai Arabian American Private School

Curriculum: US

Overall rating: Weak

Read more about the school



www.khda.gov.ae

‘Do we have to
stand still to
avoid the risk
of falling...?
...I have encountered
several challenges.
But I never bowed
to them’



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

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School information

General information



Location	Al Muhaisnah
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2006
Website	www.daaschool.com
Telephone	04-2882222
Address	Dubai, Deira, Al Muhaisana 1 PO BOX 232212
Principal	Elie Jurdak (Acting principal)
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	18 to 21 January 2016

Students



Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	4-18
Grades or year groups	Kindergarten 1 to Grade 12
Number of students on roll	1,416
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	1,025
Number of students with SEND	None identified by the school
Largest nationality group of students	Emirati

Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	102
Largest nationality group of teachers	Egypt
Number of teaching assistants	8
Teacher-student ratio	1:14
Number of guidance counsellors	1
Teacher turnover	40%

Curriculum



Educational permit / Licence	US
Main curriculum	US
External tests and examinations	None
Accreditation	None
National Agenda benchmark tests	None

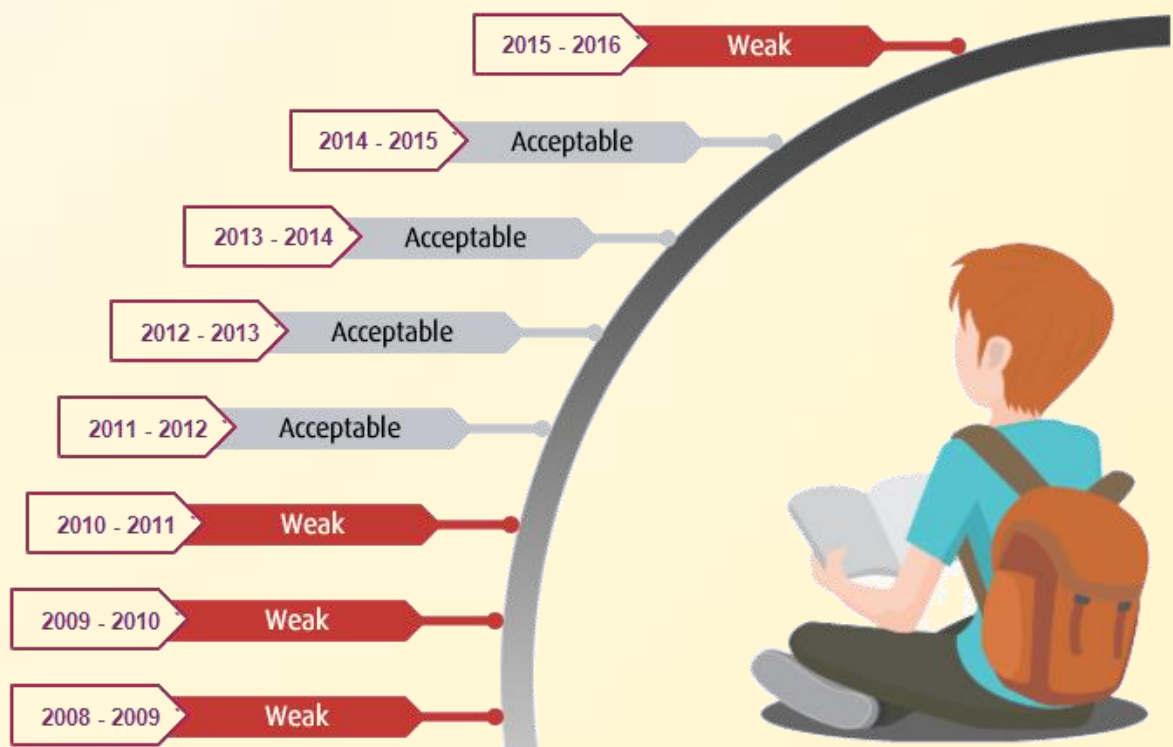


Summary for parents and the community

Dubai Arabian American Private School was inspected by DSIB from 18 to 21 of January 2016. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **weak**.

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, **Dubai Arabian American Private School** provided a weak quality of education for its students.

