



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational
needs and disabilities



Innovation

Inspection Report 2015-2016

Al Salam Private School

Curriculum: UK

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

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School information

General information



Location	Al Nahda
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	1989
Website	www.alsalamschool.sch.ae
Telephone	04-2679594
Address	Al Qusais Al Nahda 2 PO BOX 5251
Principal	Susan Patricia Johnston
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	23 to 26 November 2015

Students



Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	3-17
Grades or year groups	Foundation Stage 1 to Year 13
Number of students on roll	1,167
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	229
Number of students with SEND	43
Largest nationality group of students	Arab

Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	86
Largest nationality group of teachers	India
Number of teaching assistants	38
Teacher-student ratio	1:12
Number of guidance counsellors	3
Teacher turnover	15%

Curriculum



Educational permit / Licence	UK
Main curriculum	Cambridge International
External tests and examinations	IGCSE and Edexcel
Accreditation	None
National Agenda benchmark tests	IBT

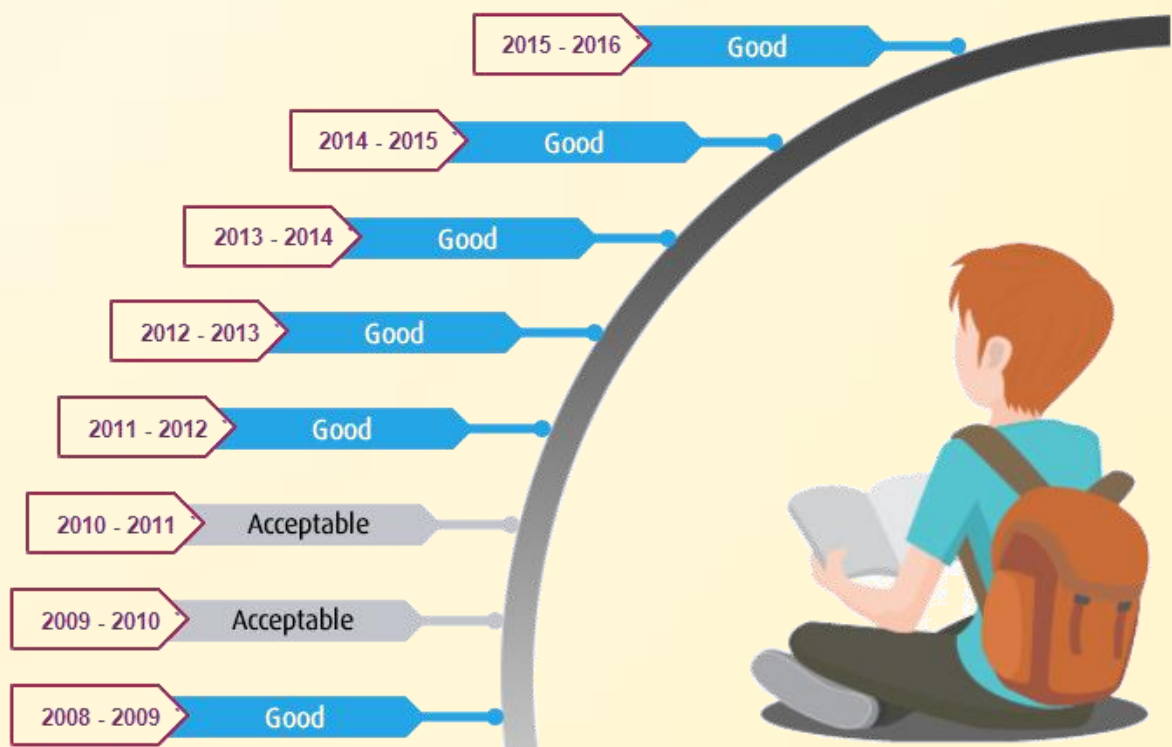


Summary for parents and the community

Al Salam Private School was inspected by DSIB from 23 to 26 November 2015. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **good**.

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

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





How well did the school perform overall?

Overall, **Al Salam Private School** provided a **good** quality of education for its students.

