



Dubai National School
(Branch)

 Curriculum: US
Overall Rating:

Good



"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



Contents

School information.....	3
The DSIB inspection process.....	4
Summary of inspection findings 2016-2017	6
Main inspection report	12
1. Students' achievement.....	12
2. Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills.....	16
3. Teaching and assessment	18
4. Curriculum	19
5. The protection, care, guidance and support of students.....	20
Inclusion	22
6. Leadership and management	22
The views of parents, teachers and senior students.....	26



School information



General information

Location	Al Twar
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	1999
Website	www.dnschool.net
Telephone	04-2988555
Address	P.O. Box 20057
Principal	Malek Daradkeh
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	13 to 16 March 2017

Teachers / Support staff

Number of teachers	206
Largest nationality group of teachers	Jordan
Number of teaching assistants	30
Teacher-student ratio	1:9
Number of guidance counselors	5
Teacher turnover	21%

Students

Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	4 to 18
Grades or year groups	KG 1 to Grade 12
Number of students on roll	1,766
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	1,225
Number of students with SEND	127
Largest nationality group of students	Emirati

Curriculum

Educational permit / License	US
Main curriculum	Massachusetts
External tests and examinations	SAT, TOEFL, ACER: IBT
Accreditation	NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges)
National Agenda benchmark tests	MAP



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.

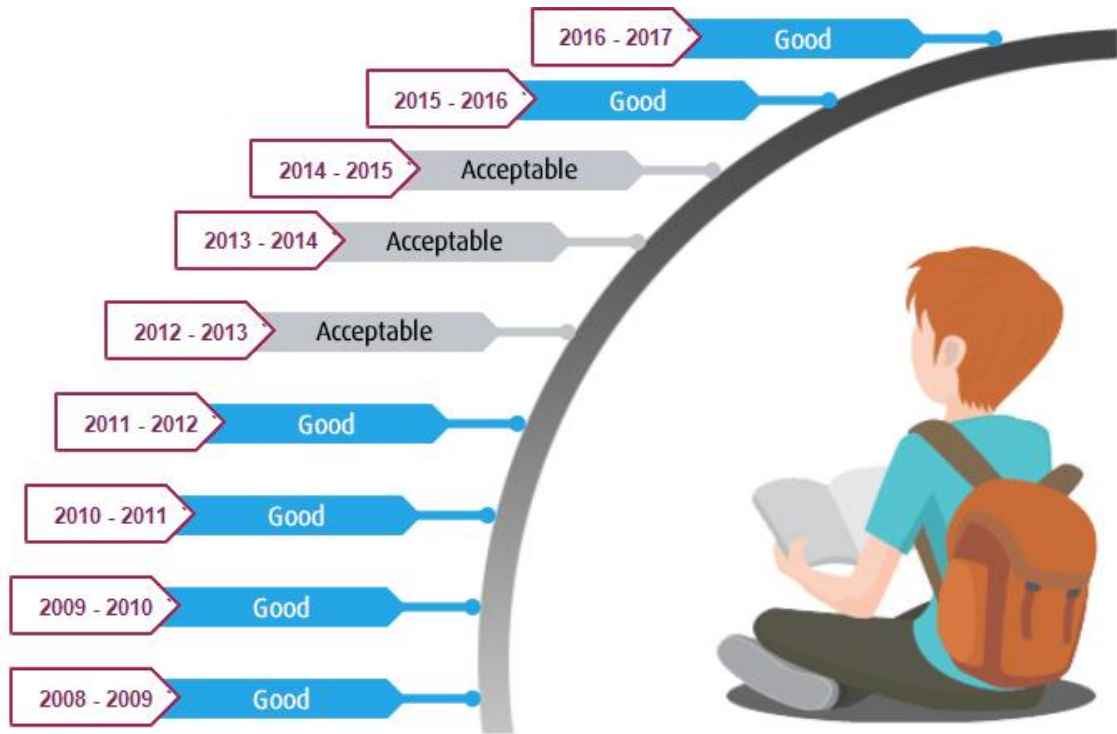
Inspection judgements are drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observation of students' learning in lessons, review of their work, discussions with students, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and review of surveys completed by parents, teachers and students.