- Children in the kindergarten made good progress and attained acceptable standards in English. Students in elementary made generally acceptable progress. Performance was weaker in middle and high school. Overall, boys' progress and attainment were weaker than for girls. Children had positive attitudes to learning in kindergarten, but these declined as students progressed through the school.
- Students demonstrated a basic level of understanding of Islamic values and its impact on the daily life in the UAE. Their knowledge and understanding of the heritage and culture of the UAE was acceptable. However, they did not initiate or show much interest in community, enterprise or environmental projects. In middle and high school, many boys had poor attitudes to learning.
- The quality of teaching and assessment was acceptable in the early years. It was weaker in the middle and high school where a large minority of teachers showed an underdeveloped understanding of pedagogy. They delivered overly didactic lessons and lectured excessively. This limited students' opportunities to be active and independent learners. Teachers did not use assessment information to modify the curriculum or adjust their teaching approaches.
- The curriculum was acceptable in the kindergarten and weaker at other stages. It was not modified sufficiently at each stage to meet the learning needs of students. The school's curriculum had significant gaps in content in some subject areas with some discontinuity.
- Health and safety arrangements were weak. Policies on bullying, cyber-safety and child protection were not communicated well to the staff. Overall, the quality of care and support provided for students was weak. The school did not have a process to identify and provide support to students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and those who were gifted and talented. Provision for these students was weak.
- The quality of leadership and management across the school was weak. Teachers were inadequately qualified and the school was resourced at a basic level. The new owners of the school had an ambitious vision to improve the school.



What did the school do well?

- The new owners of the school had an ambitious vision for the school's future. They were aware of the areas which required improvement and had a commitment to improve the school.
- The positive attitudes of senior girls and their commitment to learning and their work in Arabic, English and science were high.



What does the school need to do next?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership of the school at all levels.
- Engage and involve students in their learning, especially of the middle and senior boys by:
 - establishing clear expectations of behavior in all classes and common areas of the school
 - supervisors monitoring behavior, attendance and punctuality more rigorously
 - teachers applying consistently agreed approaches to managing classrooms
 - involving parents more fully in their children's education and the life of the school.
- Make teaching and learning more effective by:
 - providing effective training for teachers across the school and monitoring its impact on lessons and students' attainment and progress, including the use of internationally benchmarked comparisons
 - raising expectations of student's attainment in class
 - using relevant and meaningful contexts for learning
 - using assessment information to plan lessons and meet students' learning needs
 - increasing the pace of learning and providing more challenge for students
 - using a wider range of resources, including technology to enliven lessons.
- Ensure that the curriculum is compliant with, and teachers apply rigorously the Common Core Standards for English and mathematics and the State of California Standards for other subjects.
- Improve the safety and security of students by training all staff on child protection and upgrading the security of the site.
- Make provision for students with SEND by:
 - revising the admission policy
 - appointing staff with specialist knowledge and skills in SEND
 - identifying accurately lower attaining students' learning needs
 - providing appropriate programs and modifications to the curriculum
 - monitoring closely the progress of all groups of students, including those with SEND.



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

- There were no students specifically identified with SEND within the school.
- Reporting to parents on their children's progress was limited. In Grades 1 to 12 only end of term marks and averages were reported and no references were made to personal and social development.
- Communication with parents was not provided in a consistent manner. Parents did not receive early notification when their child did not reach expected levels of performance.
- Parents were not offered opportunities to become involved in the school and participate on school committees or on planning or governance boards.
- No member of staff was qualified in SEND. As a consequence, no specific guidance was available to teachers or parents, and no programs were in place to support students to improve their progress.

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
No attainment data from the National Agenda Parameter was available at this stage to make a judgement on the progress towards meeting the National Agenda targets.
- The school has not promoted National Agenda effectively. Most of the stakeholders had a very limited knowledge of the National Agenda. Governors and senior managers were aware of National Agenda but there had been no dissemination of information on what it meant or the implications for the school. Students and parents were not aware of the National Agenda but they knew about TIMSS and PISA. However they were not clear about the purpose or how the results would affect the school.
- The school curriculum was in theory aligned to the Common Core Standards in English and mathematics and to the Californian standards and the Next Generation Science Standards, but in practice alignment was weak. Whilst there was an awareness of the different skills required to meet the demands of TIMSS and PISA, few adjustments had been made.
- Plans for further professional development were in place but yet to be implemented. Few teachers had effective strategies in place to develop critical thinking and inquiry. Some adjustments had been made to the style of assignments and lesson activities. Overall the strategies did not provide effectively to develop critical thinking as defined in the National Agenda.
- In the majority of lessons students were not required to use resources that would serve to develop their enquiry skills. Many of the tasks set for students were closed and had not allowed students to research using a range of resources including learning technologies.

Innovation in education

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

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








Promoting a culture of innovation:

- School leaders had recognized the importance of using innovative ideas to find solutions too many of the issues facing the school. They had an understanding of the importance of developing a culture of innovation in their school community. School leaders were in the process of planning a strategy to build capacity and develop adults and students' innovation skills. The school's leaders had conducted a full audit of the school's infrastructure and were aware of the need to review and develop resources to support their vision of innovation. A key strategy to promote innovation was, at least, the full implementation of the basic elements of the school's chosen aspects of a representative US curriculum.

