



Al Maaref Private
School (LLC)

Curriculum: US

Overall Rating:

Weak



"We are keen to prepare the new generation that is ready to be creative and innovative to help us achieve our ambitions for even greater prosperity"

Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum



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School information



General information	
Location	Al Qusais
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	1987
Website	almaaref.ae
Telephone	00971-4-2988881
Address	Al Qusais, Oman Street, P.O. Box 87823
Principal	Nadine Richards
Language of instruction	English, Arabic
Inspection dates	13 to 16 March 2017

Teachers / Support staff	
Number of teachers	122
Largest nationality group of teachers	Egyptian
Number of teaching assistants	24
Teacher-student ratio	1:20
Number of guidance counsellors	1
Teacher turnover	67%

Students	
Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	4-18
Grades or year groups	KG 1-Grade 12
Number of students on roll	1711
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	536
Number of students with SEND	30
Largest nationality group of students	Arab

Curriculum	
Educational permit / License	US
Main curriculum	US
External tests and examinations	IBT, CAT4, MAP
Accreditation	None
National Agenda benchmark tests	MAP, IBT, CAT4



The DSIB inspection process



In order to judge the overall quality of education provided by schools, inspectors consider the six standards of performance that form the basis of the UAE School Inspection Framework (the framework). They look at children's attainment and progress in key subjects, their learning skills and their personal and social development. They judge how effective teaching and the assessment of learning are across the school. Inspectors consider how well the school's curriculum, including activities inside and outside classrooms, meet the educational needs of all students. They judge how well schools protect and support children. In addition, inspectors judge the effectiveness of leadership, which incorporates governance, management, staffing and facilities.

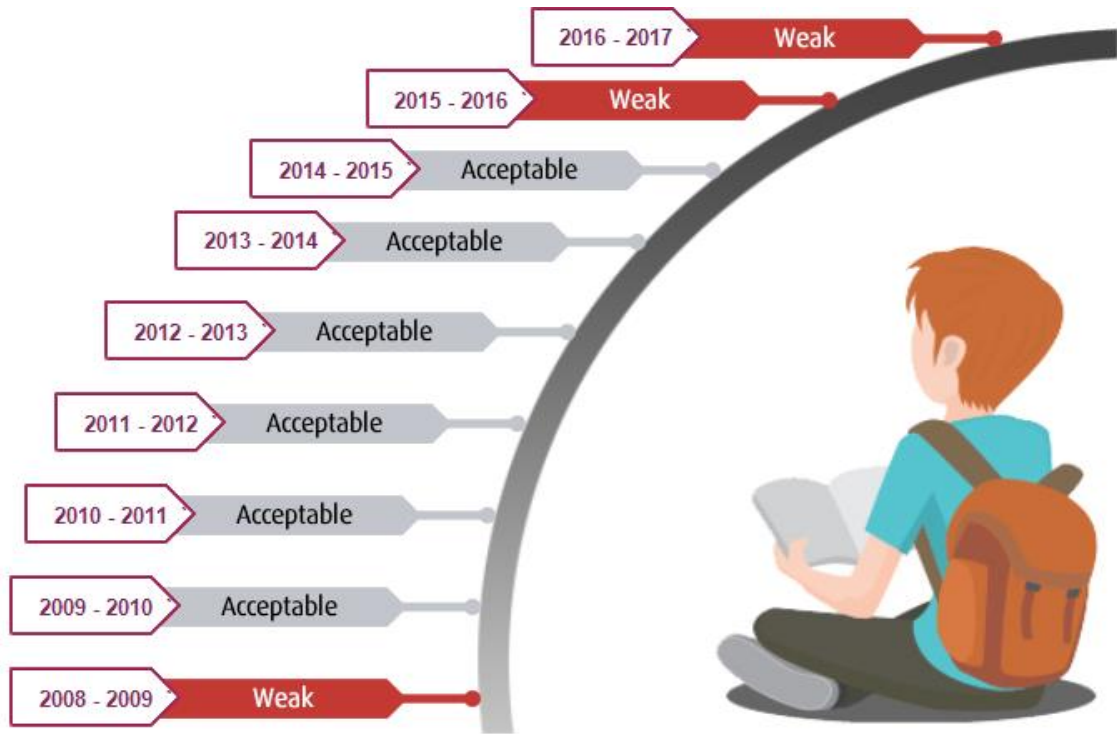
Inspection judgements are drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observation of students' learning in lessons, review of their work, discussions with students, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and review of surveys completed by parents, teachers and students.

Judgements are made on a six-point scale

DSIB inspection teams make judgements about different aspects, phases and subjects that form the work of the school, using the scale below, which is consistent with the framework.