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 Dubai National School (Branch)



- Dubai National School (Branch) was founded in 1999. Student numbers have stabilized and are now similar to what they were in 2015-16, following a drop of 483 students between 2013 to 2015. The current principal has been in the school since 2014. The rate of teacher turnover is 21 per cent, which is lower than last year's figure of 25 per cent.
- The overall rating was raised to 'good' in the 2015-16 inspection, with a number of significant improvements noted by the inspection team. Strengths noted over the past three inspections include students' strong personal development, and improvements in teaching, learning, assessment and curriculum implementation.
- Recommendations noted during the same period of time focused on the need to improve progress in Arabic and science, the use of external assessments to validate internal assessment, and the monitoring and evaluation of teaching. In addition, last year's inspection focused on the need to ensure teaching matched the needs of different students, and to improve learning skills and self evaluation.

Summary of inspection findings 2016-2017



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

- Attainment and progress in most subjects and phases is broadly good. The exceptions are; acceptable attainment and progress in Arabic as a first language in the middle and high; Acceptable attainment and progress in science in middle; acceptable attainment in English in elementary and middle; Very good attainment and progress in science in KG and high. Children and students are generally enthusiastic and eager to learn.
- Students demonstrate positive behavior when in school and their attendance is outstanding. They appreciate Islamic values and they reflect on, respect and appreciate the culture of the United Arab Emirates. Students show a high commitment to their school and they contribute actively to it in many ways.
- Most teachers have secure subject knowledge. However they do not consistently adapt their teaching approaches to challenge students of different abilities. Internal assessments present a reliable measure of students' attainment and progress when matched against curriculum standards. The use of assessment information by teachers to plan lessons matched to the needs of all students is less well developed.
- The school's curriculum is compliant with all UAE Ministry of Education (MoE), U.S. Common Core and Massachusetts state requirements. The high school offers additional electives but the blending of advanced mathematics courses does not offer a choice of pathways. Teachers' ability to adapt the curriculum to match different students' levels of understanding and ability is inconsistent.
- The school has policies to protect children from all forms of abuse, but the child protection policy does not outline the procedures sufficiently and clearly. Supervision of students is mostly effective, but during dismissal, visitors and parents are not clearly identified. Staff-student relationships are positive and mutual respect is evident. Well-developed procedures are in place to identify students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and students who are gifted or talented.
- Leaders at all levels are fully committed to the improvement of students' outcomes. The rigor with which they gather and analyze information from a range of sources is variable. Most parents consider themselves partners in their children's learning. Governors have been proactive in addressing issues that the school has faced over the past few years. The school is well managed and school leaders deploy appropriately-qualified teachers to enhance students' learning.

What the school does best

- Students of all backgrounds and abilities are welcomed, valued and supported in their learning and development. As a result, they:
 - develop excellent personal and social responsibility, understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati culture
 - make good progress in most key subjects and phases.
- Parents' very good partnerships with the school help ensure they are well informed about, and involved in, their children's learning.

Recommendations

- Governors and school leaders must address the health and safety issues identified in this report, in particular by:
 - clarifying the school's procedures and expectations for the safeguarding of children, and ensuring that all staff, students and parents are aware of these
 - ensuring the consistent implementation of arrangements to secure the school buildings, and the safety of children and students, especially during dismissal times.
- Governors should ensure that outcomes for students are improved by:
 - reviewing the structure and function of the governing body to extend representation and eliminate potential conflict of interest when holding senior leaders to account
 - setting a unified, simplified and prioritized direction for improvement, which is underpinned by effective and precise outcomes-based improvement planning, grounded in robust self-evaluation.
- School leaders and teachers should raise students' attainment and accelerate their progress in all subjects, and particularly in language acquisition by:
 - developing a clear understanding of how assessment data can be used to ensure high-quality teaching and curriculum modification to meet the needs and extend the learning of all students
 - ensuring that internal assessments are aligned with external and international benchmark tests to give a more accurate picture of students' attainment and progress
 - deepening students' learning and their ability to think critically through the use of different strategies, including the use of effective, open-ended questions.