Overall school performance

Weak ↓

1. Students' achievement

		KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Islamic education 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Weak ↓	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable	Weak ↓	Weak ↓
Arabic as a first language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Weak ↓	Weak ↓
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable	Weak ↓	Weak ↓
Arabic as an additional language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
English 	Attainment	Acceptable ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓
	Progress	Good	Acceptable ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓
Mathematics 	Attainment	Acceptable ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓
	Progress	Acceptable ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓
Science 	Attainment	Acceptable ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓
	Progress	Acceptable ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Acceptable ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Personal development	Good	Acceptable ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable	Acceptable
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓

3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable	Weak ↓	Weak ↓
Assessment	Acceptable ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓

4. Curriculum

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum design and implementation	Acceptable ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓
Curriculum adaptation	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓
Care and support	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓

6. Leadership and management

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



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	Acceptable ↓	Good
Mathematics	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓
Science	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓

- The speaking and listening skills of most kindergarten children were in line with age-related expectations for second language English learners. Children had a sound knowledge of letter shapes, sounds and letter formation, and were able to confidently sing the lyrics of familiar songs and rhymes. They were not formally assessed against international standards and data on children's achievements over the past three years was not available. The majority of children made good progress in their conversational skills and in their ability to read short words and phrases. Their independent reading and writing skills were developing. During lessons the majority of children made better than expected progress against intended learning outcomes. The progress made by children was beginning to be tracked.
- Children had secure knowledge and understanding of numerals and number work. Other aspects of their mathematical development were inconsistently developed relative to US curriculum standards. Despite being able to recognize numbers to 20 and being able to count by rote to beyond 20, children lacked experience of problem solving and investigation. They were not assessed against international standards and data on children's levels of attainment over the past three years were not available. Internal assessment records indicated that most children had made the expected progress against a narrow range of curriculum expectations. Most groups of children made appropriate progress from their individual starting points.
- In science, children had developed knowledge of key facts and attained to an acceptable level. These facts had been learned through repetition and rote learning and not through a culture of investigation and exploration. Children understood that plants needed water, sunlight and earth to grow, but were unaware of the difficulties of growing plants in a desert. They lacked the language skills needed to ask questions and identify problems. Their recall of facts was assessed regularly. Recent data indicated that most children made the expected progress against only a narrow range of learning outcomes. Data to support progress over time and moderation through external assessments were not available. As in mathematics, most groups were making acceptable progress within the narrow range of learning objectives and from their starting points.

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

- In Islamic education, most students demonstrated levels of knowledge and understanding in line with curriculum standards. Students understood concepts linked to their daily lives and a few were able to discuss and express their opinions. Levels of understanding varied between year groups and between girls and boys. Students were studying the Pillars of Islam, the Pillars of Faith, the Hadeeth and Islamic values. Most students were able to talk about their knowledge of Islam but they experienced difficulties when discussing readings from the Qur'an because of their limited understanding of classical Arabic. These difficulties limited the depth of their discussions and impacted on their writing. Most students could participate in recitation successfully.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students in the elementary phase attained levels that were in line with the curriculum standards in listening, reading and writing. At the end of the phase, most could ask and answer familiar closed ended questions. Most students were able to read aloud from familiar texts. However, their writing skills were less well developed across the elementary school. Internal assessment information showed that most students made the expected progress in relation to individual and groups' starting points. In lessons, only a majority of students made the expected progress in relation to appropriate learning objectives. Students who found learning difficult were not receiving the support they needed to make acceptable progress.
- Most students attained levels that were in line with the curriculum expectations for learning Arabic as an additional language according to their years of learning. No externally benchmarked assessment data was available. Students could responded orally to closed questions; open-ended questions were rarely posed. Discussions in groups were not encouraged nor developed across the phase. Internal assessment information showed that most students made the expected progress in gaining knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to individual starting points. A few students made better progress due to longer exposure to the language. Evidence showed that boys and girls made the expected progress in relation to appropriate learning objectives aligned with the expected curriculum standards. There were groups and individuals who showed slower progress.
- In English most students made the expected progress as they moved through the phase. However their standards of attainment were below age-related standards in English when speaking and reading, and their writing skills lagged even further behind. The school's assessment data was unreliable. There was no international benchmarking test data available. Although many students did try to improve their learning and showed clear signs of progress in their speaking, listening and reading skills, these rates of progress were acceptable, rather than good. As a result, overall, most students did not attain the appropriate standards for their age.

- Standards were below curriculum expectations in mathematics. The level of accuracy in students' work was varied. Their ability to explain why processes were successful was limited. The school had no international benchmarking test data. There was little evidence of the ability to persevere with problems to reach a conclusion. Grade 4 students, for example, were able to identify simple number patterns but could not explain with fluency, their findings in mathematical terms. Progress of most groups was below expectations although girls made slightly better progress than boys. Assessment data did not provide reliable and valid information. Students' mathematical understanding was insufficient to progress well in lessons. There was a close correlation between the progress of Emirati and non-Emirati students.
- In science, attainment and progress measurements were inconsistent and in some instances inflated by ill-informed judgements. Students did progress along a continuum in science, but with occasional gaps in content. Grade 2 students could identify tools and their use, but only at a basic knowledge level. Students in Grade 4 could identify a force as a push or a pull, but could not explain the concept further. There was no measurement of student attainment against international standards. Knowledge and skills were developing and attainment tended to increase minimally over time. Progress in lessons was inhibited by weak English language skills. There was a disparity in attainment among groups of students, unidentified students with SEND, for example, progressing poorly.

