



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational
needs and disabilities



Innovation

Inspection Report 2015-2016

Uptown School

Curriculum: IB

Overall rating: Good

Read more about the school



www.khda.gov.ae

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



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

Contents

School information.....	2
Summary for parents and the community	3
Main inspection report	10
1. Students' achievement	11
2. Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills	15
3. Teaching and assessment	17
4. Curriculum	18
5. The protection, care, guidance and support of students	19
Provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).....	21
6. Leadership and management.....	22
The views of the parents, teachers and students	25

School information

General information



Location	Mirdif
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2012
Website	www.uptownschool.ae
Telephone	04-2515001
Address	Mirdif, Tripoli street, 788181, Dubai
Principal	Christopher Bromham
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	14 to 17 March 2016

Students



Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	3-17
Grades or year groups	Kindergarten 1 to Grade 11
Number of students on roll	1,427
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	40
Number of Emirati students	286
Number of students with SEND	83
Largest nationality group of students	Emirati

Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	107
Largest nationality group of teachers	British
Number of teaching assistants	37
Teacher-student ratio	1:13
Number of guidance counsellors	2
Teacher turnover	34%

Curriculum



Educational permit / Licence	IB
Main curriculum	IB 0
External tests and examinations	IBT, CAT 4
Accreditation	None
National Agenda benchmark tests	IBT

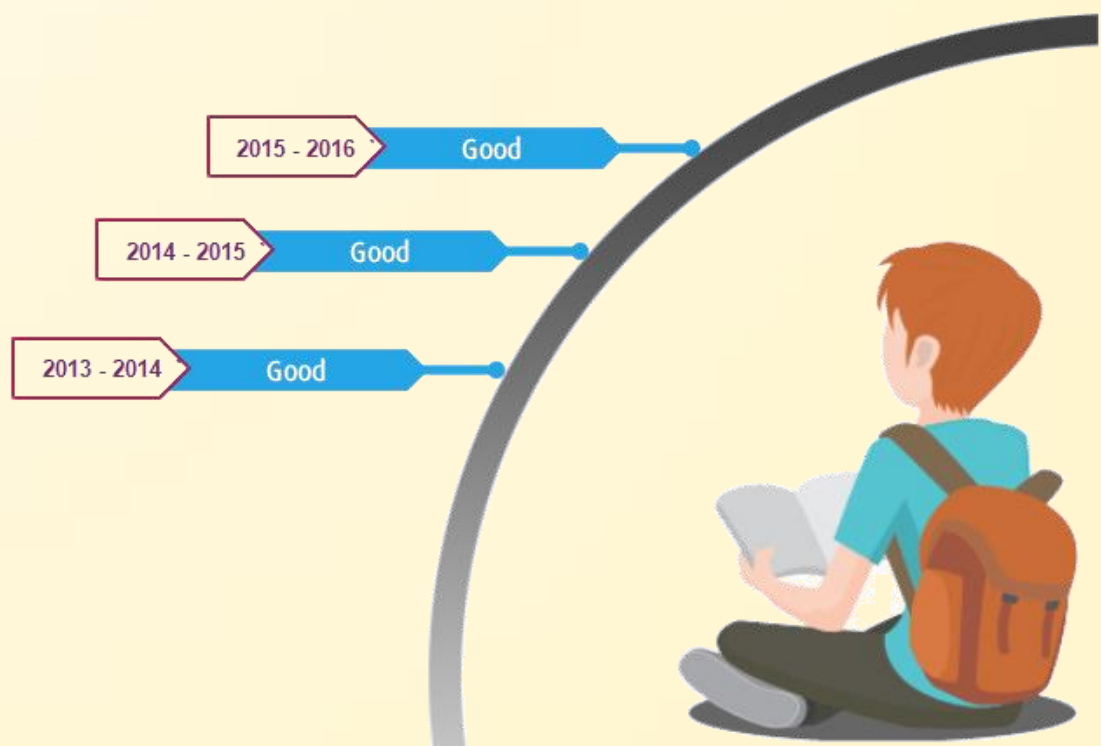


Summary for parents and the community

Uptown School was inspected by DSIB from 14 to 17 March 2016. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **good**.

In order to judge the overall quality of education provided by the school, inspectors considered six key standards of performance. Inspectors looked at children's attainment and progress in key subjects, their learning skills and their personal and social development. They judged how effective teaching and the assessment of learning were across the school. Inspectors considered how well the school's curriculum, including activities inside and outside classrooms, met the educational needs of all children. They judged how well the school protected and supported children. In addition inspectors judged the effectiveness of leadership and governance, including management, staffing, facilities and resources.