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:

- The school meets the registration requirements for the National Agenda Parameter.
- Attainment based on the National Agenda Parameter is below expectations in English, mathematics and science.
- Senior leaders analyze the National Agenda Parameter data for major trends, strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum. More detailed analysis, by class and by student, is carried out at departmental level in order to identify issues with scope and sequence, and to highlight students requiring special measures.
- The school has introduced initiatives to ensure closer alignment of its curriculum to the content required in external benchmarking. For example, the creation of books in English, mathematics and science that provide content required for success in these benchmarks, but not necessarily found in the Common Core State Standards.
- Gaps in specifically identified skills have been addressed through better planning and resources, for instance, improved access to ICT and specialized software, such as virtual labs. Students are now increasingly required to participate in frequent research tasks, give presentations and engage in project-based learning.
- Students and their parents receive information on how to interpret the results of international benchmarking tests, and how to judge their own strengths and weaknesses in relation to external averages. Students are provided with pointers in English, math and science indicating what content areas they are ready to move onto in each subject. They set goals with the help of their teachers based on these results.

Overall, the school's improvement towards achieving its National Agenda targets meets expectations.

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:

- In most lessons, students do not benefit sufficiently from opportunities to think innovatively and creatively, especially in the lower phases. However, some examples of good practice are emerging, for example in high school technology, robotics, and forensic science classes, where students are expected to come find solutions to complex problems. Enterprise and entrepreneurship are studied in the high school business strand. A majority of teachers does not ask questions or set tasks in lessons that encourage students to adopt innovative approaches to their learning. School leaders have started to discuss and to articulate a coherent understanding of innovation with staff, but have not developed a plan for its integration into the curriculum.

Overall school performance

Good

1 Students' achievement

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Good	Good	Good	Good

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Personal development	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good

3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good	Good
Assessment	Good	Good	Good	Good

4. Curriculum

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum design and implementation	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good
Curriculum adaptation	Good	Good	Good	Good

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

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

6. Leadership and management

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

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	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- The majority of children make better than expected progress from their starting points and attain levels that are above curriculum expectations. Speaking, listening and early reading skills are developing well. Progress is particularly noticeable in KG2, where children can express themselves in complete sentences and read simple books. Children have limited opportunities to practise writing and as a result their writing skills are underdeveloped.
- Children's attainment and progress in mathematics are good. In KG2, children can count to 100 and recognize numbers to 50. A majority of children can recognize and replicate patterns with ease. Simple addition and subtraction of one and two digit numbers are well developed and most children are eager to demonstrate their skills in their independent work.
- In science, children's attainment and progress are very good, with the large majority demonstrating their ability to complete the hands on activities set for them. Children accurately use correct scientific vocabulary in their lessons. They enjoy practical activities, such as planting cucumber seeds, and can formulate a hypothesis about what will happen to them.

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students attain above curriculum expectations. Their knowledge and understanding of key Islamic concepts, Seerah and Islamic values, are secure. For example, students in Grade 4 understand well the rules of fasting and its spiritual and social benefits. They have good knowledge of recitation rules and their applications, evident in their work. In lessons and in their recent work, students make good progress overall.
- In Arabic as a first language, the majority of students' attainment is above MoE curriculum expectations. Students' reading and writing skills are good. They use correct grammar while speaking and discussing in groups. In lessons and in their recent work, students make good progress overall. In the best lessons students show better progress when they use a variety of learning styles. Students with SEND make adequate progress because the level of support they receive is inconsistent.
- In Arabic as an additional language, the majority of students attain levels above curriculum expectations. As a result, students have a good range of vocabulary on familiar topics such as school, colors, hobbies and food, acquired through reading short texts. They can write a sequence of sentences using appropriate language. In lessons and in recent work, the majority make good progress. Although they are able to give information in response to questions, their ability to ask questions is not as strong.
- In English, most students attain levels in line with curriculum standards, with a majority making better than expected progress. Students join the school often with limited English language skills. By Grade 2 they have a well-developed understanding of basic grammar, such as using pronouns with verbs. Most students speak fluently in class discussions with an increasing command of English. Most listen with accuracy and their reading skills develop at an appropriate pace. Their ability to write neatly and at length is more variable. Trends over time show good progress.
- In mathematics, the majority of students attain above curriculum expectations. Internal assessment indicates higher attainment. However, this is not supported by external assessment data or by levels observed during lessons. In class, and in their recent work, the majority of students make better than expected progress and demonstrate good knowledge and understanding and reach beyond the lesson objectives. Girls and boys progress at approximately equal rates and students with SEND make better than expected progress from their starting points.
- In science, the majority of the students make better than expected progress and attain levels that are above curriculum standards. For example, they have a good understanding of scientific method and follow the steps in practical, age-appropriate form. Grade 3 students demonstrate their understanding of light and color by constructing and spinning color wheels. SEND students make satisfactory progress.