Outstanding	Quality of performance substantially exceeds the expectation of the UAE
Very good	Quality of performance exceeds the expectation of the UAE
Good	Quality of performance meets the expectation of the UAE (This is the expected level for every school in the UAE)
Acceptable	Quality of performance meets the minimum level of quality required in the UAE (This is the minimum level for every school in the UAE)
Weak	Quality of performance is below the expectation of the UAE
Very weak	Quality of performance is significantly below the expectation of the UAE

Inspection journey for Al Maaref Private School (LLC)



- Al Maaref Private School has been open since 1987. The number of students on roll is 1700. Nearly all students are Arabs and about a third are Emiratis. Teacher turnover is high this year. The fact that some teachers left during the year has caused significant problems to students and parents.
- The common strengths of the school in the past three years have been students' understanding of Islamic values and their appreciation of the UAE culture and heritage.
- The areas which have been identified as needing improvement have been the quality of leadership, the design of the curriculum and its alignment to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), assessment processes, the quality of teaching and learning and the governors' support and responsibility for the performance of the school.

Summary of inspection findings 2016-2017



Al Maaref Private School (LLC) was inspected by DSIB from 13 to 16 March 2017. The overall quality of education provided by the school is **weak**. The section below summarizes the inspection findings for each of the six performance indicators described in the framework.

- Students reach attainment levels in line with curriculum standards in most subjects. Attainment is weaker in Arabic as an additional language, English and mathematics in the elementary phase, and in mathematics in the middle phase. Students' progress is also acceptable in all subjects except in English and Arabic as a first language in the elementary phase. Students are keen to learn but the development of their skills is variable across the school.
- All students have a good understanding of Islamic values and Emirati culture. Their behavior is often at the level of teachers' expectation, particularly in the Kindergarten (KG) and elementary phase. Most students are keen to have a greater involvement in the local and national community and are aware of environmental issues.
- Teachers' skills in using strategies that match the needs of the different ability groups are developing. This is more apparent in the middle and high phases than in the rest of the school. Teaching remains weak in the elementary phase. Teachers' assessment skills in the KG, elementary and middle phases remain weak. Generally, the quality of assessment information that is collected is accurate, but in Arabic and Islamic education test results are inflated.
- Except for Arabic and Islamic education, which follow the Ministry of Education (MoE) standards, the curriculum has been aligned to New York State Common Core standards. Staff are beginning to modify the curriculum to reflect students' abilities and the vision of the school.
- Many aspects of health and safety, such as child protection arrangements, have improved. However, the lack of regular, rigorous, and informed-monitoring of safety remains a major weakness. Care and support is stronger this year with the appointments of a college counsellor and a head of positive education.
- Most aspects of leadership have improved. The new senior leadership team, led by the principal, is having a strong influence on raising students' performance. Partnerships with parents are developing too. Although governors are resourcing the school at an appropriate level, their actions to prepare the school to meet KHDA US curriculum requirements are inefficient.

What the school does best

- Students' positive attitudes to learning, especially in the middle and high schools, and their strong understanding of Islamic values and appreciation of UAE heritage across the school
- The improvements in the quality of teaching especially in the elementary school
- The enhancements to the curriculum that focus on the development of students' moral values and support their personal growth
- The improved care and support for students especially through the development of career guidance for high school students.

Recommendations

- Senior leaders and governors must, with some urgency, improve the standards of safety on site through systematic, regular and rigorous monitoring of the school.
- Senior leaders should enhance students' progress in all subjects by improving teachers':
 - management of student behavior in all lessons
 - use of assessment information to plan and deliver learning activities to meet the needs of all students
 - ability to develop students' learning skills, especially skills of collaboration, independence and critical thinking.
- Senior leaders should ensure that the school's policies and practices meet the needs of all students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and those who are gifted and talented.
- The school should develop its assessment systems and practices to:
 - measure student growth accurately over time, during lessons and through workbook scrutiny
 - measure attainment accurately in Arabic and Islamic education against curriculum standards
 - utilize externally benchmarked data in English, mathematics and science, to monitor students' performance and to align its internal tests accordingly.
- The school should ensure that the decisions it makes are informed by the opinions of parents, students and the community.

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 intention 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. In 2015, KHDA launched 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.

The following section focuses on the impact of the National Agenda Parameter in meeting their targets:

- Students' attainment based on the National Agenda Parameter benchmarks is below expectation in English, mathematics and science.
- The school does not fully meet the registration requirements for the National Agenda Parameter. There are no Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) data for Winter 2016. As a result, the school cannot develop a comparable view to evaluate students' progress and plan effectively for improvement.
- The school has identified issues rising from the recent PISA and TIMSS reports. Steps are being taken to address these through the action plan for the National Agenda Parameter. It is too early, however, to accurately assess the impact of the action plan on students' outcomes. The school has a plan to incorporate questions linked to PISA problem-solving into its internal assessments in order to provide students with better challenge.
- Teaching strategies to better prepare students for the challenges of PISA and TIMSS are developing. Improvements in teaching are not always evident in lessons. For example, questioning skills that promote students' critical thinking and discussions are limited. Students cannot relate their learning to real life situations. In mathematics, their ability to manipulate numbers mentally is underdeveloped.
- Most students do not have explicit awareness of their results on CAT4 and MAP. The school plans to share these results with parents and students as part of normal school reports. Students' research skills are developing slowly.