The inspection judgements were drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observing children learning in lessons, looking at their work, talking with children, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and reviewing the parents', teachers' and senior students' surveys.





How well did the school perform overall?

Overall, **Uptown School provided a good** quality of education for its students.

- Attainment and progress varied from acceptable to very good across the phases and subjects. The learning skills were very good in most phases.
- Students' personal development, their social responsibility and their innovation skills were outstanding.
- Teaching was generally good. Progress was variable in Arabic as a first language in the Diploma Programme (DP) and in mathematics in the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and DP. This was due to inconsistency in the quality of teaching and in the use of assessment. There was a lack of challenge for some students.
- The curriculum design and implementation were outstanding across most phases, and curriculum adaptation was outstanding in all phases.
- The arrangements for health and safety were outstanding, as well as the quality of care and support.
- The school was very well led and the principal and governors had, in most respects, a clear view of the school's strengths and what needed to be done to further improve performance.



What did the school do well?

- Most students made good or better progress in most subjects particularly in the Primary Years Programme (PYP).
- Students were enthusiastic about learning. Their behaviour was excellent, their attendance was very good and they showed care, kindness and compassion to others.
- Students demonstrated strong leadership skills and cared very much for their community and the environment.
- The curriculum was outstanding as were the arrangements for students' health and safety.
- The care, guidance and support for all students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and gifts and talents, had a very positive impact on their personal development.
- The new principal had a clear vision for the school and, with the support of other senior leaders, was increasingly effective in bringing about improvements.
- There was a positive and productive partnership with parents and the community.
- The governing board had provided state-of-the-art facilities and resources to enhance learning.



What does the school need to do next?

- Increase the rate of progress in all subjects in all phases by ensuring greater consistency in the quality of teaching in line with International Baccalaureate (IB) principles.
- Improve the use of assessment to inform planning and improve teaching.
- Develop the skills of middle leaders in holding teachers to account for students' achievement.
- Ensure school self-evaluation accurately reflects the school's performance in all respects.



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

- Students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) made very good progress in their individual personal and academic goals and good progress in their class work. Their progress was very carefully monitored.
- The school kept all parents fully informed of their children's progress and well-being. Consequently, parents had a very good understanding of the provision for their children, their personal and academic goals, and their next steps in learning.
- Parents had excellent formal and informal communications with the school during face-to-face meetings and through regular e-mails and other updates.
- Parents were fully involved in all aspects of the identification of their children's needs and in planning for the best support that could be provided. They were central to the construction of individual education plans for their children and participated in regular reviews of those plans.
- Parents greatly valued the personalisation of the support given to their children and the dedication of the school staff towards meeting needs. They felt that the caring ethos of the staff towards both students and families was also reflected in the inclusive attitudes of other students. They considered their children to be nurtured, popular and happy in school.

National Agenda Parameter



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

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

Main points:

- The school did not fully meet the registration requirements of the National Agenda Parameter.
- The attainment data was not sufficient to make a full judgement on the progress towards meeting National Agenda targets.
- The school promoted knowledge and understanding of the National Agenda to its community using a range of means. Students, senior leaders and governors had good levels of awareness. Parents and some teachers were less well informed.
- The school aligned its curriculum well to TIMSS and PISA data.
- Teachers' strategies to develop critical thinking were good overall but of variable quality and effectiveness. For example, they were consistently very good in English and in mathematics in the PYP and acceptable in mathematics in the MYP.
- Students made very good use of resources to support their research skills especially in English.

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 were committed to the national innovation agenda, and innovative practices and approaches were implicitly embedded within the school's strategic plan. They had begun to explore, together with the wider school community, what innovation meant to the school and how it could be implemented further into the curriculum. Staff received targeted professional development on developing inquiry skills and critical thinking in lessons. The school made some innovative use of spaces and furniture, and was very well resourced to support learning through inquiry. The curriculum provided a number of innovative opportunities for students to develop their inquiry, investigative and presentation skills.

Overall school performance

Good

1. Students' achievement

		kindergarten	PYP	MYP	DP
Islamic education 	Attainment	Not applicable	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good	Good	Good
Arabic as a first language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good	Good	Acceptable
Arabic as an additional language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Good	Acceptable	Not applicable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good	Good ↑	Not applicable
English 	Attainment	Good	Very good ↑	Good	Good
	Progress	Good	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good
Mathematics 	Attainment	Good	Very good ↑	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Very good ↑	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable
Science 	Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good

	kindergarten	PYP	MYP	DP
Learning skills	Very good ↓	Very good ↑	Good	Very good

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

	kindergarten	PYP	MYP	DP
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

3. Teaching and assessment

	kindergarten	PYP	MYP	DP
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good	Good
Assessment	Good	Good	Good	Good