- As a result, of at least good progress, students' attainment in the secondary and post-16 phases was very good in science and outstanding in mathematics in post-16. In Islamic education and Arabic, students' progress and attainment was good. In the early years Foundation Stage and primary phase, attainment and progress were good.
- In the secondary and post-16 phases, students' personal and social development was outstanding. Across the school students were mature, responsible and very keen to learn. They consistently demonstrated Islamic values in their day-to-day lives. In the Foundation Stage a few children struggled to manage their own behaviour.
- The quality of teaching was good in the primary and early years phases and generally better in classes for older students. Teachers knew their subjects very well. In the secondary and post-16 phases they used their expertise to plan creative and engaging activities. Assessment processes were very good in most phases but lacked accuracy in the Foundation Stage.
- The curriculum was extended very well to meet the needs of different groups of students in the secondary and post-16 phases. In all phases the curriculum provided students with very good opportunities to deepen their understanding of the UAE.
- The health and safety of students was outstanding. All students benefitted from the inclusive, nurturing and family ethos that resulted in very good care and support.
- Leaders provided an inspirational vision for school improvement. Checks on how the school was providing for students were regular and accurate. Most parents were supportive of the school.



What did the school do well?

- The highly inclusive nature of the school and the family ethos resulted in confident and mature students who had an outstanding understanding of Islamic values.
- The exceptionally clear vision provided by the headteacher had led to very good teaching and curriculum provision in the upper phases, which resulted in consistently very good and often outstanding results in international and external examinations.
- The very good care and support provided by the school, including for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), ensured that all students were safe, their personal development needs fully met and their equal opportunities successful.
- The rigorous systems of monitoring were used very well to provide the school with a clear view of strengths and weaknesses and led to accurate and focused plans for further improvement.



What does the school need to do next?

- Improve teaching and the development of learning skills in the Foundation Stage and primary phase in all subjects by:
 - teachers asking more probing questions to encourage students to think deeply and creatively
 - providing more time in lessons for students to find out things for themselves and draw their own conclusions.
- Improve curriculum design and adaptation in the Foundation Stage and primary phase by:
 - spreading the innovative opportunities seen in the upper phases including the use of 21st century technology
 - taking a consistent approach to the way teachers use their good knowledge of students' strengths and weaknesses, including those of students with SEND to modify activities in lessons.
- Improve the accuracy of assessment in the Foundation Stage and use the information to plan activities that better match the prior attainment of all groups of children.



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

- Students with SEND were making good progress in achieving their targets.
- Communication with parents was regular and informative.
- Written reports were provided to parents periodically to help them to develop a good understanding of the progress being made by students.
- The school encouraged the active involvement of parents in the development and review of student learning plans and targets.
- Parents valued the strong support and guidance they received to help their child make the best progress possible.

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:

- Progress towards meeting the National Agenda targets was as expected. There was a general awareness, amongst the staff, about the National Agenda but the requirements of the National Agenda Parameter needed a sharper focus.
- Members of the governing body were aware of the school's targets for TIMSS and PISA and had identified the improvement of attainment by Emirati students as a priority.
- Understanding and awareness of the National Agenda amongst the parents was somewhat vague. The students though were highly perceptive. They were able to explain in detail how the aim of the UAE was to drive forward the performance of students in TIMSS and PISA so that the country could become one of the top performing nations in the world.
- Careful consideration had been given to the requirements of TIMSS and PISA. Teachers' planning focused on questioning skills and higher order thinking skills. They understood that preparation for these tests was centred on the acquisition of skills and, as such, this had been both identified and planned for. This had been achieved through the analysis of previous TIMSS and PISA reports.
- All departments were firmly embedding critical thinking into their planning. In maths, students in problem solving activities were able to link their learning to real life situations. In science lessons, the students were given the opportunity to predict, hypothesise, test and then evaluate their predictions. In English, students were asked to reflect on the opinions of others and point out strengths and weaknesses in their arguments.
- The use of learning technologies was limited. However, other resources, produced by the teachers, were used to good effect to both support and enhance the learning.

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 through their guidance had inspired and empowered a strategically thinking, innovative school community. The school's curriculum was tailored to ensure that the learning experience reflected students' needs. Students' capacity and disposition to be innovative and to apply these in the real world was considered. In spite of limited resources, the school had developed a culture of innovation by creating centres for learning where they did not previously exist. The curriculum provided for incremental innovation opportunities for the youngest students and progressed to 'disruptive innovation' to change the paradigm of education at the secondary and post-16 levels.

Overall school performance

Good

1. Students' achievement

		Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Islamic education 	Attainment	Not applicable	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Not applicable	Good	Good	Good
Arabic as a first language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Not applicable	Good	Good	Good
Arabic as an additional language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Good	Good	Not applicable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good	Good	Not applicable
English 	Attainment	Good	Good	Very good ↑	Not applicable
	Progress	Good	Good	Very good ↑	Not applicable
Mathematics 	Attainment	Good	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Outstanding
	Progress	Good	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Outstanding
Science 	Attainment	Good	Good	Very good ↑	Very good ↑
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	Very good ↑

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Learning skills	Good	Good	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Personal development	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Outstanding	Outstanding

3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Very good ↑	Very good ↑
Assessment	Good	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Good	Very good ↑	Very good ↑
Curriculum adaptation	Good	Good	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Care and support	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

6. Leadership and management

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



Main inspection report

The Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) is responsible for inspecting and reporting on the standards reached by students and the quality of education provided in Dubai's private schools.