Middle

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

- In Islamic education, less than three-quarters of students' attainment was in line with curriculum standards. In lessons, students were not able to engage in in-depth discussions about their Islamic faith and the concepts associated to their daily lives. Students' standard of reading of all texts related to the subject and their ability to comprehend the importance of the Pillars of Islam were lower than expected for their age group. Students had difficulties with recitation, understanding the deep meaning of the Qur'an and applying the prescribed Islamic laws. Progress was below expectations. Students' attitudes to learning and their limited language skills impacted on their willingness and ability to express their opinions both orally and in writing.
- In Arabic as a first language, a significant minority of students performed below expected levels. Though attainment and progress were mostly acceptable over the past two years, results this year showed a drop in performance, particularly that of boys. Most students had secure listening skills, but were weak in speaking and used colloquial Arabic. They lacked fluency and confidence while expressing their views. Accuracy in oral reading varied between grades and comprehension skills were underdeveloped. Students showed some understanding of the main ideas, but lacked the skills to interpret, infer, and draw conclusions. Extended writing was rare and students mainly wrote short responses. These contained frequent spelling mistakes, wrong word choice, use of colloquial terms and faulty application of grammar. In most lessons, progress of the different groups of students was weak.

- In Arabic as an additional language, most students attained levels that were in line with expectations. In lessons and in their recent work, most students demonstrated levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that were in line with curriculum standards. However, there were wide differences among the groups. That was due to the variation in the number of years of studying the language. There was no reliable attainment data for the past three years, but the attainment of students who had been at school for this period of time was in line with the national standard. There was unevenness in the progress among groups. Girls' progress in speaking and writing exceeded that of the boys.
- In English, most students did not attain the expected standards in listening, speaking, reading and writing. In lessons and in their recent work only a majority of students, rather than most, were able to exhibit knowledge and understanding that were in line with curriculum standards. In the absence of externally moderated tests and the use of international benchmarks, comparative levels of attainment were not known. Students found it difficult to use new vocabulary and apply language skills in tasks. Only some groups of students made appropriate progress and writing was a general weakness. Boys' skills were not as well developed as those of the girls.
- A majority of students could follow a mathematical process but not talk about their work with confidence. Grade 6 students could divide multi-digit numbers with a degree of accuracy but at a level below the expected standard. A significant minority were not fluent or accurate in their mental skills when working on multi-digit division. There were no meaningful external assessments available in the school. Most students were unable to show the skills of perseverance and reasoning to develop independently their mathematical ability. Only a majority of students had the skills and understanding to progress at an acceptable rate. Most groups of students made similarly weak progress, but girls made better progress than boys because of a greater commitment to their studies.
- In science, less than three quarters of the students were progressing at a level dictated by the curriculum standards. There were gaps in students' abilities to use proper scientific terminology to describe the concepts being taught. Students in Grade 8 could identify the terms speed, distance, and time but had difficulty in applying their knowledge when solving problems. There was no data from external international benchmarking tests available, so levels of comparative performance were unclear. The ability to apply the scientific method in order to utilize that knowledge was exhibited only by the most able students. Progress was inhibited by confusion that resulted from weak English language skills. The internal assessment data indicated that there was a disparity in attainment and progress among boys and girls.

High

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

- Most students demonstrated understanding and knowledge of Islam that were in line with curriculum standards. They were able to recite the prescribed verses from the Holy Qur'an and Hadeeth. Older students were beginning to use and apply their personal understanding of Islamic values and laws to a range of contexts. Students, especially girls, were better equipped to go beyond the text and discuss values, manners and their identity as a Muslim. Progress was below expectation for most students. Students lacked the ability to analyze text and record their responses. They lacked experience of critically thinking about the importance of Islam and its impact on society.
- In Arabic as a first language, the attainment and progress of the boys was markedly lower than that of girls against curriculum standards. Most students showed secure listening skills. The majority of students were weak at speaking standard Arabic. Girls were more confident and fluent than boys in oral communication. Boys could only speak in short sentences, often using colloquial language. Boys demonstrated weak oral, reading and comprehension skills, whereas girls were able to read novels, analyze and critique the writers' ideas. Boys rarely produced extended writing and often made mistakes in language and developed poor content. Girls on the other hand, were able to write short stories of high quality using standard Arabic. In lessons, the majority of girls progressed better than boys but over time weak progress was made.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students attained levels that were in line with expectations. In lessons, and in their recent work. Most students demonstrated levels of knowledge, skills and understanding of the four language skills that were in line with curriculum standards. However, there were wide differences in the groups and this was mainly due to the difference in years of studying the language. There was no externally moderated assessment data on students' attainment and progress and little internal information on progress over the last three years.
- In English, listening and speaking skills of only the majority students, rather than most, were in line with curriculum standards. In lessons, students were able to identify themes of stories, plot story-line diagrams and give oral reports. However, learning objectives for knowledge, skill and understanding were not sufficiently challenging in lessons. Students were able to engage in more critical thinking at this stage but learning technologies were rarely used. External assessments of attainment and progress were not available. The writing skills of most students were underdeveloped. Girls displayed a higher skill level than boys.
- Only a majority of students were able to meet the expected curriculum standards in mathematics. The development of mathematical understanding during lessons was below expected levels and students did not have a thorough grasp of the subject. There was only a limited ability to reason and present mathematical arguments with confidence. Attainment over time had been consistent until the current year. The school's assessments showed that attainment had dropped, no external assessment data was available. All groups of students progressed at a similar level in relation to their start point. However, the data provided suggested that girls progressed better than boys, including Emirati girls. Progress of most groups was hindered by the lack of mathematical understanding and application.