4. Curriculum

	kindergarten	PYP	MYP	DP
Curriculum design and implementation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Very good ↓	Outstanding
Curriculum adaptation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

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

	kindergarten	PYP	MYP	DP
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Care and support	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding ↑	Outstanding

6. Leadership and management

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



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

Kindergarten

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




- A large majority of children were learning English as an additional language. From varied starting points most children made good progress against expected standards. They listened carefully, spoke with growing confidence and most could answer questions in whole sentences. Phonics skills were developing steadily and children had an expanding vocabulary. The majority could read and write simple three letter words and short sentences. Most groups of children made good progress in their lessons and over time.
- Higher achieving children did not routinely make the progress that they could.
- In mathematics the majority of children made good progress and exceeded the expected curriculum standards. Most could add two numbers within ten. They were developing an appropriate range of mathematical vocabulary and starting to use a range of basic symbols with growing confidence. They explored the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes and learned about various measures. Progress was no better than good because children were limited in their skills of gathering, recording and reading data, in solving problems and applying their learning to everyday situations. Different groups made similarly good progress.
- In science, the majority of children attained levels above those expected for their age. They made good progress in developing their scientific skills alongside factual knowledge. They developed their scientific vocabulary and understanding, for example in floating and sinking when they tested various objects in water. They explored the effectiveness of various kitchen implements in mashing bananas and squeezing lemons. Opportunities for children to investigate, solve problems and find out for themselves were underdeveloped, which restricted the progress of different groups.

PYP		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Good	Good
Arabic as a first language	Good	Good
Arabic as an additional language	Good	Good
English	Very good ↑	Very good ↑
Mathematics	Very good ↑	Very good ↑
Science	Good	Good

- Most students studying Islamic education made good progress in developing their understanding of the key principles of Islam. They attained generally above the national curriculum expectations. They developed their knowledge of the forms of worship in Islam, for example about pilgrimage. They steadily improved their memorisation of short Surahs of the Holy Qur'an and their knowledge of the main facts about the Prophet (PBUH). Internal school assessments reflected the good progress made by most students in relation to their starting points. No external assessments were available.
- In Arabic as a first language, attainment was above the national curriculum expectations. Most students could read and comprehend age-appropriate texts and had a good knowledge of grammar. Speaking skills were underdeveloped, writing skills were better. For example in Grade 2, students wrote a one-paragraph story describing four pictures. Grade 5 students used critical thinking skills to write short stories. Over time students demonstrated good progress in the amount of text written despite some spelling mistakes. Good progress was made by different groups of students.
- In Arabic as an additional language, the majority of students demonstrated a good level of age-appropriate language skills. They read texts aloud and confidently answered questions about themselves, their family and school. Grade 4 students used verbs and singular pronouns to produce a short paragraph of complex sentences with subordinate clauses. Hand-writing was usually legible and spelling was mostly accurate. In lessons and over time, the majority of students made good progress in speaking and writing about familiar topics using familiar vocabulary and structures. However, their ability to hold a conversation was limited.
- In English, most students achieved high standards against international benchmarks and made very good progress. They used the language and literacy skills they had developed in different settings and subjects. They drew upon their diverse knowledge of vocabulary to make their writing more interesting. Many introduced metaphors and descriptions of sound and scenes for dramatic effect. By Grade 5, they demonstrated these skills in the extended and sustained writing of short 'novels'. They brought together their breadth of skills in language, art and mathematics to produce well-structured and attractively illustrated stories.
- In mathematics, a large majority of students exceeded international curriculum standards in external tests.
- They made very good progress compared to their starting points. They applied their knowledge, skills and understanding of numeracy to solve word problems. The majority chose from a wide range of strategies, justifying their choices sensibly. They were able to evaluate and analyse data which supported the development of their critical thinking skills. Geometry were still not quite as strong as numeracy. Different groups made similar progress.

- A strong theme of the environment ran through PYP science and the majority of students attained above international curriculum benchmarks. They made good progress in lessons and over time. Students enjoyed learning about recycling, air pollution, food webs and ecosystems. They regularly demonstrated their ability to think critically about science linked to the real-world. They developed their understanding of scientific methods through hands on activities. They could predict, make observations and then draw conclusions. Students demonstrated their learning in innovative ways during the science fair. Progress was similar for different groups.