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students demonstrate levels of knowledge, understanding and skills above curriculum expectations. Grade 8 students can explain and give examples of Prophet Mohammad's (PBUH) compassion for members of his family. Grade 7 students effectively apply the rules of recitation when reading Surat Al Rahman in lessons. Students make good progress as measured against learning objectives. However, in some lessons, students' ability to think critically and deepen their learning is limited.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students' attainment levels are in line with the expectations of the MoE curriculum. Students' fluency in their speaking and writing is acceptable, as is their extended writing. In lessons and in their recent written work, students make adequate progress, especially when the topics interest and engage them. Students with SEND make slower progress than that of their peers.
- In Arabic as an additional language, the majority of students attain levels above curriculum expectations considering their years of study. They are developing good listening skills on familiar topics. They can read and understand simple descriptive texts and short stories with good comprehension of the main ideas and events. However, their ability to converse in Arabic is inconsistent. Students are beginning to express their own ideas in writing using present and past tenses. Overall, in lessons and in their recent work, the majority make better than expected progress.
- In English, most students attain expected curriculum levels, although they perform less well in external benchmark tests. A majority of students make better than expected progress in their lessons and as they move through the grades. Most use age-appropriate vocabulary during class discussions and read accurately. Writing is more variable; younger students produce short responses, while a minority of older students, particularly girls in Grade 8, create well-written paragraphs using appropriate punctuation and increasingly complex grammar.
- In mathematics, the majority of students attain levels above curriculum expectations. Students make good progress overall from relatively low starting points. International benchmark test results indicate weaker attainment. However, in lessons and in their recent work, the majority of students attain beyond the lesson objectives. Over time, students have maintained their levels of performance on internal assessments. Girls make better progress and attain higher standards than boys.

- In science, most students make the expected progress and attain expected curriculum levels. In Grades 6 and 8, performance in both internal and external assessment is below expectations. However, student's attainment in lessons and in their recent work is stronger. They are developing their knowledge and application of scientific method, and most students can form and test hypotheses, and draw conclusions. By Grade 8, students can build electromagnets and, through investigation, can identify the factors which affect the force. More-able students do not fulfil their potential.

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students attain levels above curriculum expectations. They demonstrate knowledge and understanding of important social issues and Islamic values, such as the key principles and rules of marriage and divorce in Islam. Students in Grade 12 can explain the difference between three types of dreams and how to deal best with each type. Their understanding of prescribed chapters of the Holy Qur'an, Hadeeth and the rules of recitation is appropriate.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students' attainment levels are in line with curriculum expectations. They are competent in most of the skills, although their writing skills are less well developed. They can speak well using complete sentences. Students make acceptable progress overall. They make appropriate use of the reference booklets prepared for them. Boys and girls make similar progress in lessons.
- In English, the majority of students achieve levels above curriculum expectations. In Grade 9 they perform considerably less well in external benchmark tests. Almost all students speak and read fluently. Students are increasingly able to present personal research using technology. They make good progress in lessons and over time. By Grade 12, they show developing debating skills in response to complex issues such as conflict and migration. A majority of older students produce high-quality extended writing, for example, in comparing the factual life of Macbeth to Shakespeare's version.
- In mathematics, the majority of students exceed curriculum expectations. While internal assessment data indicates good attainment, MAP testing in Grade 9, and SATs in Grade 11, show weaker attainment. In lessons and in their work, the majority of students are attaining above curriculum expectations. Girls and boys are progressing well at approximately equal rates and SEND students make good progress from their individual starting points. However, the more able are not sufficiently challenged.

- In science, a large majority of students exceed curriculum expectations. They demonstrate high levels of mastery when measured against curriculum standards using internal assessments. Students demonstrate their knowledge and understanding with extended explanations in response to higher order questions. In Grade 11, students design their own investigations to test metals and arrange them in order of reactivity. The high level of challenge within lessons leads to very good progress.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Students are enthusiastic and eager to learn, particularly in the KG and elementary phases. When given the opportunity, they take responsibility for their learning, for example, in some high school English lessons. Students have a reasonably accurate understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses. They demonstrate independence in learning, but this is inconsistent across subjects and phases.
- Students work well in pairs and small groups. The interactions between students and with their teachers are polite but not always effective in improving understanding. A range of communication abilities is displayed in classes. The quality of communication, both oral and written, is generally higher amongst the girls.
- Students regularly develop skills and extend their knowledge, although transferring knowledge across subjects is not consistent. Links with the real world are optimized in science. In language classes, students use their learning in context and apply their understanding to both their own and other cultures.
- In mathematics and science, students routinely engage in problem solving, although in these subjects, independent research and the use of technology are less frequent. Students' development of critical thinking is inconsistent although it is better in high school English. Inquiry skills are strongest in KG and the elementary school, but are also developed in mathematics and science classes higher up the school.