- In science lessons, Grade 12 girls made good progress and attained standards in line with curriculum expectations. However, the performance at the lower grades was much weaker. There were gaps in students' learning in chemistry. For example, students learning chemistry understood much of the theory regarding reaction rates, but a large majority of them were unable to describe the chemical reaction at work using a chemical equation. Students were occasionally challenged with questions requiring critical thinking but were not given sufficient time for reflective thought. There were no measurements of performance against international standards. This prevented the school from having precise information that could be used to guide adjustments to the curriculum, planning, and teaching.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Acceptable ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓

- A minority of students had positive attitudes toward learning. Many older boys in middle and high school had negative attitudes and were disengaged from learning. Students were often off-task and did not use time and resources effectively. In the upper phase the learning by senior girls in Arabic, English and science was better. Kindergarten children were often actively engaged in learning and enjoyed taking part in well-resourced activities.
- Students worked together amicably in groups, although hampered by their lack of English. As a result, they found it difficult to interact and communicate. Frequently, students did not work productively in groups, where one individual did most of the work while the others acted as observers. Children across the kindergarten enjoyed participating in formal and informal learning opportunities. They developed their social skills through collaboration and shared experiences.
- Students did not apply prior learning in core subjects to wider aspects. They failed to recognize connections between their learning and the world beyond school. Only a minority of students were able to apply knowledge and previously acquired language skills. Only kindergarten children were beginning to make meaningful connections between their learning and the real world, for example by planting seeds and observing their growth.
- Independent learning happened in the upper phases, especially for girls. Here, they applied critical thinking, for example, in a Grade 8 English class where they used software to make good presentations. In kindergarten, opportunities for children to work independently were often overly directed by adults. Children were not encouraged enough to explore for themselves. The use of learning technologies by students was inadequate throughout the school.

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Personal development	Good	Acceptable ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓

- Students demonstrated negative attitudes to learning and lacked self-discipline. Attitudes were more positive at the lower end of the school. In the kindergarten, children's attitudes were positive. They were cooperative and slowly built confidence in themselves. They shared their learning with enthusiasm and respect.

- Students' behavior, especially in the middle and high phases was disorderly. In the upper elementary, boys disrupted classes with unacceptable behavior. In the kindergarten and lower elementary, students were courteous to adults and each other.
- Relationships among students and staff often lacked respect and this was more evident in the middle and high phases. Students did not cooperate well with each other. There were incidents of physical confrontations across the school and mainly between the boys. Girls showed more respect towards each other. In the lower elementary phase and kindergarten, students were sensitive to the needs of others.
- Students did not demonstrate appropriate understanding of safe and healthy lifestyle. They did not often participate in activities that promoted safe and healthy living. Students in the middle and high phases, supported the 'Stop Diabetes' campaign. Students across the school had limited participation in sports activities. The kindergarten children and elementary students demonstrated underdeveloped awareness of healthy eating.
- Attendance was weak. A minority of students arrived late in the morning across the school. Teachers in the high school, in particular, complained about frequent absence of students from classes and lack of punctuality.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Most students were aware of the main aspects that distinguished the UAE as an Islamic country such as the presence of mosques and the frequent call for prayers. They could name the two Eids (Al Fitr and Al Adha), but apart from this very few knew about other Islamic occasions. Students were aware that Muslim women would dress differently from non-Muslims but could not relate this to Islamic expectations
- Students demonstrated an appropriate level of knowledge of the UAE, its origins and foundation. They were less aware of the period before the union or the role of today's leaders. They could talk about changes, but few were able to relate these to economic reasons and to the vision of the rulers. Some could talk about the lifestyle of Emirati people and their main sources of living.
- Students expressed their pride in being Emirati and showed their appreciation to the leaders for building it. However, they did not have enough understanding of their heritage and culture and what distinguished these from others around the world. The majority of students had visited several parts of the world, but their knowledge of the cultures of other nations was basic and restricted to some superficial aspects.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓

- Students did not exhibit themselves as responsible members of their school. This was mainly manifested in their limited care for its environment. Few students had participated in basic activities such as planting flowers in their school and cleaning parts of the beach with their families. Their community involvement was very limited and often restricted to granting the less fortunate people around with food and used clothing.

