

Inspection Report



Japanese School in Dubai

2014-2015



إكسبو 2020
دبي، الإمارات العربية المتحدة
DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

www.khda.gov.ae



CONTENTS

School Information	2
Parents' Report	3
School Inspection Report	9
Overall school judgement	10
Key strengths	10
Changes since the last inspection.....	10
Recommendations.....	10
How good are the students' attainment, progress and learning?.....	11
How good is the students' personal and social development?	13
How good are teaching and assessment?.....	14
How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?.....	14
How well does the school protect and support students?	15
How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?	16
How good are the leadership and management of the school?	17
What are the views of the Principal, parents, teachers and students?.....	19
What happens next?.....	20
How to contact us.....	20

School information



General information

Location	Al Wasl
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	1977
Website	www.japanese.sch.ae
Telephone	04-3449119
Address	P.O Box 7149, Dubai
Principal	Mr. Osamu Okamura
Language of instruction	Japanese
Inspection dates	8 th – 10 th December 2014



Students

Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age range	6 - 15
Grades or year groups	Grade 1 – Grade 9
Number of students on roll	129
Number of children in Pre-K	N/A
Number of Emirati students	0
Number of students with SEN	2
Largest nationality group of students	Japanese



Teachers / Support staff

Number of teachers	23
Largest nationality group of teachers	Japanese
Number of teacher assistants	3
Teacher-student ratio	1:6
Number of guidance counsellors	1
Teacher turnover	2%



Curriculum

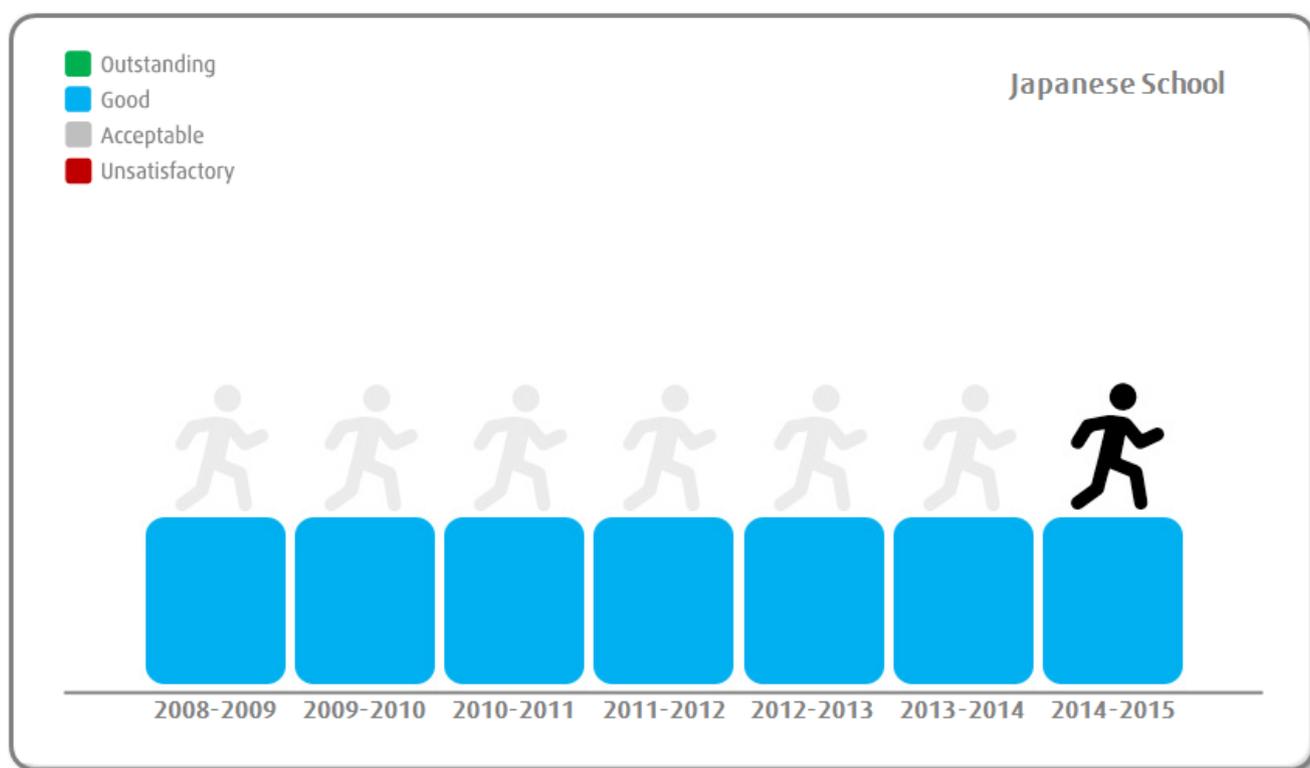
Educational Permit	Japanese
Main Curriculum / Other	Japanese
Standardised tests / board exams	Japanese Ministry of Education
Accreditation	N/A



