

"THE RACE FOR EXCELLENCE HAS NO FINISH LINE."
- SHEIKH MOHAMMED BIN RASHID AL MAKTOUM

Inspection Report 2018-2019

The Kindergarten Starters

11 YEARS OF INSPECTIONS

Good

Curriculum

CBSE



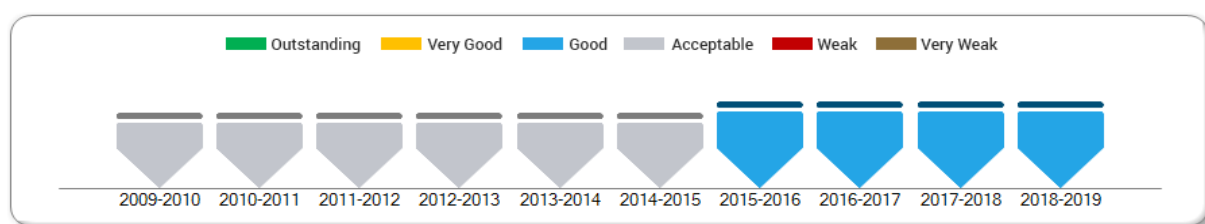
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School Information

General Information	Location	Al Garhoud
	Opening year of School	1990
	Website	www.gemskgs.com
	Telephone	04-2824090
	Principal	Asha Alexander
	Principal - Date appointed	1/8/2011
	Language of Instruction	English
	Inspection Dates:	22 to 25 October 2018
Students	Gender of students	Boys and girls
	Age range	4-11
	Grades or year groups	KG 1-Grade 5
	Number of students on roll	5337
	Number of Emirati students	0
	Number of students of determination	982
	Largest nationality group of students	Indian
Teachers	Number of teachers	229
	Largest nationality group of teachers	Indian
	Number of teaching assistants	72
	Teacher-student ratio	1:25
	Number of guidance counsellors	3
	Teacher turnover	9%
Curriculum	Educational Permit/ License	Indian
	Main Curriculum	CBSE
	External Tests and Examinations	N/A
	Accreditation	none
	National Agenda Benchmark Tests	ASSET, CAT4, IBT Arabic

School Journey for The Kindergarten Starters



Summary of Inspection Findings 2018-2019

The overall quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The section below summarises the inspection findings for students' outcomes, provision and leadership.

Students' Outcomes

- The rate of students' progress has improved in English in the primary phase. A large majority of students in Grades 3 to 5 attain above curriculum standards in English and science. Students' attainment in Arabic as an additional language is acceptable, and the progress students make is not as rapid as that seen in other subjects. Children in the Kindergarten (KG) make good progress in English, mathematics and science. In upper primary grades, students' skills of innovation and problem solving have improved and are now very good.
- Students' attitudes to learning and their care for others remain outstanding. They willingly participate in activities and often instigate acts of charity. Students have a strong sense of their own culture and of the Islamic values of Dubai. Understanding of how values and traditions can vary in a wide range of countries and the impact these can have on world issues is the weakest element of personal development.

Provision for learners

- The quality of teaching is variable and has the least impact on learning in Arabic as an additional language. Where teaching is most effective in the upper primary grades, teachers plan and implement new approaches to learning. Assessment processes are well established. The use of assessment information to adjust teaching strategies and maintain students' good progress is inconsistent, especially in Grades 1 and 2.
- The improvement in the breadth of cross-curricular opportunities provided for upper primary students contributes strongly to the development of their skills of investigation, research and critical thinking. These opportunities are not as frequent in KG or Grades 1 and 2. In all grades, students benefit from a wide range of after-school activities where they develop their talents and interests.
- Students are very effectively protected and cared for through health and safety procedures that are fully understood by staff, students and parents. Relationships between adults and students flourish in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Improvements have been made to the procedures for identifying students of determination. While the school is committed to supporting these students, the effectiveness of the support is variable.

Leadership and management

- School leaders are fully committed to UAE national priorities and to providing inclusive education for all. Improved self-evaluation procedures, including information gained through outstanding partnerships with parents, ensure an increasingly accurate view of the schools' effectiveness. Actions for improvement are mainly appropriate. Leaders and the governing board have not fully ensured that these actions are having the same effect on students' achievement in all subjects and grades.

What the School does Best:

- The bold vision of the principal to create a climate of innovation in which students can experience high quality resources, especially those related to sport and technology
- The very good development of the skills of creativity, independence and resilience, which contribute strongly to the very good progress of students in English and science by the end of the primary phase
- Students' outstanding personal development, which contributes to a happy and inclusive school
- The very good curriculum and after-school opportunities that broaden students' experiences, raises their aspirations and develops their talents and interests
- The very good procedures to maintain the health, safety and well-being of all.