Overall, the school's improvement towards achieving its National Agenda targets is not secure.

Innovation in Education

The UAE Vision 2021 sets the aspiration 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' and provides a basis for evaluating schools in order to deliver a world-class education for all children in the UAE.



Promoting a culture of innovation:

- Innovation is addressed as a discrete element rather than an integral part of the life of the school. The school has organized an Innovation Week and students have participated in competitions and challenges that require creativity. However, students do not use the available learning technology regularly or often enough to allow them to develop, fully, their own approaches to learning. Lesson planning is not modified adequately to promote innovation. An exception is the modification to the curriculum through the inclusion of advisory lessons. School leaders are aware of the importance of innovation. As a result, they have created a new senior leadership position called the head of positive education.

Overall school performance

Weak

1 Students' achievement

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

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

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

3. Teaching and assessment

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

4. Curriculum

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum design and implementation	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Curriculum adaptation	Acceptable ↑	Acceptable ↑	Acceptable ↑	Acceptable ↑

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	Acceptable ↑	Acceptable ↑	Acceptable ↑	Acceptable ↑

6. Leadership and management

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

Main inspection report



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	Acceptable
Mathematics	Acceptable	Acceptable
Science	Acceptable	Acceptable

- In English, most children show acceptable attainment and make the expected progress in developing speaking and early reading skills. They develop age and grade appropriate vocabulary. Children in KG 1 know the days of the week and months of the year and can recognize simple words and sounds. In KG2, most children can answer simple questions and talk about a story giving some details. Higher attaining children in KG2 are beginning to develop their recognition of words and understanding of phonics. They enjoy stories and books and are developing their writing skills.
- In mathematics, children develop an adequate grasp of number and shape. In KG2, most children can add and subtract two single-digit numbers at the expected level. Their problem-solving skills are underdeveloped and their conceptual understanding of addition and subtraction is at an early stage of development. Most children can name and recognize basic two dimensional shapes and a few can model shapes by building or drawing. However, children are given very little opportunity to practice their skills in structured activities such as role-play.
- Children's attainment and progress in science are in line with the school's curriculum. Most children develop a scientific knowledge base and vocabulary and can talk about things they have observed. They follow instructions and use their senses to describe different properties. Children's skills of investigation and enquiry are at an early stage of development and opportunities for them to develop scientific concepts and apply knowledge to real world connections are limited.

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

- In Islamic education, most students attain levels that are in line with MoE curriculum standards. They demonstrate age-appropriate levels of understanding the five pillars of Islam and the six pillars of faith. Students can recall facts from the Prophet's life and that of his companions. Students' progress in lessons and as evident in work samples is acceptable. However, the internal assessment data show greater progress over time. Students are developing their recitation and memorization appropriately, but their understanding of how to apply their learning is weak.
- Although most students in Arabic as a first language have attainment levels that are in line with MoE expectations, they do not make the expected progress. Students' internal assessment results are very high and do not reflect the attainment levels evident in lessons. Students have adequate listening and reading skills but many do not confidently use classical Arabic. Students are adequately developing their knowledge in grammar but not their writing and speaking skills.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students make expected progress but do not reach the expected attainment levels, with respect to the number of years of study. Internal assessment results are too high and do not reflect students' actual attainment levels. Few students have adequate reading skills and can respond to basic questions. Many students in Grades 5 and 6 struggle to understand spoken words and are unable to engage in simple conversations. Students are developing their reading, comprehension, and knowledge of grammar adequately but not their writing skills.
- Most students' progress in English is weak in lessons, and there are no reliable data to show students' progress over time. Internal data, MAP data, and evidence from lessons and students' work indicate that students' attainment is weak. Students can communicate orally, understand instructions, and write brief descriptive statements. Students' attainment is not better because they are not challenged to expand their reading, writing, and speaking skills in class.
- In mathematics, student attainment, in internal assessments, is broadly in line with curriculum expectations but less so in external benchmark test results. Knowledge and skills are developing well, however student ability to apply these to other subjects, such as science, is under-developed. Mathematical speed and thinking is also developing slowly. The progress of students with SEND is less than expected. Progress is better in lessons where students can interpret word problems, express them as mathematical expressions and successfully use these to arrive at correct solutions.