Dear Parents,

Japanese School was inspected by DSIB from 8th – 10th December 2014, and 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 aspects of the school's performance and standards. Inspectors looked at children's attainment and progress in five key subjects, their learning skills as well as their personal and social development. They judged how effective teaching was across the school. Inspectors considered how well the school's curriculum, including activities inside and outside the classroom, 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 a range of evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observing children learning in lessons, looking at their work, talking with children, meetings with staff, parents and governors, and reviewing the parents' and teachers' surveys.

The key strengths and areas for improvement to be made by the school leaders, governors and owners are:

Strengths

- The outstanding levels of attainment and progress in the school's language of instruction, Japanese, had been sustained.
- Students' attainment and progress in science in each phase of the school and in mathematics in the high school were outstanding.
- The attitudes and behaviour of students across the school were outstanding.
- There was a supportive family ethos with strong relationships between all staff and students, between parents, the school and the broader community.
- The commitment of school leaders and staff provided ensured good quality teaching for most students.

Areas for improvement

- Improve provision for students with special educational needs by:
 - appointing qualified personnel
 - improving systems for the identification of students
 - providing targeted support to enable students to make good progress in all lessons.
- The governors must ensure that the school is fully compliant with the Ministry of Education regulations for Islamic Education and Arabic.
- Develop systems for self-evaluation and enhance school improvement plans by introducing timescales and success criteria for action.
- Ensure all health and safety arrangements in the school, especially safety in the science laboratory, meet the highest standards.

We warmly encourage you to read the full school inspection report.

The school is required to submit to DSIB an action plan identifying the steps they will take to address the areas for improvement. We have advised your school leaders to share this with you.

We trust that the information provided will help you understand, and encourages you to support, your child's school.

Yours sincerely,

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau
Knowledge and Human Development Authority

A closer look at Japanese School



How well does the school perform overall?

Overall, the Japanese School provided a **Good** quality of education for its students.

- Students' attainment and progress in Japanese, English, mathematics and science were good or better. They were weaker in Arabic as an additional language as the school had yet to provide and comply with appropriate time allocation in this subject. Students were enthusiastic about their learning and responsive to challenges set by their teachers. Almost all students collaborated well when working in groups, and could effectively apply their knowledge to real-life experiences. Critical thinking skills were developing across the school, but the use of technology to support learning was at an early stage of implementation.
- Most students demonstrated outstanding learning attitudes and behaviour. Supported by strong relationships with local and private international schools, students had developed an understanding of Islamic values, appreciated the culture of the UAE and demonstrated significant awareness of their own and other world cultures.
- Teaching was good across the school and most teachers demonstrated secure levels of subject knowledge. Teaching methods routinely and effectively promoted the interest and learning of students. Assessment strategies were robust, enabling students to make good progress towards their learning targets. The regular use of Japan's Ministry of Education tests, marked and moderated externally, provided the school with an effective and reliable comparison of school performance against that of other public schools in Japan.
- The school had put in place systems and services to protect students' physical and emotional well-being while they were on the school premises and when travelling to and from school. Excellent relationships permeated the school, and students and their parents felt secure as a result of the quality of support and guidance that were offered.
- The recent appointments of the Principal, Chairman of the Governing Body and Parent Teachers Association, as well as senior leaders in the school, demonstrated how committed the school was to improving itself. Leaders monitored students' progress and provided teachers with effective professional development. Self-evaluation was mostly accurate but required further analysis. Improvement plans were in place and addressed key features of development although they lacked specific timeframes and success criteria. Links with parents and the community were highly effective. They demonstrated a positive impact on both the personal and academic development of the students.