Judgements are made on a six-point scale



Using this scale, the *Main inspection report* contains the judgements about the different aspects, phases and subjects that form the work of the school.

It provides the reasons for the answers to the questions in the *Summary for parents and the community*:

- How well did the school perform overall?
- What did the school do well?
- What does the school need to do next?

1. Students' achievement

Foundation Stage

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

- Children's attainment in English was above the school's early years curriculum standard. The large majority of children were learning English as an additional language and were acquiring a proficient range of language and communication skills. Children were able to retell and role-play stories using key features of a text. They made better than expected progress in lessons and over time. They were beginning to read and write using their phonic knowledge. Work in lessons showed children using their knowledge of high frequency words and imaginative vocabulary in their independent writing. School assessment data and children's work in lessons showed that children made good progress.
- Mathematical attainment in the Foundation Stage was above the school's early years curriculum standard. In lessons children competently used their skills in number, shape, space and measurement. They could use comparative language when describing size and could identify two and three-dimensional shapes in their environment. School data indicated that the majority of children made good progress in relation to their starting points. For example, children had moved on from counting up to ten and beyond to understanding different sequences to 20 and 30, identifying missing numbers and counting back. Interesting lessons were planned with practical opportunities for children to use and apply their mathematical skills. The majority of groups made better than expected progress.
- As in English and mathematics, attainment was above the school's early years curriculum standard in science. Engaging lessons were planned which helped children make predictions and test their theories. Children in Foundation Stage 2 considered why astronauts wore space suits and took part in an experiment to see how cotton wool in a bag acted as an insulator. School data showed that children attained standards in science that were above curriculum standards. This was evident in lessons. Children enjoyed practical opportunities to investigate and explore making good progress in lessons and over time. They were curious to learn and teachers actively encouraged them to ask and answer questions. In some instances computer programs were used to support the learning. The majority of groups made better than expected progress.

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students attained levels that were above curriculum standards. They could apply their learning to real life situations. Their knowledge of the Pillars of Islam, faith and the prophets Ibrahim's story was strong. Arab Muslim students' recitation skills were developing well but with limited links to the Quranic verses. This was better for non-Arab Muslim students. The students made good progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to the learning objectives in lessons. However, the progress of the different groups of students, including those with SEND was inconsistent. There were no externally benchmarked assessments. The analysis of internal assessment information was inconsistent.
- In lessons and overtime the majority of students attained levels that were above curriculum standards in Arabic as a first language. The skills of speaking and listening were the strongest elements of students' attainment. All groups of students made good progress and spoke Arabic correctly in lessons using a wide range of vocabulary. Students made good progress in developing reading skills, especially in reading poetry and stories. They understood what they read well. In writing, students in Year 3 copied paragraphs in clear handwriting with few spelling errors. In Year 4, 5, and 6 students were able to write free scripts covering multiple topics such as, love of their country and National Day. There were no externally benchmarked assessments used.
- In Arabic as an additional language the majority of students attained above curriculum standards. The majority spoke Arabic correctly using well-formed sentences. In lessons students demonstrated knowledge, skills and understanding above curriculum standards. For example they had well-formed handwriting skills and could accurately read short stories. Over time the attainment of the majority of all groups of students has been above national standards and was continuing to improve as a result of good progress. There were no external internationally benchmark assessments available to be used by the school.
- Students received a good grounding in the basic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in English. As a result, attainment was above curriculum standards. Progress in English over time and in lessons was good. Even the youngest students had very advanced speaking and listening skills. They were able to carry on conversations with peers and teachers using correct diction and pronunciation. Across the primary years all groups of students read both silently and aloud with good comprehension. By Year 6, students' free writing was good and this was evident in above international average attainment in external test data.
- In mathematics, students made very good progress in lessons and over time. A large majority attained at levels above curriculum standards. This was clearly evident in their written work. All of the students, including those with SEND, were challenged by problem solving activities that enabled them to apply their skills to the real world. Year 6 students enjoyed a lesson where they applied their knowledge of rounding up of decimals, to calculate the cost of their shopping budget. The school used a range of national and international benchmark tests. These tests confirmed that students performed at levels above national and international standards. Over time, there had been a steady improvement in students' attainment, indicating very good progress.