- Students' attainment and progress in science, as measured against the school's internal assessment, indicate that most students attain levels above curriculum standards. However, in external benchmarked assessments, students in Grade 4 scored below average. In lessons, most students demonstrate levels of knowledge and understanding in line with the curriculum. For example, students can identify the different sources of water and graph the amounts and percentages of fresh water and salt water. They express their ideas clearly, often using correct scientific terms. Their scientific skills are less developed.

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

- In Islamic education, most students attain levels that are line with the MoE curriculum expectations and make acceptable progress. Their knowledge of the main Islamic beliefs, concepts and values is secure. They can explain the evidence of the oneness of Allah. Their knowledge of the biographies of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and his companions is in line with expectations. They understand the overall meaning of Hadeeth and verses from the Holy Qur'an. Students' memorization, recitation and linking knowledge to real life are developing at a slow pace.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students reach levels that are in line with the MoE standards and make the expected progress. In lessons, they perform only at an acceptable level, although their results on internal assessments are very high. They have adequate listening and reading skills but are not confident in using classical Arabic. Grade 8 students are increasing their range of vocabulary and grammar. Students write appropriately but not in a range of genres. Progress of the most-able and the least-able students is slow because work is not matched to their needs.
- In Arabic as an additional language, although most students make acceptable progress in their language skills, they demonstrate levels that are below the curriculum expectations, considering their years of study. Students' very high internal assessment results do not reflect their actual attainment. Only few students show appropriate reading skills and knowledge of grammar. Many students have limited listening and speaking skills. Their progress in improving their handwriting, vocabulary and comprehension is developing appropriately. They do not make better progress because work is not well matched to their needs.
- In English, evidence from internal assessments and work in lessons indicates that the attainment of most students is in line with curriculum standards. Attainment is not confirmed by any external data. Students make acceptable progress in lessons and overtime, particularly in giving presentations and reading increasingly-complex texts. Their progress is not better because writing opportunities are limited for them, which has a negative impact on their comprehension skills.

- In mathematics, external assessment information indicates that students' attainment is below what is expected. However, most students make progress that is in line with expectations because they can apply their knowledge in new situations. Progress is better when students are given the opportunity to create links that connect their mathematical understanding to other subjects. For example, a project on Sustainable City integrates aspects from both mathematics and science. In lessons, girls make better progress than boys.
- Internal assessment results in science indicate that a large majority of students attain levels that are above curriculum standards. However, the attainment of students in Grades 6 and 8, as measured by external benchmarked assessment, is significantly lower. In lessons, most students make acceptable progress in relation to appropriate learning objectives that are aligned with the curriculum standards. Students develop their scientific skills, fair testing, and prediction at a slow rate.

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

- In Islamic education, most students attain levels that are line with the MoE curriculum expectations. Most students demonstrate acceptable understanding of Qur'anic verses and can interpret the general meanings conveyed in them. They have secure knowledge of the early years of Islam. They make acceptable progress in understanding Islamic values as measured against the lesson objectives. However, they make slower progress in memorizing the Holy Qur'an. Students' ability to link their knowledge to real life is still underdeveloped.
- Most students attain in line with MoE expectations and make the expected progress in Arabic as a first language. Internal assessment results are high but do not reflect students' actual attainment levels in lessons. Students have adequate listening and reading skills but do not use classical Arabic confidently. Grade 12 students develop their reading comprehension appropriately. However, they do not show an ability to write enough reflective pieces using individual experiences or comprehensive research papers.
- In English, students' attainment is in line with curriculum standards. Internal data, evidence from lessons, students' work and projects indicate that progress is better for girls but is acceptable overall. Students make good progress in speaking. In Grade 12, students use a wide range of vocabulary and sophisticated language during presentations. Their reading skills are refined as they can read, analyze and critique a variety of literature. The developmental writing tasks they receive in a variety of genres have a positive impact on their writing skills.

- In mathematics, students' attainment and progress are acceptable across the phase. The progress students make over time has a positive influence on their attainment. However, the improvement is mainly focused on textbook questions. Increasingly complex questions are routinely practiced and students can usually solve these with support. Students' abilities to apply their learning to real life are developing. For example, the use of calculus to determine the minimum car speed at which speed cameras are triggered, is well explained by some students.
- Most students' scientific learning, as measured against internal assessment, is in line with curriculum standards. However, in external benchmarked assessments, the results of students in Grade 10 are significantly lower. In lessons, students develop effective investigative skills and make predictions. They can construct models to describe the role of gravity in motion within galaxies and solar systems. They express their ideas and understanding clearly and with sound reasoning. Most groups made similar progress in science over time.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Most students are interested in learning and can work for short periods without their teachers' intervention. In the middle and high schools, students are more engaged in their learning than in the other phases. Students rarely reflect on the quality of their learning and consequently they are unsure about how to improve their performance. In the elementary school, the majority of students are passive learners.
- Students can collaborate adequately but do not get enough opportunity to do so. When they do, the most-able students tend to dominate tasks, especially in the larger groups. This results in a limited learning experience for the other students. In most subjects, students in the middle and high school show better collaboration, particularly the girls.
- Students make some connections between areas of learning and can relate these in simple ways to their understanding of the world. This is a relative strength in English and Arabic in the high school. Students acquire knowledge of facts but their conceptual understanding is less developed. Therefore, students only show success in learning in familiar contexts and cannot apply their knowledge in new situations without support.
- Only a few students exercise their ability to find things out independently and use learning technologies effectively. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills are not established features of students' learning. Nonetheless, in a minority of lessons, students carry out basic research and enquiry.