MYP

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

- In Islamic education, most students made significant progress in developing their understanding of a range of Islamic rulings. They made good use of their critical thinking skills to improve their understanding of the relevance of these rulings in modern society. They improved their memorisation of Surahs from the Holy Qur'an and were beginning to improve their understanding of their meaning. The application of recitation rules was, however limited. No external assessments were available.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students made good progress in understanding the general meaning of complex texts, through reading and discussion. Their use of contextual cues when reading unfamiliar words was less well developed. Communication was limited as they relied too heavily on colloquial Arabic to express themselves orally. Students' writings were short and contained inaccurate use of connectors and punctuation. Attainment was broadly in line with expectations.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students could read and understand short Arabic texts. They wrote short paragraphs, for example, to compare two sports and to invite a friend to dinner. They wrote short journal entries about a friend's visit to Dubai containing some spelling and grammatical errors. Students' skills in conversation and communication were underdeveloped. Progress in lessons was variable, but over time it was good in comparison to students' starting point. Different groups of students made similar progress.
- In English, students performed well against international standards in listening, speaking and reading skills. They applied their literacy skills across all aspects of learning. Most students demonstrated the depth of their questioning to support discussion, dialogue and debate. They analysed texts effectively. For example, Grade 8 students studied poetry and identified how writers used their craft for effect. Grade 7 students showed how well they had progressed in their writing by using metaphor and imagery to convey and enhance their descriptions of their experiences of travelling. Progress was very good across the different groups of students.
- In mathematics, the school's internal tracking system and the results of external international tests showed that attainment was broadly at an expected level against the school's curriculum. Progress in lessons and over time compared to students' starting points was acceptable for most groups. Mathematical concepts were often learned by rote so that understanding was shallow. Consequently

students had difficulty applying their learning to new contexts or to real life problems. Critical thinking was limited and students found it difficult to recognise patterns or formulate hypotheses. Students of higher ability made insufficient progress.

- Most students made better than expected progress in science. Practical work was very much a feature of science classrooms. Students worked collaboratively and systematically to conduct investigations into topics such as chromatography, plant structures and the effects of temperature on matter. They could process and evaluate data and reflect on how science could be used to solve real-world problems. A majority of students communicated their learning at a level above international curriculum standards through media such as essays, projects, discussions and demonstrations.

DP

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

- The few students of Islamic education in DP continued to make progress in their understanding of Islamic values. In particular, they made good progress in developing an understanding of how to link their values to their lives and in different contexts. They had a good understanding of Islamic rulings. They steadily improved their knowledge of the Prophet's (PBUH) Seerah and used their critical thinking skills well to identify the lessons learned from it. Improvement had been made in their memorisation of Surahs from the Holy Qur'an, although their application of Tajweed rules were, at times, inaccurate.
- In Arabic as a first language, a minority of students of advanced level could read extended literary works and present an analysis of the prevailing social norms behind the development of a novel. They produced extended writing with a few grammatical errors, but broadly in line with general expectations. Their progress in lessons and over time was also largely as expected, but the majority of students made too little progress and struggled in reading, speaking and writing.
- In English, attainment was good against international benchmarks and students were making very good progress. Students demonstrated very mature attitudes in their discussions and presentations. They had effective skills in analysing texts and using different sources to support their arguments and when making class presentations. They spoke with confidence and eloquence, and used self-evaluation and reflection to very good effect to improve their work. Most had a strong understanding of writers' use of language for persuasion and emphasis, and how its impact on the target audiences. A few students were still developing more robust and extended skills in written expression. All groups were eager to build their knowledge and worked diligently and collaboratively to continue to do so.
- Attainment was broadly in line with international curriculum benchmarks in mathematics. Basic knowledge, skills and understanding developed at a steady pace and students knew how to apply, for example, the cosine rule, and worked out the response. Deeper understanding was more limited as was their understanding of the usefulness of mathematical concepts in the real world. Students in the higher level group made rapid progress in filling gaps in their mathematical knowledge and understanding. More generally, groups of students made acceptable progress.

- In science, students' attainment was generally in line with international standards. Students made good progress during their lessons and overtime, in their acquisition of knowledge. They were applying their skills to deepen their understanding of scientific concepts. They carried out investigations into topics such as Snell's Law of Refraction, the breakdown of sugars in yeast and the effects of temperature on solubility. Most students used sophisticated practical skills and could write comprehensive responses to their observations. , They applied their critical thinking skills and sound knowledge and understanding to the DP curriculum standards. Different groups made similarly good progress.