- Students did not have a strong work ethic. There were a few school initiatives which motivated students. A good example was provided by seniors, who collaborated well in business projects. Most students lacked sufficient opportunities to be engaged in entrepreneurship and to create and lead their own projects.
- Students' environmental awareness was not well developed across the phases. Their understanding of local and global environmental challenges was very shallow. Very few students could discuss pollution and fewer could explain its origins. Students were not aware of what they as individuals or what governments could do to eliminate this problem. The students' understanding of sustainability and conservation concepts such as recycling and reusing was very limited.

3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable	Weak ↓	Weak ↓

- Most teachers had reasonably secure subject knowledge but did not demonstrate a good understanding of how students learn. Kindergarten teachers had a good understanding of the importance of active learning. In the elementary phase, teaching was often pitched at a suitable level, but in the upper phases a large minority of teachers showed an underdeveloped understanding of pedagogy. They lectured in didactic lessons excessively.
- Teachers' planning and classroom management were too variable. A minority of teachers were unsuccessful in engaging students, characterized by low levels of student motivation. Not enough progress was made because expectations were too low or the pace of learning was too slow with limited resources. Classrooms in the middle and high phases were often bleak and uninspiring, they were better in the kindergarten and elementary phase.
- Teachers' interactions with the students were mostly positive. The quality of teachers' questioning was variable. Teachers depended too much on closed questions. They did not challenge students sufficiently to develop their understanding or give them sufficient time to promote higher order thinking skills. In the lower phases, a majority of teachers used questions that promoted thought and engaged students in meaningful discussions and reflection.
- Most teachers failed to differentiate their teaching strategies to meet the needs of all students. The selection of content and learning activities did not take sufficient account of students' levels of achievement and their interests. As a result, a significant minority of students were disengaged and did not respond positively in lessons. In the majority of lessons, teaching did not provide sufficient challenge for the more able students or support for the least able.
- Teachers presented too few opportunities for students to develop critical thinking, problem solving and independent learning skills. Poorly planned and implemented learning activities did not support the students' development of critical thinking skills. Although most children in kindergarten showed skills of independence in a range of exciting opportunities for learning, teachers' interventions in these activities were not consistently effective in extending children's thinking skills and investigations.
- In Arabic as a first language, almost all teachers demonstrated secure subject knowledge. However, a significant minority showed underdeveloped understanding of pedagogy. The situation was similar in teaching Arabic as an additional language.

- In both Arabic language subjects teachers talked at students most of the time. This limited students' opportunities to be active learners. Teachers did not have high enough expectations. The pace in most lessons was too slow, characterized by low levels of students' motivation. Questions were not sufficiently challenging. Teachers did not provide enough thinking time and opportunities for students to participate effectively. They did not develop critical thinking skills.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Assessment	Acceptable ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓

- Assessment of student progress was based solely on internal tests and subjective evaluations by teachers. Internal assessment methods were linked to the school's curriculum but were inconsistently applied across the school. As a result, assessment reliability, validity and comprehensiveness were weak.
- There were no recent international assessments and therefore the school could not compare its own assessments to international benchmarks. Historical data was available from TIMSS, PISA, and PIRLS.
- There was no uniform, school-wide monitoring and analysis of attainment data. The validity of the data varied from teacher to teacher. The school had sound plans to improve assessment but there was not yet a comprehensive and integrated system in place to reliably monitor students' attainment and progress.
- A small group of experienced teachers used strategies that were effective in meeting the needs of their students, but the majority of staff did not make best use of assessment information. The majority of teachers did not use assessment information to modify the curriculum or adjust their teaching approaches.
- Teachers' awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of student was limited to assessing their basic knowledge through questioning and summative tests. A majority of teachers gave little written feedback to students and the marking of student work tended to be cursory and minimally informative. Students' assessment of their own learning was limited.

4. Curriculum

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum design and implementation	Acceptable ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓

- The curriculum was reasonably broad and balanced, and was being brought in line with the California state curriculum standards. There was an emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge and this was generally guided by the use of textbooks and workbooks. The focus on skill development was limited.
- The curriculum had gaps in content in some subjects causing discontinuity. Poor curriculum alignment and limited understanding of expectations had a negative impact on students' learning experiences, since many were incorrectly pitched and with progression and continuity not clear. The curriculum met the needs of only a majority of students. As a result students were not adequately prepared for the next phase of their education, within school and beyond.