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

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

- Students show responsible attitudes. They are considerate and caring towards each other. Students in the upper grades appreciate teachers' comments about their performance. They are respectful and helpful towards other students.
- Students are generally courteous and follow school rules. They behave well during lessons, break time, and arrival and departure. However, a few children in the KG and a few students in elementary school do not demonstrate the ability to manage their own behavior which slows down their progress.
- Relationships between students and teachers are mostly positive. Students help their peers well and are willing to work with them during lessons. Students are sensitive to the needs and differences of others and are ready to support each other.
- Students understand the importance of having a safe and healthy lifestyle. They can explain the reasons for this and encourage others to make healthy eating choices. The health and fitness program at school promotes students' adoption of a healthy lifestyle.
- At the beginning of the school day, students arrive at school on time. Student registration begins at the start of the first lesson and does not include attending assembly. Attendance is good overall.

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

- Students demonstrate a clear understanding and appreciation of Islamic values, Islamic traditions and the importance of Islam in the modern Dubai society. They can talk and discuss Islamic values such as cooperation and modesty. They understand the relevance of these values and their impact on everyday life in the UAE.
- Students exhibit clear appreciation of the heritage and local traditions of the UAE and can describe some of the main sporting activities which are traditionally enjoyed in Dubai. They can speak in detail about famous buildings in UAE. They confidently share their understanding of cultural activities and know about celebrations such as the National Day and the Flag Day.
- Students have a clear appreciation of their own culture and of other cultures from around the world. They show respect to students of other nationalities and backgrounds. Although they are familiar with some cultures of other countries, many of them do not know enough about these, particularly in the lower elementary grades and the KG.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Students are provided with opportunities to be involved in the community through various government-sponsored and school-sponsored events. Two such events are the Walk of Education sponsored by Dubai Cares and the Model United Nations program. Students also volunteer to participate in the Walk for Tolerance hosted by the Minister of Tolerance.
- Students enjoy their work and are happy to be involved in activities. Some discrete innovation and entrepreneurial opportunities are available for them in the classroom as well as in the community. For example, students participate in the water rocket challenge and the solar power project. However, students' enterprise, innovation, and entrepreneurship skills remain underdeveloped.
- Students are aware of the importance of conservation. They are encouraged to be responsible global citizens, and some take part in the Global Scholars Environmental Action Plan project. Furthermore, students have produced a documentary on Climate Change Awareness and have participated in the KHDA-sponsored project, the Happy Plant. However, the range of activities to support sustainability and conservation is limited.

3. Teaching and assessment

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

- Across the school, most teachers have secure knowledge of their subjects. However, some teachers do not have good understanding of how students learn best. In Arabic, a minority of teachers do not model classical Arabic. In the KG, there is a wide variance among teachers' understanding of how children best learn.
- Teachers plan lessons consistently and learning objectives are shared with students. However, planning is too general, content-focused and does not meet the needs of different groups of students. Many teachers demonstrate poor classroom management skills, especially in the elementary school. In the best lessons, pacing is appropriate and activities are creative, particularly in the middle and high school. In the KG, the environment is stimulating, lesson plans are simple but effective, and resources are sufficient.
- Teachers' interactions with students in lessons are positive. However, questioning is often closed and to the whole class. It is often related to assessing learning, and dialogue does not always engage students effectively. Teachers have better questioning skills in mathematics in the elementary school and in English and science in the high school. Teachers' use of questioning is an emerging feature in the KG.