	Kindergarten	PYP	MYP	DP
Learning skills	Very good ↓	Very good ↑	Good	Very good

- Students were generally active in their learning. Children in the Kindergarten (KG) were enthusiastic and enjoyed their play activities. Students demonstrated self-reliance and discipline. They regularly worked independently when completing tasks or developing their personal projects. DP students were insightful and very mature in their reflections on their strengths and weaknesses and their ambitions for the future. In a few lessons students were too passive.
- Collaboration was a positive feature in students' learning across PYP, MYP and especially in DP. Students worked very effectively together to a common purpose in completing tasks and challenging each other to improve. In Arabic, at MYP, students' interactions were limited because of their underdeveloped communication skills. In the KG, children had not yet developed collaborative skills, but worked alongside each other to share resources well.
- Students linked learning with real life. In KG, children used their scientific skills to investigate the properties of shapes in mathematics. Students in PYP shared relevant results of their work with other classes. Older students used higher order skills in connecting aspects of their leadership studies on personal and social development. Fewer links were made by students in Islamic education.
- Students had developed inquiry and critical thinking skills. They were engaged participants, taking responsibility for their own learning. Students demonstrated innovative skills during presentations of their novels in Grade 5 and during seminars in Grade 11. Students used learning technologies to research their personal projects. On occasion, particularly in MYP, their research did not link effectively with the expected learning objectives.

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

	Kindergarten	PYP	MYP	DP
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students had a strong sense of personal responsibility and showed independence in their thinking. They were self-motivated, self-reliant, and resilient, thriving on constructive critical feedback. Almost all students demonstrated highly positive attitudes to learning. In most lessons they participated with enthusiasm but this was less so in Islamic education lessons.
- Students' behaviour across the school was excellent. The vast majority of students were self-disciplined in lessons, when moving around school and at times when they were less closely supervised. Almost all were able to make sensible behaviour choices and resolve difficulties in mature

ways. Occasionally, in lessons that were less engaging, a minority of students became restless and their behaviour deteriorated.

- Relationships between students and staff were highly respectful and considerate. Students showed empathy and were sensitive to the needs of others. Across all phases of the school, students were caring and helped each other. This was especially evident with peers supporting students with SEND.
- Students demonstrated an excellent understanding of safe and healthy living. They consistently made wise choices about what to eat. Most students participated in the wide range of physical and sporting activities available to them and understood the importance of keeping themselves safe. For example, children in KG learned about road safety through play and older students were well informed about internet safety.
- Attendance was very good and still improving. Almost all students arrived punctually to school and for lessons throughout the day. Older students had a clear understanding of the impact good attendance had on their achievement.

	Kindergarten	PYP	MYP	DP
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good

- Young children had an excellent age-appropriate understanding of the features of Islamic culture and Emirati traditions in Dubai. In other phases, students had a well-developed understanding and appreciation of how Islam influences life and the community in modern Dubai.
- Most students had a strong knowledge and appreciation of UAE traditions. They gave and explained many examples of the Emirati customs that could still be seen nowadays and talked intelligently about how many of them were linked to Islam and the Arabic culture. Emirati students, in particular, talked with pride about the importance of preserving their Emirati identity in the fast growing Dubai.
- Students understood and appreciated very well the impact of diversity in Dubai and talked about the richness this brought into the lives of its residents. They had a good understanding of how the diversity of population and culture had a positive impact on its present and future. Students' understanding of some world cultures, particularly in MYP, was less strong.

	Kindergarten	PYP	MYP	DP
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students demonstrated active roles and positive attitude towards interacting with people in school and in the wider community outside school. They valued sports activities as venues to socialise and forge new friendships. Students in MYP and DP volunteered to support the local community through Dubai Marathon and the IB Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) programme.
- Students' demonstrated a very strong work ethic. They knew how and where to seek help if they needed it. The IB learner profile developed students to become risk takers, open minded, reflective and caring communicators. Leadership and enterprise skills were well developed as part of DP curriculum.

- Students had an excellent understanding of environmental issues and the action required to care for their community. KG children took part in cleaning and tidying and they recycled cardboard boxes to build robots. Students helped the environment through conservation of water, electricity and recycling. DP students appreciated some of the environmental initiatives in Dubai to reduce pollution, such as public transportation and renewable energy sources.

3. Teaching and assessment

	Kindergarten	PYP	MYP	DP
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Most teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge. In many classes, particularly in KG and PYP, they had a very good understanding of how children and students learn and develop. Across the school, teachers encouraged students' curiosity and helped them to be enquiring individuals. In a few instances, such as mathematics in MYP, some lessons lacked challenge.
- Most lessons were planned purposefully to provide an appropriate balance of curriculum opportunities and build on students' prior learning. Teachers enhanced the learning environment with stimulating resources to support subject and concept knowledge and skills. In KG and in a minority of lessons throughout the school, activities were generally well-matched to the abilities of most groups, but did not consistently challenge the most able.
- Across subjects, interactions between teachers and students were very positive with high teacher expectations. Most teachers asked open questions to help students to think more deeply and as a result, the quality of students' dialogue was very high, especially in English lessons and in the DP. Where questioning was closed, teachers did not allow students enough time to think and respond.
- Most teachers used group work well to develop inquiry and collaboration. They used a range of strategies effectively to provide specific support for students with SEND, those for whom English was an additional language and those who were gifted or talented. Support was provided very sensitively for students to follow personal learning plans, such as studying their first language in preparation for examinations.
- Independent learning, critical thinking and problem solving were common features of most lessons. Examples of particularly skillful teaching were seen in the programme for leadership in the DP, and across lessons in the use of information technologies for research. In a few cases, teacher's restricted students' higher order thinking by not promoting greater analysis and research.
- In Arabic, most teachers used a variety of strategies to enhance learning. These were particularly effective in KG. They included learning technologies to support inquiry skills in most classes. In a few classes, teachers planned more learning outcomes than could be achieved in the lesson and on occasion the pace of lessons was rushed.