- Students' attainment and progress in science over time and in lessons were good. A majority of students demonstrated better than expected knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts such as reversible and irreversible changes. Internal and external assessment data indicated attainment above curriculum and international standards. Similar levels had been sustained over three years. Many examples of good attainment were seen by inspectors. In Year 3, for example, students were able to use hands-on activities to demonstrate a good understanding of the role stems play in transporting water in plants. Progress was good overall for different groups of students. In the weaker lessons, progress was hindered by excessive guidance from the teacher.

Secondary		
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	Very good ↑	Good

- In Islamic education the majority of students attained levels that were above curriculum standards. Their knowledge of the Fiqh, marriage in Islam, different types of prayer, etiquettes, Islamic morals and values were above curriculum expectations. Students' recent work reflected this well, in their debates and discussions and in the use of Quranic verses. These skills were stronger for non-Arab Muslim students. The majority of students made good progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills in lessons and overtime. Students' recitation skills were developing well. Progress in Fiqh and Sharia, for different groups of students including those with SEND, was inconsistent. External assessments were not used for benchmarking.
- In Arabic as a first language the attainment of the majority of students was above curriculum standards. All students spoke Arabic and the majority of them had a richness in the vocabulary they used in presentations to other students, especially in Years 8 and 10. The majority of the students had knowledge of grammar rules that were compatible with the content of the curriculum for students in Year 11. In lessons and over time the majority of students made good progress in their understanding of what they read from the prescribed curriculum. Students were developing free writing skills but levels of performance from year-to-year were inconsistent. There were no external internationally benchmarked assessments used by the school.
- All groups of students made good progress over time in learning the skills of speaking Arabic as a second language. Attainment was above curriculum standards. In lessons and in their work students demonstrated good levels of knowledge, skill and understanding. They could form correct and meaningful sentences and read well from a good range of books. They understood what they read and wrote summaries about the stories. They skillfully copied long passages from curriculum textbooks. School data indicated that in internal examinations students did consistently well. External assessments were not available for wider benchmarking purposes.

- In English, students exhibited a very high level of competence in speaking and listening, reading and writing in comparison with curriculum standards. They were able to express their thoughts, ideas and attitudes both in written and oral form. Almost all students demonstrated a confidence in speaking and listening that was unusual for students who were not native speakers. In lessons their well-developed knowledge, understanding and skills allowed them to participate in many creative and collaborative activities. School data indicated that in internal and external tests all groups of students made very good progress over time to attain standards well above curriculum expectations. Creative and expository writing was part of their repertoire and they wrote stories, poems, formal and informal letters, and essays with great success.
- In mathematics, attainment was very good with a large majority of students attaining at levels above curriculum standards. Similarly, their progress over time was also very good. School data indicated that in external IGCSE examinations, most students achieved grades A* to B. This reflected well the level of consistency of students' performance over time. Students made very good progress in lessons where they were challenged to solve problems, which gave them the opportunity to apply their knowledge and to work independently.
- Students demonstrated very good understanding and application of concepts in science. In Year 10, for example, students were able to investigate the impact of exercise on their breathing rate and could explain the correlation between them. Students' attainment levels in lessons were very good and in line with their external examination results that had been well above curriculum standards for the past three years. The majority of students made better than expected progress in lessons. They achieved their learning objectives in lessons consistently through investigative work and through experimentation. In Year 9, for example, students were able to design and run an experiment to find out how pressure in a liquid changed with depth.

Post-16

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

- In Islamic education the majority of students attained levels that were above curriculum standards. They had a strong knowledge and understanding of the Islamic principles, Fiqh, divorce in Islam, human rights in Islam, Seerah and Hadith. This was a strong feature of non-Arab Muslim students' attainment. Using Hadith and verses from the Holy Qur'an to support the students' point of views was inconsistent. Students made progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to the learning objectives of lessons. Their progress in understanding Fiqh and Islamic morals and values were rapid while it was steady in recitation and slow in Hadith and Sharia. The progress of the different groups of students was inconsistent. School analysis of the assessment information of attainment and progress and attainment in internal tests were stronger for non-Arab Muslim students. External assessments were not used for benchmarking.