How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?



- The progress of students with special educational needs was unsatisfactory because it was too variable across classes and in different subjects.
- Although, school leaders welcomed students with special educational needs into the school, the management of the support for these students was unsatisfactory. This was due to lack of expertise, although a training programme was in progress.
- The KHDA criteria for identifying the full range of special educational needs was not yet understood or adhered to. Modifications of the curriculum were not fully in place to provide satisfactorily for students with special educational needs.

1. How good are the students' attainment, progress and learning skills?

		Elementary	High
 Islamic Education	Attainment	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
	Progress	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
 Arabic as a First Language	Attainment	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
	Progress	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
 Arabic as an Additional Language	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable
Language of instruction	Attainment	Outstanding	Outstanding
	Progress	Outstanding	Outstanding
 English	Attainment	Good	Good
	Progress	Good	Good
 Mathematics	Attainment	Good	Outstanding ↑
	Progress	Good	Outstanding ↑
 Science	Attainment	Outstanding ↑	Outstanding ↑
	Progress	Outstanding	Outstanding
		Elementary	High
Learning skills		Good	Good

↑ Improved from last inspection

↓ Declined from last inspection

2. How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Elementary	High
Personal responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Good

3. How good are teaching and assessment?

	Elementary	High
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good
Assessment	Good	Good

4. How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?

	Elementary	High
Curriculum quality	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Acceptable	Acceptable ↑

5. How well does the school protect and support students?

	Elementary	High
Health and safety	Good ↓	Good ↓
Quality of support	Good	Good

6. How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

Overall school judgement

Good

Key strengths

- The outstanding levels of attainment and progress in Japanese had been sustained.
- The outstanding attainment and progress in science across the school and in mathematics in the high school.
- The attitudes and behaviour of students across the school were outstanding.
- There was a supportive family ethos with strong relationships between all staff and students, between parents and the school, and with the broader community.
- The commitment of school leaders and staff to providing good quality teaching for all students.

Changes since the last inspection

- Attainment and progress of students in science across the school and in mathematics in the high school had improved.
- Recent appointments of a new Principal and the Chair of Governors and Parent Teachers Association supported the development of this highly engaged learning community.
- Enhanced parental support and communication built positive dialogue between home and school, and supported the learning experiences of students.

Recommendations

- Improve the provision for students with special educational needs by:
 - appointing qualified personnel
 - improving systems for the identification of students
 - providing targeted support to enable students to make good progress in all lessons.
- The governors must ensure that the school is fully compliant with the Ministry of Education regulations for Islamic Education and Arabic.
- Develop systems for self-evaluation and enhance school improvement plans by introducing timescales and success criteria for action.
- Ensure all health and safety arrangements in the school, especially safety in the science laboratory, meet the highest standards.

 Improved from last inspection

 Declined from last inspection

1. How good are the students' attainment, progress and learning skills?

Elementary		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic Education	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as a First Language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as an Additional Language	Acceptable	Acceptable 
Language of instruction	Outstanding	Outstanding
English	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science	Outstanding 	Outstanding

- In Arabic as an additional language, the majority of students were able to understand and respond to simple single statements of previously studied words. Although most students were able to decode words that included familiar letters, writing skills were the least developed.
- In Japanese, most students in the early phase of elementary acquired outstanding levels of attainment in reading and writing. Skillful speaking and writing activities ensured that they achieved rapid progress. In upper elementary, challenge through enquiry ensured that most students attained high technical competency as well as exposure to complex issues to articulate their thoughts.
- In English, speaking and listening skills were well developed for the majority of students. Reading levels were improving and students were developing a secure grasp of basic grammar which they were able to apply with proficiency into their writing.
- In mathematics, students had secure knowledge of number and used correct mathematical vocabulary to describe the properties of geometrical shapes. Skills of calculation were a strength.
- In science, most students attained high standards which were above national and international benchmarks. A wide range of scientific knowledge was acquired through additional environmental studies lessons and which developed further understanding of key areas such as the study of plants, insects, the water cycle, reproduction and electricity.