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Personal development	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good

- Students display very positive attitudes towards their school and their school work. They are increasingly self-confident and they strive to do their best work in lessons. They accept constructive criticism when it is given.

- Most students demonstrate positive behavior when in school. They are courteous to adults and kind to their classmates. They are keen to please their teachers by demonstrating their best behavior in lessons. They display self-control and try hard to follow all school rules.
- Relationships between students and with their teachers are warm and respectful. Students report that they feel well supported in school. Almost all students are kind to their peers and offer assistance within lessons and throughout the school. They are supportive when their peers need help and are comfortable asking for help when challenged.
- Students have a good understanding of a healthy lifestyle. They respect their bodies and strive to incorporate exercise, healthy eating and positive thinking into a balanced lifestyle. However, they do not always choose the healthy eating options that the school offers.
- Attendance is outstanding and students arrive on time to lessons. However, punctuality at the start of the day is not as strong.

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

- Students have strong appreciation of Islamic values and are fully aware of the impact they have on their lives very much. A significant number perform the Umrah (pilgrimage to Mecca) with the school every year. They celebrate all the Islamic events and participate in many competitions for reciting the Qur'an. They demonstrate the values of the UAE vision of respecting, and showing tolerance to all faiths.
- Students show their respect and appreciation of the culture of UAE by discussing in depth the developments that have occurred in Dubai. They talk knowledgeably about the next steps in its development with regard to the UAE vision. They enjoy participating in all national events.
- Students in all phases appreciate their own, and other, cultures during Global Day and International Day celebrations. They set a good example of how young people from different countries can live together in harmony.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good

- Students feel a strong sense of belonging in their school. They contribute actively to school life and the wider community by, for example, initiating or participating in projects with the Red Crescent and the Islamic Affairs Directorate. They volunteer for activities with organizations such as the Bait Al Khair Society.
- Students have a very good work ethic. They initiate ideas through the annual Business Day; one student is running his own on-line business successfully. Students' contributions in Injaz and Expo 2020 have a significant impact on their personal development.

- Students are highly involved in environmental awareness projects. They have started planting their edible garden. They are keen to improve their school environment and participate in projects such as collecting plastic bottles and paper for recycling. They also play an active role in the Emirates Environmental Group.

3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Most teachers have good subject knowledge. They are beginning to modify their methods to support students' independent learning skills. This is particularly effective in the KG and high school phases. However, they do not consistently engage students in activities that support their preferred learning styles. Teachers use technology well to stimulate lesson activities, but do not sufficiently facilitate its use by students to support their personal research.
- In the most effective lessons, teachers use their knowledge of students' prior attainment to modify their lesson plans. This is, however, not consistent. Most teachers plan a range of activities to support learning. On occasion, they try to incorporate too many strategies, rather than focus on specific and measurable learning outcomes.
- In most lessons, highly supportive relationships result in enjoyable learning. A majority of teachers use skillful questioning to encourage student reflection and engagement in meaningful discussion. In the best lessons, teachers motivate students to contribute and listen to others and participate in stimulating group activities. In a minority of lessons, activities are not sufficiently challenging and teachers' limited class control leads to inappropriate student behavior.
- The most effective teachers encourage students to participate in a range of learning strategies and practical activities. However, they often have the same expectations for students of different abilities and interests. In a minority of lessons, teachers dominate lessons at the expense of allowing students to apply what they have learnt.
- In a few lessons, teachers ensure that learning objectives are sharply focused on improving critical thinking, research and investigative skills. As a result, students lead aspects of learning through presenting personal or group research. In some lessons, teachers spend too long on 'warm-up' exercises with insufficient time for purposeful learning.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Assessment	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Internal assessments present a composite view of the attainment and progress of the students. They are, in the majority of cases, increasingly reliable indicators of the students' attainment when matched against curriculum standards. However, the level of rigor presented in some internal assessments is not sufficient, resulting in an overly positive picture when compared to externally-measured assessments.