- In Arabic as a first language the majority of students achieved a good understanding of what they heard from their teacher and their friends. Their answers were correct and demonstrated levels of attainment above national curriculum standards. They memorized many poems and presented them in front of their friends. Students demonstrated a good ability to use dictionaries to explain the meanings of words. All groups of students spoke Arabic well with good levels of vocabulary. In lessons and over time, the school achieved good progress in reading for example, in stories about the UAE. Students' work indicated that writing skills were good also.
- In mathematics students made outstanding progress and most attained levels that were above curriculum standards. School data indicated that in AS level tests most students attained at grades A and B and this had been a consistent trend over time. Progress in lessons was outstanding for almost all groups of students and enabled them to develop their skills and build their knowledge further. One such example was a lesson where students used different properties of the circle to solve geometrical problems and made rapid progress.
- Students generally demonstrated knowledge, understanding and application of concepts in physics, chemistry, and biology in ways that exceeded curriculum expectations. In Year 12, students learning physics were able to teach one another about the law of conservation of momentum using effective learning technologies. Students' scores in AS level examinations were very good. In lessons, students made very good progress towards their learning objectives. Their progress over time was strongly promoted by their high levels of engagement and sense of responsibility.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Learning skills	Good	Good	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- Students were eager to study and assumed mature responsibility for their learning. For example, Year 8 students in social studies worked in pairs on a web-mapping project with minimal intervention from the teacher. Students' independent skills were less well developed in lower years due to overly adult-directed teaching.
- Students' collaboration and interactions were well developed and a feature of most lessons. In the better lessons students had choices to complete activities in groups or individually. Older students were particularly comfortable working together and could clearly and confidently explain to teachers and their peers what they had learned.
- Students confidently made connections across areas of learning to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, Year 4 science students used examples from real life, such as burning wood and boiling eggs, to demonstrate their grasp of reversible and irreversible changes. Upper phases were skilful at consistently making relevant connections across areas of learning.
- Innovative strategies incorporating technology were better in upper phases, for example Year 11 students were preparing for a 'Mystery Skype' session with a school in India. This initiative developed students' critical thinking and problem solving skills. In the lower part of the phase, technology was mainly used by teachers using interactive whiteboards and projectors and was not consistently used independently by students.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Personal development	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students across all phases displayed positive attitudes and spoke with pride about their school and learning. Students in the upper phase linked their school experience to a journey that was 'an adventure'. They were engaged in their lessons and were open and responsive to feedback on how to improve.
- Upper phase students were outstanding role models for younger students. Respect was a positive feature of the interactions between them, their teachers and peers. Behaviour of students in the lower phases was usually well disciplined. A few children in the Foundation Stage found it difficult to manage their own behaviour. Students throughout all phases valued the school's 'zero tolerance' attitude towards bullying.
- Students thoroughly enjoyed the comfortable relationships that had been established between peers and with adults in the school. Students described Al Salam Private School as being 'like a small family - someone is always there for you.'
- Almost all students made good choices with regard to healthy living and healthy eating. Students had opportunities to take part in some regular physical exercise and were looking forward to the completion of the new gymnasium facilities to further develop these interests and to improve their overall health.
- Attendance was outstanding. Punctuality was an issue for some students, particularly those in the lower phases.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students across all phases had an exceptional appreciation of how Islamic values influenced their own lives and modern society in Dubai and the UAE. Students, particularly in secondary and post-16 phases, explained how this appreciation had a positive impact on their attitude, habits and relationships with others.
- Students' awareness of Emirati heritage and culture was very strong. Their recognition of the diversity of Dubai and the UAE and their understanding of its impact on their future was exemplary. They explained respectfully the UAE history and how it has developed.
- Across all phases, the students were very sensitive to the needs of others. They were very proud of their own cultures and highly respectful of that of others. They were able to explain well the famous traditions and main features of different cultures. Their understanding of western culture was slightly less well developed, especially in primary and lower secondary phases.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students, particularly those in the secondary and post-16 phases played a very active role in community service. Dedicated groups of students raised money and volunteered to help in special centres within their local community. Their awareness and willingness to support others was highly commendable.
- Students were highly dedicated and consistently took responsibility for enhancing their own learning and for organising whole school initiatives. They took pride in their work and routinely aimed to achieve their best. The students were empowered to prepare for life beyond school.
- There was a very strong emphasis across all year groups, led by secondary and post-16 students, on improving the environment of both the school and outside community. Recycling and helping local communities to become involvement in 'green projects' in Dubai, the UAE and abroad were fully embedded in the school's and students' initiatives.

3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- Teachers across all phases had strong subject knowledge, particularly in the secondary and post-16 phases. Most teachers knew how students learn best, but were not routinely able to put this knowledge into practice. In the primary phase teachers too often relied on too much instruction rather than helping the students find things out for themselves and take greater responsibility for their learning.
- A strength of the teaching was very good planning. Teachers used a common format that included targeted activities adjusted to suit the variety of learners' needs, linkages to other subjects and clear success criteria. Lessons were linked closely to curriculum expectations. Appropriate pace and challenge were evident in most lessons. Sometimes in the primary phase, lessons did not have high enough expectations and were too slowly paced.
- A highlight of the school that contributed to the at least good outcomes were the positive relationships between students and teachers. Teachers of even the youngest children employed questioning and dialogue to good advantage. This was more developed and meaningful in the upper two phases where questions frequently provided opportunities for students to reflect and deepen their thinking.
- Teachers across the school knew their students very well and understood the importance of employing different strategies for different groups of students. Lesson plans reflected this understanding and each plan included strategies to provide for the needs of the different groups. Support for students was not consistent in each class but generally more so in the secondary and post-16 phases.