High		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic Education	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as a First Language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as an Additional Language	Acceptable	Acceptable
Language of instruction	Outstanding	Outstanding
English	Good	Good
Mathematics	Outstanding 	Outstanding 
Science	Outstanding 	Outstanding

- In Arabic as an additional language, most students' listening skills were acceptable. Students could comprehend and speak using basic, familiar vocabulary. Most were able to decode words and read previously learned text. However, skills in reading comprehension and writing remained weak. Progress was less rapid in these areas for all students.
- Almost all students in Japanese achieved high standards of attainment and progress in each language skill. The school's initiative to develop essay-writing and more advanced grammatical competency, had advanced students' writing skills to an even higher level. For instance, students' poetry writing (Tanka) had won national prizes from a major Japanese newspaper. The ability to write sophisticated extended writing together with their ability to construct articulate arguments in debate secured acceptance to eminent high schools not only in Japan but in other parts of the world for students in the school.
- In English, speaking and listening skills were developed well and were a strength for the majority of students. Reading levels continued to improve as did the skill of textual interpretation, despite the limited range of reading resources available. A secure grasp of basic grammar was applied well in students' structured written work. Creative and imaginative writing was the least developed type of writing.
- In mathematics, students were confident in applying their knowledge to deduce, use formulae and solve complex geometrical problems. Excellent progress was achieved and high standards attained with the application of mathematics to real-life situations.
- Students achieved high standards across junior high in all aspects of science. Most students had outstanding scientific knowledge which they were able to apply with confidence to research, practical investigations, discussions and presentations.

	Elementary	High
Learning skills	Good	Good

- The majority of students were engaged in and enjoyed taking responsibility for their learning. They were occupied in tasks, eager for the next steps and confident of what they needed to achieve to improve further.
- When allowed to do so, students worked well together but this was not a consistent feature across all subject areas.
- Almost all students were able to link their learning to real-life situations. There were significant strengths in Japanese, mathematics and social studies.
- For most students, the skills of critical thinking and the use of technology were underdeveloped.

2. How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Elementary	High
Personal responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students' attitudes were outstanding as they were consistently well engaged and focused on their own learning. High levels of self-discipline were characteristics of almost all students in the school, as observed in the classrooms, corridors and playgrounds. Students were always respectful and courteous with each other, their teachers and to visitors in the school. Supported by school initiatives and activities, students actively sought to adopt healthy lifestyles. Most students were punctual in arriving to lessons and school attendance was good. 		

	Elementary	High
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures was secure across all phases of the school. Students showed high appreciation of Emirati culture, celebrations, heritage and traditions. The majority of students demonstrated a strong awareness of their own culture and other cultures from around the world and were able to make connections and comparisons between them. Students' understanding of how Islamic values impact on the modern society in Dubai, however, was still developing. 		

	Elementary	High
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almost all students understood their responsibilities well, participated actively in a range of school activities and often took the lead in projects. The involvement of all students within the vertical committee groups, enabled them to assume responsibility for health lifestyles and school cleanliness. Students made full use of what they had learned during their visits to public and private schools in Dubai. Students demonstrated a positive work ethic, honesty and integrity. For instance, their responses at various levels and within various media, to a recent whole-school focus on issues of human rights were outstanding. All students demonstrated awareness of the main environmental issues faced by the world, such as global warming. All students took part in recycling. Older students were able to comment about on how these issues were affecting Japan as well as the UAE. 		

3. How good are teaching and assessment?

	Elementary	High
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most teachers demonstrated secure subject knowledge of their subjects, and, adapted their teaching to make the content of their lessons meaningful and to meet the needs of most but not all groups of students. Lesson planning was used effectively in most key subjects. It was particularly effective in Japanese but less so in Arabic. Most resources, with the exception of technology, were used efficiently to enhance students' learning. Teacher-student relationships were a special feature of the small classes in the school. Interactions were strong and purposeful with discussions brisk and meaningful. Most teachers had high expectations and set a good pace for learning. However, tasks were not always adapted to meet the needs of students with special educational needs. Teachers in many, but not all, classes promoted critical thinking skills and independent learning. This was a particularly strong feature in Japanese and science teaching. 		