- Students' outcomes are compared to others in the U.A.E., as well as to students internationally through a variety of international benchmark tests. These results are analyzed to determine performance trends of particular groups of students. Internal assessments are not sufficiently aligned with international benchmark tests to ensure validity.
- Senior leaders carefully analyze both internal and external data to help them identify areas of strength of individual students and groups. Additionally, areas of the curriculum that are less effective are targeted for action planning to improve students' performance.
- Appropriate modifications are made on the basis of careful analysis. For example, analysis of external assessment data indicates that the majority of students perform poorly on questions about geometry and earth sciences. Subsequent modifications take account of this and fill the gaps in the curriculum. The use of assessment information by teachers to plan lessons that meet the needs of individual learners is underdeveloped.
- Teachers know the strengths and weakness of their students well. Most teachers regularly check students' understanding throughout the lesson. They provide good verbal guidance to students on how to improve. The quality of teacher's written feedback on students' work is inconsistent.

4. Curriculum

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum design and implementation	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good

- The school's curriculum is compliant with all UAE MoE, U.S. Common Core and Massachusetts state requirements. It is broad, relevant and age appropriate. It effectively develops a balance of knowledge, skills and understanding at each grade level.
- The curriculum is planned to ensure progression in all subjects. It meets the needs of almost all students. In KG, lessons follow learning standards that are sequential, and when effectively implemented ensure a smooth transition to the next phase of the school. The elementary and middle grades also reflect this process, again when implemented in a consistent manner across all classes.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities for students to expand their thinking and explore additional areas and interests as they prepare for their next level of learning. Additional electives are available this year. Science subjects are offered individually enabling a choice of pathways. However, the blending of advanced mathematics courses does not reflect a typical US curriculum.
- Cross-curricular links are planned in all phases. Links to the real world are embedded and contribute to expanded opportunities for students to make connections between their studies and the outside world. Opportunities for creativity and innovation are not consistent. However, they are increasingly present in some high school lessons, such as forensic science and robotics, and in other activities such as debate, drama, and 3-D technology.

- The school conducts regular reviews to ensure the curriculum is closely aligned to the Common Core and Massachusetts state standards. These reviews have contributed to a better alignment of what is taught in lessons and to the modification of the timetable to accommodate extra-curricular and enrichment clubs.
- The UAE social studies curriculum is compliant with MoE expectations. In Grades 1 to 8 lessons are taught in Arabic, whereas in Grades 9 to 12 they are taught in English. Topics and lessons are interactive and engaging. Overall, the curriculum is implemented well and encourages students to explore their world through a range of interesting activities. Assessments are aligned with MoE standards and include quizzes and students' projects as well as mid-term and final examinations.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum adaptation	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Most teachers adapt the amount of content and the level of task difficulty to support students with identified learning difficulties. They also provide additional challenges to students who are academically gifted. However, this practice is not consistent across the school. Students enrolled in special education classes, follow a curriculum that has been modified to suit their learning needs.
- A wide range of opportunities to foster creativity and innovation enriches aspects of the curriculum. Additional opportunities are offered to every student through elective extra-curricular activities and clubs such as chess, robotics, debating, leadership and graphic design. Enterprise and entrepreneurship are studied in the high school business strand, with opportunities for other students provided through school events such as Business Day.
- Arabic, Islamic education and social studies lessons develop effectively students' appreciation of UAE heritage, and many aspects of UAE life are celebrated in school events and assemblies. Teachers frequently use the experiences of their Emirati students and their peers to enhance their lessons. An appreciation of Emirati culture and values is promoted through classroom-based projects and participation in national celebrations.

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

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

- The school has policies to protect children from all forms of abuse including bullying and cyber-bullying. However, the child-protection policy does not outline the procedures sufficiently and clearly. Child protection training for staff is delegated to section supervisors, but staff are not sufficiently clear about procedures. The school offers students training on how to protect themselves from bullying and cyber-bullying.