- Limited curricular options provided high school students with choices that were narrow and overly prescriptive. The subjects offered as choices for these students did not allow them to study subjects in which they were interested or could be of benefit to them as they select further study or enter the world of work.
- Some cross-curricular links were planned for implementation in the coming year and this was a weakness in most subject areas. However, in kindergarten basic cross-curricular links were being developed between the English and Arabic departments with teachers attempting to complement and make connections in learning between the two curricular outcomes.
- The school's review of its curriculum was insufficiently focused on the academic and personal development needs of students in most subjects. Plans had been formed to conduct periodic reviews of the curriculum in the future.
- The social studies courses in Grades 1 to 8 follow curriculum standards provided by the Ministry of Education. It was designed to develop students' understanding of the UAE's culture and society, and were taught in Arabic. Courses on world history and geography were offered to high school students. The celebration of National Day provided students with opportunities to learn more about the UAE culture.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum adaptation	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓

- The school made few modifications to the curriculum to meet the needs of students. Teachers did not adjust the learning objectives to be in line with the needs of all students. Low levels of differentiation were seen in action and were rarely implemented effectively. The school had a strategy to address the needs of all groups of students, but had not yet implemented it.
- Students had limited opportunity to engage in activities that promote enterprise, innovation, creativity and social consideration. These were too few and so missed education towards achieving the National Agenda targets.
- There were too few examples of extra-curricular activities and community links. Not enough consideration was given in planning to diversify and enrich students' experiences in order to strengthen their learning. The Business Fair that Grade 12 economics students participated in provided examples of students using research skills to develop business plans, critical and creative thinking, and the development of presentation skills.
- The school provided a comprehensive Arabic language program for all its kindergarten children. This was delivered in 245 minutes per week. The program focused on the development of script recognition and Arabic phonemic awareness. Children had opportunities to learn age-appropriate language needed to communicate in Arabic. Teachers also provided chances to practice writing and tracing of letters and simple words.

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓

- School policies on bullying, cyber-safety, and child protection were not communicated well to the staff. As a result, monitoring of these behaviors by teachers was inconsistent and led to numerous instances of inappropriate behavior by a minority of boys. Not all staff were trained in child protection.
- Security at the entrances to the school was unreliable. There were supervisors on school buses. The supervision of students was weak and inconsistent. Classrooms were not always cleaned to a high enough standard. Safety drills were conducted in accordance with regulations and some staff members were trained in the use of fire protection equipment. The two health facilities were staffed by one doctor and three nurses.
- The building was in need of significant numbers of minor repairs to classrooms, laboratories, gymnasium, and common areas. The new owners had identified the areas where work was required. Appropriate record keeping was in place. All areas of the premises that were unsafe for children were securely locked.
- The upper floors of the building were not accessible for students with limited mobility as there was no elevator. At some entrances, ramps were steep and difficult to negotiate. Some classrooms were too small for the size of the class and as a result this environment limited movement and presented tripping hazards.
- The school provides food service canteens that served only healthy foods. Its policies refer to living a healthy life-style and were reinforced in only a minority of classes. Children who bring lunch from home do not necessarily observe these guidelines. Students took physical education each week.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Care and support	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓

- Positive relationships among staff and students were occasionally apparent. However, close bonds between teachers and students were not often observed in class. An effective system to manage behavior was not in use on campus.
- The school was installing a new online system to track attendance and punctuality of students on a daily basis. A series of consequences for attendance infractions was established with the new student attendance policy. Although the school's attendance rates were beginning to improve, these continued to be weak areas of performance for the school.
- The school did not encourage students with SEND to enroll. It did not have a process to identify and provide support to students with SEND or those who were gifted and talented. The school had not filled the SEND coordinator position for most of the past four years. The school did not have individual educational plans in place for students.
- The school provided very limited support for students with special learning needs as it had no teachers with qualifications in this area. No provision was made for gifted and talented students. Teachers had not yet received any training on meeting students' learning needs but it did have plans to introduce such training.

- Personal and academic guidance and counselling were not provided. Plans for boosting personal and academic guidance were discussed as a future task for the counsellor to provide for students, but existing provision was weak.