- The importance of developing critical thinking and other 21st century skills was known and understood by teachers. They approached this with varying degrees of success. In the secondary and post-16 phases teachers were very skilled at encouraging students to work together, for example using the eduScrum technology for creating and managing group projects. Lower down the school, innovative projects such as these were still just developing.
- Teachers of Arabic as a first language planned lessons effectively to involve students in class discussions and used dialogue as a strategy to engage them. They had good knowledge of how students learn and took into account individual differences. The majority of teachers used technology for curriculum enrichment.
- Teachers of Arabic as an additional language had good knowledge of their students' abilities and skills. They were able to plan lessons and set appropriate learning objectives. Most teachers used dialogue and discussion as part of their strategies to encourage students' interaction.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Assessment	Good	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- Internal assessments that were valid and closely linked to curriculum standards were used well in most phases. Heads of departments ensured that internal assessment processes were coherent and consistent across the school.
- The school benchmarked its students' outcomes against a range of reliable external assessments. These included Cambridge Checkpoints in Years 6 and 9, IGCSE examinations in Year 11, AS level examinations in Year 12 and IBT tests in Years 4 and 8. This external moderation gave confidence in the school's assessment system as a whole.
- The school analysed available attainment data in depth. Teachers tracked students' progress in lessons using rubrics that were commonly agreed among the department staff. However, tracking students' progress over the years was still a developing feature of the assessment process. In the Foundation Stage, assessment systems did not consistently generate data that accurately reflected what children could do routinely and independently.
- Assessment information was also used very well to modify the curriculum. The school identified areas for improvement in both content and skills by analysing internal and external assessment data. The use of this analysis to modify teaching and lesson planning was usually very good, but occasionally it varied too much across subjects.
- Teachers knew their students very well and provided them with appropriately challenging tasks. In most cases, but not all, teachers' feedback provided students with very useful information about their next steps in learning and ways to improve the quality of their work.

4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Good	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- The Cambridge Curriculum was followed across the school. It was made more relevant through the introduction of interesting contexts. The curriculum was both innovative and challenging. It fulfilled the requirements of the Cambridge Board whilst Arabic, Islamic education and social studies fulfilled the statutory requirements and were well matched to the Ministry of Education expectations.
- The curriculum had been skillfully developed to allow students to build progressively upon their skills and knowledge from year-to-year across subjects and phases. The curriculum met the needs of almost all students. Effective transition was supported from Foundation Stage through to post-16 by the efficient sharing of information about students, which was then incorporated into teaching programmes.
- Subject options in the secondary and post-16 phases were matched to the talents and interests of students. In the Foundation Stage the curriculum allowed children to learn at their own pace through practical and exploratory activities. The upper secondary IGCSE subject choices had been broadened to include Global Perspectives, Tourism and Travel, and Islamic Studies, in addition to a range of online global study courses in Year 9.
- Cross-curricular links and real life contexts were integral to lesson planning. This was stronger in secondary and post-16 phases. In the best lessons, examples were well chosen and made the learning more relevant to students and their own lives. For example, in English the link made between Robert Frost's poem, 'The road less travelled' and the life skills being taught in personal, social and health education.
- The review of the school curriculum was a dynamic and on-going process to improve provision taking account of the National Agenda and other priorities. The results of international testing had resulted in significant curriculum change to help students develop the skills necessary for improvement. Social studies helped to develop the students' global and cultural understanding of the heritage of the UAE.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum adaptation	Good	Good	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- Most teachers modified the curriculum to meet the needs of different groups of learners. Successful modification was more evident in secondary and post-16 phases. A language enrichment programme had been developed for students to improve their language skills. The curriculum included opportunities for higher achieving students to extend themselves.
- The curriculum had been enriched to include enterprise, creativity and the use of 21st century technology, especially in secondary and post-16. Social studies developed greater knowledge and understanding of world cultures. Community service had been built into the curriculum. The extra-curricular programme was very well supported in the upper years. It offered a broad range of opportunities for students to engage in sporting, artistic and recreational activities.
- The traditions, culture and values that underpin the society of the UAE were embedded across the entire curriculum through a wide range of interesting and relevant topics. .
- The school provided Arabic in Foundation Stage for all first language Arabic and Arabic as an additional language speakers. A daily 40-minute session was allocated to develop the children's awareness of Arabic sounds and everyday vocabulary.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The school took the subject of care very seriously. The child protection officer, together with the counsellor, oversaw the implementation of the school's policy. Students, in interview, remarked that the dangers of cyber-bullying were a common feature of assemblies. The processes surrounding safe recruitment were firmly established.
- There were very effective arrangements in place to ensure the health, safety and security of the students. The operations manager had organised systems for the identification of risk and for regular hygiene checks. Students were very well supervised. Arrangements for the arrival and departure of school transport were characterised by a strong adult presence and well organised procedures.
- All fire drills were recorded. The information was thereafter analysed in order to make any necessary refinements. The keeping of medical records and the recording of incidents were thorough. Staff in the clinic were fully aware of regulations and their responsibilities. Medical supplies in the clinic and chemicals in laboratories were all housed in locked cupboards.