	Kindergarten	PYP	MYP	DP
Assessment	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Assessment processes and systems were linked closely to the school's curriculum. Consequently, assessment information generally provided reliable information about students' attainment and progress. In Islamic education this information was not consistent or valid.

- The school analysed students' academic attainment against international benchmarks in English, mathematics and science. This provided a clear overview of the attainment of all students and of specific groups, such as Emirati students.
- Teachers tracked students' work regularly, providing school staff with a realistic view of individual and group progress. However, this was inconsistent across the school.
- In most areas, assessment information was used well to improve teaching and the curriculum. It was particularly strong in English where it was used to sharpen the focus of planning for groups of students. In a minority of lessons, for example in KG, assessment information was not used to ensure that teaching was sufficiently challenging for the most able children.
- Teachers had a good knowledge of the students' strengths and areas for development. This was a particular strength for students with SEND. However, the quality of written and oral guidance to students on how to improve their work was variable.

4. Curriculum

	Kindergarten	PYP	MYP	DP
Curriculum design and implementation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Very good ↓	Outstanding

- The curriculum was underpinned by the International Baccalaureate Organisation's (IBO) Mission Statement and was compatible with the UAE's and school's values. The nature of the curriculum ensured a balance of knowledge, skills and understanding, and promoted innovation and challenge. Exceptions were Islamic education in both DP and MYP, where there was an imbalance between knowledge and skills, and MYP mathematics, which did not align with IBO requirements.
- In each phase, the curriculum was aligned in all subjects to ensure structured progression to meet the needs of students. Each curriculum unit built on the one before and provided a solid base for the one following. Continuity of learning was virtually seamless and DP students were fully prepared for life beyond school.
- The comprehensiveness of the MYP and the DP curricula ensured that students benefitted from a diverse range of learning experiences that nurtured their talents, interests and aspirations.
- Cross-curricular links were a strong feature of all curricula. They were embedded through the transdisciplinary themes in PYP, six global contexts and at least one interdisciplinary unit per year in each year level in MYP. They were also integral to the 'theory of knowledge' in each of the DP subjects.
- Teachers in each phase met monthly, at least, to rigorously review the curriculum and continuously develop it to ensure that the academic and personal development needs of all students were met in full. All teachers were required to reflect at the end of each unit about ways in which it could be improved.
- The school had an extensive programme for social studies across all phases of the school. Aspects of UAE social studies were integrated in the themes for learning. All PYP students received two 40-minute periods per week of UAE social studies. Additionally, elements of UAE history and geography were well integrated within other areas of learning and instruction was offered in English and Arabic. In MYP, five hours of learning about UAE were offered in addition to the integration of elements of history and geography in different subject areas. In DP, learning about UAE was integrated in the subject of geography.

	Kindergarten	PYP	MYP	DP
Curriculum adaptation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The curriculum provided learning experiences which interested and engaged students. Modifications were effective in meeting the needs of students with a range of SEND, those for whom English was not their first language and for children beginning to learn Arabic in the KG. Teachers' lesson plans met the needs of most groups of students and collaborative planning supported this. However, challenge for higher ability students was not consistent.
- The IB curriculum was intrinsically rich, diverse and motivating. Building on children's early experiences in KG, students were empowered to make choices in their learning, to deepen their critical thinking and to enhance their skills in enterprise and innovation. Students gained a holistic education with a strong sense of service and responsibility. A wide range of extra-curricular activities further developed students' talents and interests.
- The school's culture engaged fully with Dubai's vision and priorities. Consequently, recognition, appreciation and celebration of Emirati culture were integrated within the curriculum units and enhanced by events, visits and guest speakers. Social studies cross-curricular themes provided an additional effective structure which helped students to develop a very good understanding of the culture, history and traditions of the UAE society.