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

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

Very weak ↓

- The school had lacked the strong leadership needed to demonstrate a commitment to the education of students regardless of teaching or behavioral need. A process for identifying and serving students in need of special services was not in place.
- Parents expressed their frustration in the lack of attention and services provided for students. They were especially upset with the absence of communication and the lack of care extended by the school.
- Classroom teachers and counsellors did not know how to modify lessons and provide learning support for students with SEND. Identification processes were inadequate.
- Students with learning difficulties made very poor progress in lessons. Teachers lacked the skills needed to use assessment in its various forms, to guide the writing and monitoring of measurable and targeted goals for students with SEND.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Weak ↓

- The acting principal was determined to improve the learning experiences of students to maximize their attainment. He had a good knowledge of effective educational practice. The school did not yet have an inclusive ethos and it was not focused upon improving students' learning and personal development.
- Most senior leaders had positive relationships with teachers and other staff. They had taken steps to improve communication with staff and parents. Leadership was distributed across the school. The heads of department had yet to demonstrate their effectiveness as leaders of change. Many teachers were optimistic about the future development of the school.
- The governors and acting principal had an ambitious vision for the school. They knew that the school was weak when they bought it and had plans to develop it into a high performing bilingual school with an American curriculum and a strong Islamic ethos. This vision had not yet been communicated successfully to the whole school community. A new principal had been appointed but had not yet taken up post.
- The school did not yet have the capacity to improve and innovate. Teachers needed to improve classroom management and adopt teaching approaches which would engage and motivate students. The school did not have high academic standards or a culture of high aspirations. There had been a high turnover of staff.

- Senior leaders had recently developed an improved approach to monitoring students' progress and attainment which was based upon the Common Core Standards and the Californian State Standards. This system was well-conceived but not fully implemented. However, many teachers' judgements on students' standards of attainment were not accurate.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Weak ↓

- The school had produced an improvement plan, based upon its recent audits prior to this inspection. It identified the main areas for improvement. However, there had been insufficient time for the new owners to bring about improvement.
- As a result of the many changes in senior leadership and teaching staff the school had not improved since the last inspection. However, the governors had appointed a new principal, upgraded the school's administrative support services and established a vision and strategic plan to improve the school.
- The acting principal had a realistic view of the school's strengths and its priorities for improvement. Upon acquiring the school the acting Principal and appointed consultants carried out a number of detailed audits and consultations with staff to evaluate the quality of education, the quality of the school's support services and the safety, security and quality of the premises.
- The school did not have well-established, effective processes to monitor and evaluate the quality of learning and teaching or students' academic performance. In the past, the school had used external assessments to benchmark standards but the results from these assessments were not used consistently across the school to improve student outcomes.

Partnerships with parents and the community

Weak ↓




- The acting principal was accessible to and listened to parents' views. Staff did not organize sufficient events and workshops to explain how the school teaches their children. Parents were willing to support the school to further their children's learning.
- The school used a wide range of ways to communicate to parents. They were kept well informed about their children's education and school events.
- The school provided termly reports to parents on their children's progress. They contained marks on student's academic performance and averages over the year. However, they did not have any information on students' next steps. Apart from the reports on children in the kindergarten, there was no information in other report cards on students' personal and social development. Information on students' attendance was not provided.
- The school had not yet developed links with local businesses or organizations. Other schools in Dubai could provide opportunities for staff to share good practice and for students to play competitive sports.

Governance	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school did not yet have appropriate representation of its stakeholders on a governing board. The owners had plans to establish advisory boards of staff, students and parents. Governors had a detailed knowledge of the school and the UAE national priorities. Governors received weekly reports from the acting principal on the progress the school was making since the audits were carried out in the last two months. The governors exerted a strong influence on the school. They provided a strategic vision for the school's development and showed a strong commitment to its improvement. 	

Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Weak ↓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school was not well organized but operated adequately on a day to day basis. Both kindergarten and elementary classes were taught by too many different teachers. The school was staffed with teachers with university degrees in a range of subjects. Only ten percent of whom had a teaching qualification and none had SEND qualifications. As a result of turnover and expansion, almost half of the teachers were new to the school this session. Many teachers had an inadequate grasp of the English language. Some Islamic education and Arabic teachers had not yet been approved by KHDA. The premises provided a very basic learning environment. The school had specialist facilities for art, information technology, science and physical education. The school's audit identified many building issues which required maintenance. The majority of classrooms in the middle and high school were bleak. Staff did not use display spaces well. The upper floors of the building were not accessible to students who could not use the stairs. The kindergarten was satisfactorily resourced. Other classrooms had an adequate quantity and basic range of resources. There were no interactive whiteboards, portable laptop computers or tablets for student use. Students only had access to computers in the library and specialist rooms. The supply of books in the library was limited. 	

The views of the parents, teachers and students

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

Responses to the surveys		
Responses received	Number	
Parents* 	2015-2016	75
	2014-2015	47
Teachers 	63	
Students 	7	

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

- A large majority of teachers and very few parents and students responded to the survey.
- Most of the parents and teachers who responded to the surveys were satisfied with the education provided by the school.
- Almost all parents thought that their child was making good progress in Islamic Education; most thought that their child was making good progress in English and mathematics; and a large majority thought that their child was making good progress in Arabic and science.
- The majority of teachers felt that students did not behave well.
- Most teachers and parents thought that the school dealt well with bullying.
- Most teachers thought that the school listened to parents and acted on their views.
- A large majority of teachers and parents thought 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