- The premises provided a safe and secure environment that was very well suited to the needs of all the students. The absence of a lift restricted admission for students with physical disabilities. The imminent completion of a new school gymnasium and indoor play area was planned to further increase opportunities.
- The school had been particularly active in promoting a safe and healthy lifestyle. This was evident within the physical education programme and in display material around the school. It had also featured strongly as a theme for assemblies. To mark the 25th anniversary of the school, the students had produced their own healthy food cookbook.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Care and support	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- Staff knew their students very well and were aware of their needs. Students held special events during the year that acknowledged and showed appreciation for their teachers. The discipline procedures were clear, fair and explicit. They provided boundaries within which students were expected to make responsible choices.
- Effective policies were in place to encourage punctuality and good attendance. Follow up procedures for unauthorised absences were consistent. The school rewarded good attendance with appreciation certificates.
- Early identification of students with SEND was in place. Individual education plans or individual support plans had been implemented for these students and shared with staff. Higher levels of challenge for gifted and talented students were being actively developed and implemented across the school. The school's entrance procedures were inclusive.
- The school had a range of specialist staff co-ordinated by the leader of special educational needs and counselling. They worked closely with classroom and specialist support teachers. The majority of class teachers were familiar with the procedures for supporting students. The needs of most but not all students were met.
- Effective procedures were in place to monitor the personal development and well-being of all students. Students causing any concern had a teacher assigned to help them. Students felt well supported and protected at school. Senior students received sound advice and guidance about career choices and tertiary pathways best suited to their needs and aspirations.

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

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

Good

- School leadership was committed to supporting all students with SEND. The school was truly inclusive and had appointed a good leader and dedicated staff. The school was resourcing SEND provision with a team of over 35 staff in total.

- The identification of students with SEND was reliable, prompt and used internal and external agencies to ensure it was accurate and complied with KHDA categories. Once students were identified their individual education and support programmes were designed in conjunction with staff with SEND responsibilities, subject teachers, students and parents.
- Parents were invited to be active partners in the education of their children. Most were keen to be kept up to date with all aspects of their child's development and progress and had developed strong relationships with the school staff.
- Modification of the curriculum was sometimes inconsistent. In the Foundation Stage provided appropriate tasks and support for children with SEND. In the upper years, teachers of mathematics, were generally more successful in using differentiated lesson objectives, tasks and expected outcomes to benefit students with SEND than the teachers of other subjects.
- Monitoring of students' progress was good and improving through a range of strategies, including better tracking and baseline testing than previously used. This ensured more accurate assessment of students.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Very good 

- The headteacher set an inspirational vision for the school resulting in a highly inclusive school where all were welcome regardless of background or ability. School leaders were fully committed to school improvement and the delivery of the UAE national agenda. Leaders were forward thinking in their planning for improvement and used available resources well to continue to meet students' needs.
- Senior leaders provided role models through their very good knowledge of the curriculum and in demonstrating best practice in teaching. Leaders were firmly focused on improving students' learning academically and in their personal development. This was most successful in the secondary and post-16 phases where the attainment of almost all students was at least well above average levels in IGCSE and AS levels examinations.
- Relationships between leaders and staff were excellent. An ethos of mutual respect permeated the school and provided excellent examples for students to emulate. Very effective communication systems enabled staff to contribute to the school's understanding of strengths and weaknesses. Good systems of delegation enabled subject leaders to improve achievement, but not all subject leaders had the opportunity to drive improvement beyond their own subject.
- School leaders had a very clear understanding of the barriers to school improvement. They had acted promptly to improve important aspects of the schools work such as the development of students' critical thinking skills. These actions together with a clear well targeted action plan demonstrated a very good capacity to continue to improve.
- Leaders had successfully developed key aspects of the school's provision. High standards in English, mathematics and science in IGCSE and AS examinations had been maintained and in the secondary phase improved further. Innovative additions to curriculum provision using 21st century technology had extended opportunities for older students, but less so in the primary phase. The school was compliant with all regulatory requirements.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Very good ↑