	Elementary	High
Assessment	Good	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal and external assessment systems and processes were in place and sufficiently developed. Valid and reliable data linked to the school's curriculum was available to teachers and many used the information to address students' needs and aptitudes. Japanese national standardised tests, administered on a regular basis, provided national and external benchmarks which were used systematically to monitor and compare students in the school to those in public schools in Japan. Results were analysed and adjustments made to inform a more targeted approach towards teaching and learning. The school encouraged each student to complete self-assessment surveys in all lessons about their performance. These results, shared with teachers, enabled them to have a good understanding of most students' overall well-being, as well as address concerns as they were raised. 		

4. How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?

	Elementary	High
Curriculum quality	Acceptable 	Acceptable 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The curriculum followed the requirements of the Japanese Ministry of Education. It was enhanced by extra lessons in English in the primary grades, as well as additional 'Immersion Classes' in which art and music were taught in English to provide further opportunities for conversational English. Students also studied Arabic as an additional language but provision did not meet the stipulated time as prescribed by the Ministry of Education. The school was not compliant with the Ministry of Education requirements with regard to the teaching and curriculum of Islamic Education. 		

- Planning of the curriculum ensured continuity and progression in almost all subjects. As a result, most students were successfully prepared for the next stages of their education, including transferring to schools in Japan and other international Japanese Schools.
- Enrichment through music and drama festivals, exchange programmes with local schools for all grades every term and numerous field trips in Dubai, UAE and the broader Gulf region, such as Doha and Oman, was a key feature of provision.
- There were developing opportunities for students to link subjects across the curriculum. This was particularly strong in Japanese and science.

	Elementary	High
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Acceptable	Acceptable 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although the planning and review of the curriculum were carried out annually, insufficient opportunities were built in to address the needs of students with special educational needs. Ability groupings in English and Arabic helped to meet students' needs in these subjects as well as develop their knowledge, understanding and skills. • Lower attaining students continued to access the curriculum through small classes and additional support from teachers. However, adjustments for students with special educational needs was yet to be successfully implemented across the school. • The range of curriculum subjects provided suitable opportunities for students to follow their aspirations. • Extra-curricular activities supported some, but not all, students' learning and personal development. The programme included team and competitive sport and trips and visits, but there was a lack of creative and performing arts for students as additional enrichment. 		

5. How well does the school protect and support students?

	Elementary	High
Health and safety	Good 	Good 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school operated an effective and safe recruitment policy. However, staff understanding of child protection procedures was inconsistent. Additionally, students' awareness of the dangers of the internet was under-developed. • The school provided a hygienic and safe environment. Security was outstanding and the supervision of students around the school and at the beginning and end of the day was excellent. • Procedures in the clinic were thorough, and records and medicines were locked away when unsupervised. However, the chemicals stored in the science laboratory were not secured to ensure appropriate safety standards. • Although, the school premises were well maintained, some parts required improvements such as hygiene and access for physically disabled personnel. • Healthy lifestyles were promoted and supported by many aspects of the curriculum and school routines. 		

	Elementary	High
Quality of support	Good	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of relationships was outstanding. The school's family-like atmosphere and small classes ensured that teachers knew their students well. Regular discussions regarding individual students promoted a very good understanding of each student. • There were secure systems to promote good attendance and punctuality. Parents recognised the importance of their children maintaining a high level of attendance. • Students with special educational needs were welcomed into the school but the full range of KHDA categories was not used to identify students' needs. Therefore, the identification of students with special educational needs was unsatisfactory. • Although, some tasks were adapted to meet the needs of students with special educational needs, they could not always complete them. • The school had effective personal support for the well-being of students including those with special educational needs. As such, most students were well prepared by the school for entry to high schools not only in Japan but in countries around the world. 		

How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?

	Overall
The overall effectiveness of provision for students with special educational needs	Unsatisfactory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school had a limited understanding of special educational needs and therefore the management of its provision was unsatisfactory. However, the school was in the process of developing staff expertise. • There was no clear policy for identifying the full range of special educational needs that students might have. • The curriculum was not routinely modified to provide for students with special educational needs. • The partnership with parents was good and the teachers communicated daily, orally and in writing, with parents of children who had been identified as having special educational needs. • The progress of students with special educational needs was variable. 	