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

	Kindergarten	PYP	MYP	DP
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding


- The premises were safe and hygienic for students, staff and visitors. Security checks of the school perimeter and visitors attending the school were regularly carried out. There were appropriate levels of supervision throughout the school. Lockdown and evacuation procedures were well-known.
- Safeguarding and child protection procedures were outstanding. Staff knew the students very well and monitored them closely. There was a systematic approach to developing awareness of roles and responsibilities. Bullying was rare. When it occurred, it was quickly dealt with. Students felt safe, secure and well cared for. Both students and staff knew who to go to if they had a concern.
- Buildings and equipment were in excellent condition. The bursar oversaw all matters relating to the school's maintenance. Accidents were almost always of a minor nature because of the meticulous approach to risk assessment. Confidential and detailed records regarding students' health and their social and emotional well-being were securely locked away.
- The excellent physical environment facilitated easy access to all floors for all students, staff and visitors.
- The school was increasingly effective in promoting safe and healthy living for all students. The state-of-the-art sports facilities were well used by students. Canteen menus offered healthy and balanced choices.

	Kindergarten	PYP	MYP	DP
Care and support	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding ↑	Outstanding

- The quality of staff student relationships in all phases was a key strength of the school and was a crucial reflection of the school's ethos. Teachers knew their students very well academically and as young people with their own strengths, talents and needs. Behaviour management systems were very effective in almost all cases.
- The school kept accurate records of students' attendance and punctuality and systems for following up absence and lateness were thorough and effective.
- Effective procedures on entry to the KG and other classes ensured the swift identification of any student with SEND. Specialist staff, both internally and from external agencies, worked closely and effectively with the SEND leader, teachers and parents. This holistic approach resulted in accurate identifications and planned support which was well matched to students' needs.
- Support for students with SEND was very effective. It included highly appropriate intervention from a specialist team and intensive support for those students with severe difficulties. The very rich curriculum provided a wealth of opportunities for gifted and talented students to celebrate, extend and enhance their talents. These groups of students therefore made the best possible academic and personal progress.
- The well-being and personal development of all students was very effectively monitored and supported by the school counsellors. Individual students readily sought advice and guidance and appropriate workshops were scheduled into the school timetable to address particular issues relevant to students' needs. Early careers guidance began appropriately from Grade 6 and the school had appointed a designated careers counsellor to support the new DP phase.

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

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

Outstanding 

- The leadership of the SEND department was a strength of the school. The inclusive vision and positive admissions policy ensured that students with specific, and sometimes severe, difficulties were included in the life of the school and that provision met their needs.
- The school had invested well in a team of specialist staff who were skilled in the support they provided for students. Comprehensive and effective systems coordinated provision and teachers were well trained and supported to adapt lessons appropriately.
- The school had very effective procedures to ensure the swift identification of students with SEND either on entry to the KG, or to other classes. Specialist staff, from within the school and from external organisations, worked closely with the SEND leader, teachers and parents. Consequently, identifications were accurate and planned support was exceptionally well matched to students' needs.
- The school's strong partnerships with parents resulted in excellent formal and informal communications keeping parents fully informed and involved. They greatly valued the personalised support given to their children. They felt that the caring ethos of the staff was reflected in the inclusive attitudes of other students and were reassured that their children were popular and happy at school.
- Provision matched the needs of students with SEND. Students with severe difficulties benefitted greatly from having a personal support assistant. Modifications were detailed and comprehensively planned. A strong feature of these plans was that students were consulted about where they found greatest difficulty and the type of support they most valued. Teachers in most classes were effective in adapting lessons to meet these needs.
- Students made very good progress in their individual personal and academic goals and in their class work. Their progress was carefully monitored through a wide and appropriate range of assessments and summarised on student's personal provision plan. Assessments were used very well to guide future goals and provision.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Very good ↓

- In the short time since his appointment, the new principal had carried out a thorough evaluation of the school's work with the support of the re-structured leadership team. They had formulated an accurate view of its strengths and its inclusive ethos and had set a clear vision for improvement which was shared by teachers.
- The principal's experience and expertise had brought credibility to the role. Through his daily actions and discussions with staff, students and parents, he had gained the trust and respect of the school community in a remarkably short space of time.
- New appointments to the leadership team had increased the capacity for improving teaching and learning rather than for managing people and systems, which had been the case previously. Leaders had been able to spend time giving clear and incisive messages to staff about the quality of their work and in supporting them to improve. As a result, teachers were increasingly confident. Morale was high.
- Leaders had a clear understanding of what needed to be done to bring about further improvements. They were committed to the National Agenda and ensured staff were provided with opportunities to develop their skills in further promoting inquiry and critical thinking in lessons.
- There had already been a significant number of improvements in students' progress and personal development. The school was fully compliant with all statutory and regulatory requirements.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Very good ↓