- Most teachers use strategies that direct and lead students. Although their skills to match the needs of the different ability groups are developing, they do not consistently provide students with appropriate challenge and support. Activities and tasks are not set to meet the needs of all groups of students effectively. They are designed to meet the needs of average-ability students, leaving the learning needs of the most- and the least-able students insufficiently met. This is more apparent in the middle and high phases than in the rest of the school. Teaching remains weak in the elementary.
- Teachers rarely develop students' critical thinking, problem-solving, innovation and independent learning skills. They do not give students enough scope to develop their own approaches to learning and to think for themselves. In high school English, students get some opportunities to develop critical thinking. In both middle and high school science, students' problem-solving skills are good.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Assessment	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak

- Internal assessment processes are established and reflect students' outcomes across most subjects. The tests are linked to the curriculum standards and are used to provide information on individual and groups of students. This is less effective in Arabic and Islamic education, where tests are not rigorously aligned to the curriculum standards. The school has recently aligned its grading system with the KHDA requirements for US curriculum schools.
- The school enters a limited number of grades for CAT4 and MAP tests. These results are now being used to identify curriculum needs in English, mathematics and science. This allows teachers to be better informed about necessary interventions to improve students' outcomes. The leadership team has plans to extend the use of these benchmark tests to additional grade levels.
- The school has the capacity to monitor students' progress from grade to grade and over time. This can improve as the quality of the available data improves. For example, the school is working to align its internal assessments to the New York Common Core Standards which can improve the monitoring of students' progress over time.
- The use of assessment data to inform teaching is inconsistent in most phases. It is better when the benchmark test results are used to identify the range of student abilities in classes. This is a stronger feature in the high school, where teachers are more effective at modifying their teaching to meet the needs of the different groups of students.
- Teachers' limited knowledge of their students does not allow for effective support and challenge. This is slowly improving as external benchmark test results have started to influence lesson planning, especially in the high school. Teachers' written feedback is limited and doesn't guide students towards their next steps in learning. Students' ability to assess their own strengths and areas for improvement are underdeveloped.

4. Curriculum

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

- The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that promotes an understanding of the society of Dubai and the UAE. The school implements the New York State Core Curriculum Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Arabic and Islamic education meet all statutory MoE requirements. The school is aware of the US curriculum requirements and the deadlines that are to be met.
- The curriculum is planned for continuity and progression in all subjects. Its design is purposeful, creative and builds upon students' knowledge and achievements. The NGSS is a spiraling curriculum that revisits key ideas, on a yearly basis, strengthening students' understanding of increasingly complex topics. Transitions between grades and phases are currently dependent on the classroom teachers. No systemic plan to facilitate these transitions is currently in place.
- Curricular choice are limited as only few courses are available in the high school. These include pre-calculus, environmental science, data analysis, graphic design and humanities. Children in KG have recently been given opportunities to make choices in their learning, allowing them opportunities to follow their interests.
- In the majority of lessons, students have limited opportunities to consolidate or apply their existing knowledge and understanding to new contexts or to the real world. The curriculum director is systematically introducing cross-curricular links into the curriculum.
- An ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the school's curriculum and its modifications to meet the needs of all students is taking place, which is essential to successful delivery. Recent reviews of the curriculum show some positive impact on students' academic attainment, personal development and learning skills.
- The school follows the UAE social studies curriculum and uses the MoE textbooks to create schemes of work, scope and sequences, and lesson plans. Lessons are age-appropriate and grade-appropriate. Most students enjoy social studies classes, and Emirati students, in particular, enjoy learning about their culture and heritage. Topics include historical events and comparisons of the present and past of the UAE geography and history. The school, however, is not fully compliant with the requirements of UAE social studies. It is taught in Arabic as a discrete subject but only in Grades 1 to 9.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum adaptation	Acceptable 	Acceptable 	Acceptable 	Acceptable 

- The curriculum is modified to meet the needs of most groups of students, particularly in Islamic education, Arabic, and moral education. The curriculum lacks sufficient adaptation for the many English as an additional language (EAL) students and does not deliver the learning skills needed for the 21st century. The curriculum for students with SEND and those who are gifted and talented incorporates only few accommodations.

- The curriculum is functional and designed to engage most groups of students. The school provides extra-curricular activities, such as cooking, robotics, reading, and chess, to satisfy students' interests. Students participate in some innovative and community projects such as the Walk of Tolerance. However, the range of opportunities does not meet the interests of all students.
- Appreciation of the values, culture and society of the UAE are woven into many subjects across the curriculum. This is especially strong in the UAE social studies program. Throughout the school, the influence of Emirati culture is evident in students' art work, exhibits and bulletin boards. Students enjoy celebrating Arabic Week and the UAE National Day.
- The school provides five sessions of thirty minutes per week of Arabic language to all children in the KG. The content focuses on letters, words, songs and links to the UAE culture and heritage. The content is made easier for the non-Arab children.