- Arrangements to ensure safety and security on campus are effective in most respects. Supervision of students is mostly effective. However, during dismissal and at arrival, security procedures are not consistently implemented. The school has taken initial steps to address this concern.
- There are effective procedures to maintain the premises in good condition. Risk assessments and fire drills are regular. Dedicated medical staff maintain updated records of all students and share information about chronic cases with relevant staff. Medication is stored in a safe place with restricted access.
- The school premises and facilities provide a safe and secure environment that is very well suited to the needs of all students, including people with disabilities.
- The school is committed to promoting healthy lifestyles. The canteen offers a variety of healthy options for students, and there is a regular program of physical education and after school sport activities for all students. There are sufficient shaded areas and water coolers in all sections of school.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Care and support	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good

- Staff-student relationships are very positive and mutual respect is evident. The school's code of conduct and discipline policy outlines the school's expectations for students' behavior and links good conduct with effective teaching and learning. Guidance is provided on the promotion of good behavior and the actions to be taken in response to misbehavior.
- The school successfully deploys an efficient system for recording, monitoring and reporting students' attendance and punctuality. The policy clearly sets out the school's regulations and links academic success with good attendance and punctuality. It stresses the importance of shared parent and student accountability. All incidents are followed up promptly.
- Well-established procedures are in place to identify students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and those who are gifted or talented. Referral forms, parent interviews, professional reports, student observations, and standardized and school-based testing are all employed to identify and classify students. The data gathered informs the individual planning process to support students.
- The provision available for students with SEND includes class teacher-directed accommodations and withdrawal from one or more classes to attend specialist support lessons. However, there is no additional support for students after Grade 3. Some students with gifts and talents are supported through more challenging tasks, extended learning opportunities and participation in a range of local and national competitions.
- Teachers, supervisors and counselors collaborate productively to monitor and support the well-being of all students. A full-time guidance counselor works with middle and high school students and advises them on choosing electives in line with their personal interests and academic performance. Grade 11 and 12 students receive targeted support in identifying career and post-school options, and in applying for university.

Inclusion

Provision and outcomes for students with SEND

Good ↑

- The school is inclusive in policy and practice. It enrolls students with a wide range of diverse educational needs and provides a variety of strategies to support their academic development. The provision is led by a competent team of professionals. They are receiving ongoing professional development and provide good support, advice and training for classroom and subject teachers.
- The SEND department works closely with parents and external professionals to identify students with SEND. Students are assessed at entry and observed in class to establish baseline information. This information is used to make decisions about the accommodations and modifications that the students will need to access the curriculum. Insufficient account is taken of assessing students' specific skills in the English language.
- Parents are very involved in planning and supporting their children's learning. They attend meetings and make contributions to produce individual education plans. Parents are very supportive of the school and the provision. They receive frequent reports on their children's academic progress and personal development. A few parents of children with SEND have opted for a parents' training course that the school has recommended to them.
- Some students are not sufficiently engaged or challenged and their progress is hindered. Lesson plans often identify different strategies, to be deployed, but these are not integrated well into the teaching. When students attend special education classes, they follow a curriculum that is modified to suit their learning needs. This increases their engagement and enhances their progress.
- Overall, students with SEND make good academic progress. Every student with SEND has an individual education plan which guides curriculum instruction. However, these plans sometimes lack measurable targets and this inhibits their use in tracking progress. In addition, the targets do not address non-academic needs, such as behavior, social skills and communication skills, that are potential barriers to learning

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Good

- Leaders at all levels are fully committed to the improvement of students' outcomes. Senior leaders are in the process of articulating, and sharing with all staff, a clear understanding of what outstanding teaching, learning, assessment, and curriculum modification look like. Leaders are committed to aligning the direction they are setting to national priorities, including the National Agenda and inclusion.

- Most leaders have a secure knowledge of how students learn best. They have a good understanding of the rationale of, and developments within, the Massachusetts curriculum. However, they do not make consistently effective modifications to ensure that all students are challenged in their learning. They are working well together and with teachers to develop a culture that is focused on improved practice.
- Relationships and communication among school leaders and with staff are positive and supportive. Leadership is distributed effectively and leaders at all levels are clear about their roles and responsibilities. This ensures that leaders share accountability for the improvement of the school. Cross- departmental discussions and feedback enhance communication and the sharing of good practice.
- Senior and middle leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are aware of the potential barriers to improvement and receive professional development. However, this does not consistently enable them to know what outstanding practice looks like in order for them to effectively lead the school in its next stage of development.
- Leaders across the school have improved the quality of aspects of the school's provision over the past two years. As a result, some outcomes for students have improved. Leaders ensure that the school is compliant with statutory requirements and regulations.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Acceptable ↓