6. How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	Overall
The effectiveness of leadership	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new Principal and his senior leaders had set a clear vision for the school which was shared by the governing board, staff and parents. Leaders had worked hard to ensure all members of the school community complied with the guidelines from the Japanese Ministry of Education. The leadership structure included leaders of all subjects. Within these departments, leaders had a variety of experience and understanding in relation to raising standards in teaching and learning. Strengths in the leadership of Japanese, English, mathematics and science were not as evident in the leadership of Arabic. School leaders demonstrated a good capacity to improve. The three-yearly rotation of school leaders continued to interrupt the continuing process of school improvement. 	
	Overall
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior leaders, governors and parents were aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. High quality analysis of academic data provided valuable evidence to support improvement planning as well as sustaining good teaching and high examination results. Evidence for self-evaluation was gathered from a range of sources including parent and staff reviews. The systematic process for identifying all key areas for improvement was still a weak feature. As a result, the self-evaluation document lacked effective analysis in aspects other than academic results. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning with constructive feedback from leaders and students impacted positively on learning and professional development needs. The school had focused on the recommendations from the previous report, although not all areas had been sufficiently addressed. The school's action and improvement plans did not contain sufficient information with identified steps and timescale which allowed for a clear and incisive overview of progress. 	
	Overall
Parents and the community	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links with parents and the community were outstanding. Parents were highly supportive of the school and leaders. They played a crucial part in the personal and academic development of their children. A parents group met formally on a regular basis and frequently visited the school to help with after-school activities, field trips, the daily reading programme and the library. The school sought parental views through large-scale surveys and responded positively to their concerns and opinions. Reporting on students' progress was regular and included specific outcomes, self-evaluation from students and targets for improvement. Extensive partnerships with local and private schools, the Japanese and local community played a significant part in the life of all students in the school. 	

	Overall
Governance	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The board of governors worked in close co-operation with senior managers and provided support and direction for the school. The board had broadened its representation by including members with relevant expertise, as well as parents. Regular board meetings and prompt responses to the views of all stakeholders of the school helped to support school leaders in their journey of change. Despite being well informed about the quality of provision by the senior leadership team, the board had not ensured that the school complied fully with the recommendations of the previous report, including improving provision for students with special educational needs and in meeting the time requirements for Arabic and compliance for Islamic Education. 	

	Overall
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school had effective procedures to make sure the school ran smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Staff understood their roles clearly. Staff and students were well inducted into school routines. Most teachers were well qualified for their roles. This was not fully the case in the teaching of Arabic. School buildings were safe and secure, well maintained and used to the best advantage. However, access was limited for those with a mobility issue. The school had invested in resources including technology but had not provided enough training for staff to maximise the potential for improving learning. Additionally, the school library was limited in the range of reading materials. 	

What are the views of the Principal, parents, teachers and students?

Before the inspection, the views of the Principal, 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		Percentage
 Parents*	This year	80	82%
	Last year	73	84%
 Teachers	16		80%
 Students	There are no upper secondary-aged students in the school		

- Most parents and teachers responded to the survey.
- Overall, all stakeholders who completed the surveys reported high levels of satisfaction with the work of the school.
- Almost all parents and all teachers were satisfied with the education provided at the school. Almost all teachers stated that they were given sufficient time to prepare and mark students' work.
- Nearly all parents reported that their children enjoyed school, were safe inside school and on the school buses. They felt that children had good opportunities to become aware of other cultures, as well as learn about the community and environment in Dubai.
- Almost all parents were satisfied that their children made good progress in key subjects. The majority disagreed particularly about progress in Arabic. Almost all parents considered that their children made good progress with the development of their learning skills and that the quality of teaching and teacher assessment supported their development further.
- Nearly all parents stated that the school was well led, and that their concerns were listened to and acted upon quickly by the school leadership.
- A minority of parents expressed their concerns about the need for greater support and guidance with regard to cyber safety for their children. A few noted that more exposure to technology was needed to enhance learning, especially for the older students in the school.
- Although most parents agreed that the school provided a good range of subjects which prepared their children for their return to academic study in Japan, a minority disagreed with the range of ECA the school offered.

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

What happens next?

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

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

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

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

How to contact us

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