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 ↓

- The school's safeguarding policy and procedures are known to most, but not all, staff and students. Staff training is detailed and child protection arrangements are in place. The school gives students guidance on how to stay safe on the internet and on social media. However, the school has neither monitored nor evaluated the effectiveness of its procedures and practices.
- The school clinic, managed by the doctor, keeps detailed student medical records and documents. There is an efficient system to ensure students transfer to and from the school safely, and the school has systems in place to monitor entry into the school. However, regular rigorous risk-assessment that monitors student safety around the school premises is not comprehensive or routinely applied. The arrangements to protect students remain weak.
- Preventive maintenance of the school is not adequate. This leads to the inefficient identification and addressing of risks and potential dangers. Buildings and equipment are not regularly maintained, and students have access to some areas of the school that are not safe. Some parts of the school are not clean and litter is frequently found in the stairwells and other areas.
- The school premises and facilities are suitable and appropriate for the needs of most students, including those with SEND. The school has ramps for access into the building and has recently installed an elevator for students who have mobility difficulties.
- Healthy lifestyle is promoted by the clinic staff as part of their student support service. There are some healthy food choices available in the canteen. The medical team provides some education on issues such as obesity and diabetes and supports individual students with diet and exercise programs. However, the school is not sufficiently proactive in the promotion of healthy lifestyles amongst all students.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Care and support	Acceptable ↑	Acceptable ↑	Acceptable ↑	Acceptable ↑

- Across the phases, relationships between teachers and students are respectful. The school has developed an appropriate system for recording and dealing with incidents of student misbehavior. While most students show care and concern for each other, some teachers do not manage students' behavior well.
- Arrangements to promote punctuality and record unexcused absences are effective. The school systematically monitors and follows up absence and lateness in each phase. Students respond well to regular rewards for good attendance and punctuality. However, senior students are less punctual and a few of them take advantage of the late morning registration period, to arrive late to assembly.
- The school provides limited support for students with SEND and for those who are gifted and talented. The school does not have an effective system to identify students with SEND. The school's SEND team are beginning to make a more accurate use of data to identify students who may need support.
- The school is committed to improving SEND staffing and to providing better accommodation, facilities and resources to support students more effectively. Currently, specialist support to meet the specific language, communication and sensory needs of many students is not sufficient.
- The school develops and monitors the wellbeing and personal and social development of younger students through the moral education and positive education programs. It has successfully developed academic and college guidance through a well-planned program for senior students. Counsellors provide personal guidance that prepares students for the next stage of their lives.

Inclusion

Provision and outcomes for students with SEND

Weak

- While the school has a policy that sets out its vision for SEND, this is not well developed in practice. Investing in resources and staff is at an early stage and teachers do not consistently display the skills necessary to meet students' learning needs. Senior leaders recognize the need to review the school's vision of inclusion and drive forward a shared responsibility for inclusion.
- The school has a process for identifying students' needs, but this is not applied systematically and often relies on external assessments and teacher referrals. The school is planning to make a better use of formative and summative internal and external assessments to improve its capacity to identify and address students' needs.
- Parents are not regularly informed about their children's progress. While the school aims to develop a close working relationship with parents to support their children's needs, the level of communication with teachers varies. Most parents like to know more about how the school is helping their children make progress.

- The SEND team shares strategies for supporting the different needs of students. A few teachers use this information well to help them plan lessons, but this practice varies significantly. Curriculum planning to meet the needs of students with SEND does not take enough account of students' personal, social and learning needs. As a result, many students with SEND do not make sufficient progress.
- The SEND team delivers some personalized support and intervention sessions. These are not part of a progressive program, and while SEND teachers readily provide students with help, there is no formal tracking and monitoring of their progress within these sessions.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Acceptable

- The new vision of the school has been shared with parents, students and the advisory board. It has been a good opportunity to bring the school community together to give strong ownership to the school's identity. The vision is central to school's decision-making and has been an important reference point for the introduction of the new advisory board.
- The new leadership team has a secure knowledge of the practices needed to prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century. In a brief period of time, they have had a significant effect on how and what students learn in the classroom. They have a clear focus on the academic, personal and social development of each child.
- Relationships between senior leaders is professional and communication channels are well structured. Roles and responsibilities are appropriately distributed and lines of accountability are generally clear. Meeting patterns enable information to be collected and disseminated, ensuring that decisions are made effectively. An appropriate balance is made between organizational discussions and those related to the school's core purpose of improving students' progress.
- Most leaders at all levels have sufficient capacity to continue the school's development into a learning community. Senior leaders, led by the principal, have clearly identified the potential barriers and have found some innovative solutions to overcome them. An example is the development of some outdoor spaces into learning environments to overcome the school's limited classroom space.
- Senior leaders' energy and expertise are beginning to establish secure foundations for future improvements. Students' behavior is improving, teaching strategies are encouraging greater student engagement, and students are becoming more prepared for their next stages in education.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Acceptable

- The school has worked to respond to an inspection by DSIB, last year, a pre-accreditation visit from NEASC and an approaching deadline for meeting the KHDA requirements for US curriculum schools. This tight timescale has limited the involvement of the school community in the school self-evaluation processes. School leaders are making some use of external data to determine appropriate key priorities.