- The school made very effective use of internal and external assessments of students' attainment and progress to support the identification of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This information was used very well to set key priorities for improvement. For example, increased opportunities for problem solving and critical thinking in mathematics had resulted in improved levels of attainment in most phases.
- The school had clearly stated standards against which the quality of teaching was measured. At the heart of these standards was the impact of teaching on students' learning. A very effective performance management system required all staff to be reflective and act on feedback to improve their performance. This had resulted in improvements in the quality of teaching, particularly in the secondary and post-16 phases.
- School improvement plans were based on accurate and rigorous monitoring. Clear targets with realistic timescales were set. Contributing to the UAE vision and ensuring that all students had access to a good education was central to the school plans. This resulted in improvement in students' achievement in the upper phases, but had been less successful in increasing the pace of improvement in the lower phases.
- The school had taken prompt action to address the recommendations from the previous inspection. Opportunities for students to develop critical thinking skills were key features of lessons for older students. Teachers had increased their knowledge of the specific needs of groups of students and in most lessons the curriculum was modified to meet these. However this was inconsistent across subjects, especially in lower primary classes.

Partnerships with parents and the community

Good

- The parents expressed their satisfaction with the quality of education their children received. They believed that the senior leadership team listened well to their opinions and considered them in developing the various aspects of the school's performance.
- Parents were satisfied with the amount of information they received through meetings with teachers and through the daily diaries. They felt that the two-way communication with the school helped them stay informed about their children's progress and the school's activities. Parents of students with SEND thought that they were well engaged with the school as partners in the education of their children.
- Parents were generally satisfied with the quality and frequency of the reports they received from the school on a termly basis. Some parents, however, expressed the need for reports to be easier to read and to be more informative about their children's next steps in learning.
- The school built effective partnerships with the local and national communities. These included partnerships with other schools to develop plans to align their teaching and learning with the UAE National Agenda requirements. The school also built a partnership with a rehabilitation centre in Dubai that enabled students to support and spend time with people with disabilities.

Governance	Good
- Representation on the governing board had been strengthened. The school had been proactive in seeking new governors who could provide the school with a range of expertise and skill, for example, in the fields of finance, business and education. The wide range of representatives ensured that the board was aware of the views of stakeholders. - The board members had visited the school and at first hand gained knowledge of performance through visits to classrooms and discussions with staff and students. Board members with an expertise in education were able to analyse the school's academic performance and provide appropriate support and challenge. Other board members used their expertise to challenge the school in areas such as staff performance management. - Although the large majority of board members were new to the role they had begun to exert a positive influence on significant areas of the school's work, for example in the choice of National Agenda parameter tests and resourcing of provision to close gaps in the attainment of different groups of students. The board ensured that all statutory requirements were met.	

Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Good
- The procedures and routines based on the school's timetable allowed a smooth and efficient running of the school that made good use of teachers' and students' time. - Most teachers were suitably qualified and their performance was in line with the vision and mission of the school. They received regular internal and external opportunities for professional development based on a comprehensive assessment of their needs. - The school environment supported teaching and learning well. The two computer laboratories, the library, the music room and other areas contained the resources needed for students to achieve well academically and to develop personally. The school did not have a lift to allow full access to school premises for students with physical disabilities. - The range of resources and equipment available in the classrooms, science laboratories, computer laboratories, and other areas were used to promote effective implementation of the curriculum leading to good or better outcomes for students.	

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	170
	2014-2015	181
Teachers 	79	
Students 	159	

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

- Almost all parents and students who responded to the survey were satisfied with the quality of education at the school.
- Almost all parents were satisfied with the amount of progress their children were making in English and mathematics and most were satisfied with their children's progress in science and Islamic education. Students' opinions mirrored those of their parents.
- A few parents expressed their concern about the quality of teaching in Arabic.
- Almost all parents thought that their children got enough opportunities to learn about the community and environmental responsibility. Most students and almost all teachers agreed.
- All parents believed their children were safe at school and almost all believed they were safe on school buses. Teachers fully agreed.
- Almost all parents thought that the school kept them well informed about their children's progress.
- Almost all teachers said they were involved in the self-evaluation process and all teachers considered the leadership team effective. They received regular feedback from their line managers on the quality of their performance.

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