- A wealth of information gathered from a range of sources including students' assessments and the views of students, parents and teachers was available. The evaluation of this information generally presented an accurate picture of the school's achievements, but that presented in the school's self-evaluation document was too optimistic. School leaders were aware of this and what needed to be done to ensure all students achieved well.
- The senior leadership team systematically and very effectively monitored the work of teachers and increasingly focused on the progress made by students in lessons and over time. They gave detailed and insightful feedback on the quality of teaching and identified action points for improvement.
- School improvement plans identified appropriate priorities and actions for the short and medium term with the National Agenda in mind. They were aspirational and challenging with measurable outcomes for improvements, first and foremost, in the effectiveness of teaching, the outcomes for students in internal assessments and external benchmarks, and the levels of satisfaction amongst parents, students and staff.
- Recommendations from the previous inspection report had been implemented or were in progress. In the PYP, attainment and progress had improved in English and mathematics. In the MYP, progress had improved in Arabic as an additional language and in English, but had declined in mathematics. Most students had a better understanding of the IB key concepts. The quality of support for students with SEND was now outstanding.




Partnerships with parents and the community	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almost all parents were overwhelmingly supportive of the school and welcomed every opportunity to support their children's education. Their voice was heard and they exerted influence through a variety of channels such as the school advisory board, the school engagement committee and the Uptown parents and friends group. Parents were in regular contact with the school using the latest technology and through face-to-face meetings to share information and discuss concerns. They made good use of the practical ideas provided by the school, and more recently the e-portfolios, to support their children's learning at home. Parents of KG children gladly supported and contributed to the mother tongue maintenance programme. Parents received regular reports about their children's academic and personal development. A few thought they were unnecessarily long and detailed and difficult to follow. However, they welcomed the clarity of information provided during face-to-face meetings with the teachers in which they gained a clear understanding of what their children did well and what they needed to do to achieve the next level. Significant contributions to the local, national and international communities were made. As well as sharing best practice via the Taaleem network, the school hosted IB workshops for the region, accepted trainee teachers and invited speakers to promote qualities such as leadership and perseverance. Students were involved in a range of out-of-school events, such as the Tanzania project. 	

Governance	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two boards were involved in governing the school. The school executive board was accountable to the owners and had overall responsibility for policy, staffing, finance and resources. The school advisory board, consisting of the principal, teacher and parent representatives, was influential in determining the direction of the school. Both boards worked together to ensure the views of the whole school community were taken into account. The school executive board acted as a very effective critical friend. Members had high expectations for all staff and held them to account for their performance. They received regular reports from school leaders and had a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The owners, through the school executive board, had extended the buildings and facilities, provided a wealth of high quality resources to enhance learning. They had arranged workshops for teachers' development. Board members were not afraid to make difficult decisions and take decisive action with regard to staffing matters and appointments in the best interests of the students. 	

Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school day was very well organised and ensured optimum use of the available time, spaces and resources. Timetables were well constructed. A significant amount of time, perhaps too much, was allocated to Islamic education and Arabic in the KG. Routines were well rehearsed and movement around the building was orderly. There was a sufficient number of suitably qualified teachers. Teachers had had the appropriate training and experience in the IB curriculum and philosophy. Those who had not were scheduled to attend relevant workshops in the near future. Teachers were in tune with the school's vision and mission. All had access to high-quality ongoing professional development from across the school and Taaleem organisation. The state-of-the-art facilities were attractively designed to inspire and motivate all students so that they could fulfil their gifts and talents and be the best they could be in sport, art, technology, science and literature. Displays throughout the school celebrated their achievements, at every opportunity, so that they knew their work was important and valued. Resources were of the highest quality from the KG to the DP. The library held a significant number of books to foster a love of reading in several languages and to enrich and extend learning. Online resources gave students access to a rich source of information from such organisations as the CIA government library, Gapminder and the Taaleem organisation's own library. 	

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	124
	2014-2015	289
 Teachers	87	
 Students	15	

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

- Generally, the parents who responded to the survey were very positive about the school. Of those who responded, a few had concerns about attainment and progress in Arabic, Islamic education and science.
- Most parents reported that the school listened to their views very well.
- Some parents of students with SEND were generally positive. A few had some concerns about the identification of SEND and the quality of support for their children. The large majority were satisfied with the help they received to support their children
- Teachers' feedback was mainly positive. A minority had concerns about receiving feedback on the quality of their work and not being listened to by the school leadership.
- The large majority of students who responded were satisfied with the progress made in Arabic and science.
- Most students were aware of Emirati culture and heritage.
- The large majority of students were positive about the upgrades to facilities and the provision of new resources and the range of curriculum options
- Most students thought they were well-prepared for their next steps in learning.

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