- There are several established systems for measuring the quality of teaching in the school. These range from focusing on the impact of teachers' professional development, in the middle and high school, to evaluating a wider set of teaching standards in the elementary school. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths of each teacher, but they do not focus on students' progress in their classroom evaluations.
- The school improvement plans are sufficiently detailed. Whole school targets are adapted for each phase and for each subject. The plans contain several appropriate actions, timescales and responsibilities. They are monitored, but the evaluation is made of the extent of implementing them rather than of their impact. The improvement plans are recent and have not had a measurable effect on students' progress.
- The school has improved provision through enhancing whole-school policies. A career counsellor has been appointed and child protection has been strengthened by coming up with a detailed policy and offering in-depth training. The curriculum has been revised to ensure that the teaching of Islamic education and Arabic not only complies with but also exceeds statutory requirements.

Partnerships with parents and the community

Acceptable

- The school provides opportunities for parents to be involved in the school life of their children. Many parents visit the school to participate in the events and celebrations their children enjoy. Responses from the questionnaire indicate that parents feel that the school listens to their opinions. There is a parental representation on the school Advisory Board which has been only reactive to parental concerns. There is no parent association at the school.
- Parents consider that communication with the school has improved this term. They speak positively about the communication applications the school uses and appreciate their bilingual nature. The school also maintains an up-to-date website. Opportunities for face-to-face discussions are enhanced through the regular coffee mornings with school leaders.
- Reporting is regular and supplemented by teacher-parent meetings. The report cards give relevant information about students' performance in curricular areas and against class averages. They contain no records of students' personal and social growth. They do not identify students' next steps in learning to enable parents to help their children at home.
- Parents are pleased that, this year, there are more opportunities for their children to become involved in projects at the local and the national levels. Some examples include working on environmental projects with DEWA and Solar Power. Students participate in competitions with other schools such as soccer competitions. Parents express a desire for the school to increase such opportunities for their children next year.

Governance

Weak

- The school's owners have given the responsibilities of governance to the newly-created advisory board. The board is made up of a representative of the owners, a parent, several community members with educational background and the principal. The views of the parent body are gathered on an 'ad hoc' basis, as there is no systematic process for them to share their views to influence school direction.
- During their termly meetings, members of the advisory board discuss aspects of school life including enhancements to the school site and improvements to teaching. The representative of the school owners and the parent representative have regular informal contact with the school leaders. Consequently, the board's knowledge of the school is secure and members will be in an appropriate position to hold school leaders to account.
- The board has ensured that the school improves certain areas. An elevator has been installed making the school accessible to all students. The provision for IT, science and PE in the school has improved, and campus security is better. The preparation to meet the KHDA requirements for US curriculum schools has resulted in unnecessary changes to staffing during the year causing disruption to students' learning.

Management, staffing, facilities and resources

Acceptable

- Many aspects of the daily school life are adequately organized. Timetabling runs smoothly, although some time is lost when teachers move from room to room. The school operates a homeroom system for teachers in Grades 1 to 4. IT systems are useful in giving students access to information.
- There is sufficient staff in most areas to support students' academic and personal development. Some middle leaders have no additional time to carry out their responsibilities. An appropriate professional development program is in place and its impact is monitored by senior leaders. The school has recently added new leadership posts such a careers counsellor and a head of positive education.
- The premises are adequate and some new specialist areas have been created. The science laboratory has been remodeled, the Wi-Fi infrastructure has been enhanced and a sports field is now operational. Although many rooms are too small for the number of students, teachers have been creative with the use of space. An elevator has been installed to enable all students to access all learning areas.
- Resources are sufficient in most areas of learning. The number of computer devices in the school has been increased through the introduction of three laptop trolleys. However, the school resource center has no permanent means of research, and the number and quality of books, both Arabic and English, remain low.

The views of parents, teachers and senior students

The views of parents, teachers and senior 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*	2016-2017	222
	2015-2016	85
 Teachers	58	
 Students	47	

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

- Most parents, a majority of teachers, and a minority of students who responded to the survey are satisfied with the quality of education at the school.
- A majority of parents who responded to the survey are positive about the quality of teaching and school leadership. However, they have made comments about some teachers' poor classroom management skills and the high teacher turnover rate.
- Parents, teachers and students see that the school is safe. This view is at odds with the findings of the inspection team. In the survey, some parents have expressed concerns about safety during the departure of students due to lack of supervision and security at the school gates.
- A majority of students who responded to the survey are positive about the range of resources available, the quality of teaching and the opportunities they get to develop their understanding of Islamic values and Emirati culture.

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

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