- School leaders systematically gather and analyze information from a range of sources to review the quality of educational provision and the resulting outcomes for students. The rigor they apply, and the validity of the data on which they base their analyses, are variable. Consequently, their knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses is not accurate and does not ensure that their improvement plans address identified weaknesses precisely.
- Senior and middle leaders systematically monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching. However, the extent to which monitoring takes into account the progress that students make during lessons is inconsistent, with clear variability between departments. Teachers are given verbal and written feedback following lesson observations, although the quality is variable.
- Improvement plans are based on priorities identified by the school and previous inspection teams. However, most of these plans are not based on accurate self-evaluation information and do not contain targets with measurable outcomes. As a result, school leaders are not always able to evaluate the impact of their intended actions.
- School leaders have made some progress in addressing a few of the recommendations from the previous inspection report. However, a number of recommendations, such as those to improve students' learning skills, teaching, and attainment in Arabic, have not been addressed sufficiently.

Partnerships with parents and the community

Very good

- Most parents consider themselves partners in their children's learning and active participants in the life of the school. The views of parents and students are sought and considered when deciding upon school improvement priorities; for example, parents are involved in reviewing the school's mission

and plans. However, this is not a systematic process and does not ensure that the views of all parents are heard. Parents acknowledge that the school has made significant improvements over the past three years.

- A number of communication strategies, including the use of an electronic platform, ensure that parents are well informed about activities in the school that have an impact on their children's learning and development. Parents feel that school leaders and teachers are approachable and accessible, and that the school deals with their concerns very effectively.
- Reporting on students' academic progress is regular. Parents can access electronically up-to-date information about their children's attainment and progress. They attend scheduled meetings to discuss their children's progress and feel welcome to meet teachers whenever necessary to discuss any concerns. School reports convey important messages on key aspects of students' achievements and their next steps in their learning.
- The school has links with a number of local organizations, such as the Emirates Environmental Group, The Dubai Chess and Culture Club, and the Canadian University of Dubai. As a result, students benefit from opportunities to participate in events and activities that enrich their learning. The school has not established national and international partnerships to enhance and extend their learning further.

Governance

Good

- The governing body consists of the school's owner, the principals of the two Dubai National Schools, together with community and parent representatives. The board structure and method of governance could give rise to a lack of systematic representation and a potential conflict of interest when holding senior leaders to account.
- The school principal provides the owner and the board with updates on matters relating to the operation and improvement of the school, including the achievements of all students. The owner is well appraised about the school's strengths, weaknesses and priorities, and he holds senior leaders to account. However, he is not sufficiently involved in evaluating the impact of development and action plans on students' outcomes.
- The owner is proactive in addressing issues that the school has faced over the past few years. He has made strategic resourcing and operational decisions based on his well-informed understanding of the work of the school. This has significantly improved fundamental aspects of provision.

Management, staffing, facilities and resources

Good

- The school is managed well. School leaders' efficient timetabling ensures that adequate time is provided for the teaching of each of the key subjects. An additional period each week is supporting children's English language skills in the KG. An increase in administrative and technical staff supports the growing demands of the school.

- School leaders deploy appropriately-qualified teachers to enhance students' learning. The increase in the number of classroom assistants is having a variable impact in helping to support learning. Teachers benefit from a planned professional development programme, most of which is covered at weekly meetings. Professional development is enhanced further through developing links with other schools.
- The school is maintained well and provides suitable access for students with disabilities. A new library for senior boys complements the three libraries already established in the school. Librarians work effectively with class teachers to promote the use of the library by both the Arabic and English departments.
- Use of the computer laboratories is enhanced through a significant increase in the range of software available. This is supporting school initiatives on reading, writing and practical learning activities. A wide range of new reading and reference books is being used in the libraries. Improvements in the use of technology include students' ability to model scientific investigations using software programs.

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	204
	2015-2016	218
Teachers 	222	
Students 	364	

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

- Of the relatively small percentage of parents who participated in the survey, most are satisfied with the quality of education being offered at the school. They believe that students receive good teaching.
- Parents' opinions are less favourable about teachers' support for the development of students' learning skills, students' learning of Arabic, and in particular about the school's role in supporting students' personal and social development.
- Students surveyed are appreciative about their teachers' input and support. They feel safe at school and are proud of their understanding and appreciation of Islamic values. Students are less appreciative about the availability of technology.
- Most teachers who responded to the survey shared positive views about most aspects of the school's provision. Some teachers think that they should have more focused professional development, particularly on how to support students with SEND.

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