Key Recommendations:

- Improve the impact of teaching on students' attainment and progress, especially in Arabic as an additional language, by ensuring that:
 - teachers in all grades have the subject knowledge and understanding of the learning process needed for all students to do as well as they can in all lessons
 - teachers make full use of assessment information to adapt their teaching to meet students' varying learning needs
 - students are consistently provided with accurate feedback about how they can improve their work
 - in all lessons, students have equal access to high-quality learning resources.
- Improve the ability of leaders at all levels, including the governing board, to accurately evaluate the impact of actions taken to bring about improvement.

Overall School Performance

Good

1. Students' Achievement

		KG	Primary
 Islamic Education	Attainment	Not applicable	Good
	Progress	Not applicable	Good
 Arabic as a First Language	Attainment	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Progress	Not applicable	Not applicable
 Arabic as an Additional Language	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable
 English	Attainment	Good	Very good ↑
	Progress	Good	Very good ↑
 Mathematics	Attainment	Good	Good
	Progress	Good	Good
 Science	Attainment	Good	Very good
	Progress	Good	Very good
		KG	Primary
Learning skills		Good	Very good ↑

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

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

3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Primary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good
Assessment	Good	Good

4. Curriculum

	KG	Primary
Curriculum design and implementation	Very good	Very good ↑
Curriculum adaptation	Very good	Very good ↑

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

	KG	Primary
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection/ safeguarding	Very good	Very good
Care and support	Good	Good

6. Leadership and management

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

For further information regarding the inspection process, please look at ***UAE School Inspection Framework***.

National Priorities

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. In 2015, KHDA launched the National Agenda Parameter, which is a method for measuring and monitoring schools' progress towards achieving the UAE National Agenda targets.

The following section focuses on the success of the school in meeting the National Agenda Parameter targets:

Registration requirements

The school meets the registration requirements for the National Agenda Parameter for the academic year 2018-2019.

School's Progression in International Assessments

is above expectations.

- International assessment data in mathematics and science in the 2015 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) significantly exceed the projected targets and show outstanding progression from the previous test. The strongest progression is evident in the science results. Accordingly, the school has set aspirational targets for the 2019 tests to further improve results in mathematics and reading. Leaders have prioritised the use of CAT4 assessments as an important indicator to measure student potential. They use successive test outcomes and align all these with curriculum standards to evaluate the progress of all individual students. Comparing NAP outcomes against CAT4 measured potential shows that most students have exceeded their potential.

Impact of Leadership

is above expectations.

- The leadership teams fully support the visions and goals of the National Agenda. The present action plan is successful in developing very good processes for monitoring and measuring outcomes in this aspect of the school's work. Considerable progress has been made to align subject curricula with national and international test requirements.

Impact of Learning

meets expectations.

- The school is actively and effectively promoting students' skills of enquiry and higher order critical thinking, especially by using innovative technology. The promotion of refined learning skills is strongest in science. There are inconsistent levels of teacher knowledge in all subjects. Consistency is required to improve the learning environment and learning processes to continue to improve students' performances in national and international tests.

Overall, the school's progression to achieve its UAE National Agenda targets is above expectations.

For Development:

- Ensure that all teachers have the necessary depth of subject knowledge to provide students with the highest possible level of challenge in all lessons.

Reading Across the Curriculum

- International benchmarking assessments show a significant improvement in students' reading skills. Digital texts are used to assess students' ability to read with understanding. In mathematics, structured course material is used to improve students' ability to comprehend and solve word problems.
- Students' reading skills within many subjects are assessed through digital programmes. These enable additional attention to be given to any identified weaknesses. Students make slow progress in their understanding of letters and sound.
- Library periods are planned but resources and display are out-of-date in comparison to the school's digital and e-learning provision.
- Students spend a dedicated hour each week reading independently or in groups. Older students read to younger children. This has a beneficial effect on their own reading skills.

The school's provision, leading to raised outcomes in reading across the curriculum, is developing.

For Development:

- During the weekly hour dedicated to reading, encourage all adults and teachers to read so that students see them as positive role models.

UAE Social Studies

- UAE social studies is skilfully integrated with the CBSE curriculum. Knowledge, skills and understanding are thoughtfully balanced to ensure continuity and progression.
- Most students set their own learning goals and take on challenging tasks. They devise effective solutions to real world problems. They think and work creatively.
- In internal examinations, the majority of students attain levels that are above curriculum standards. They have a good understanding of UAE's history, economy, national identity, values and traditions.
- Lessons and students' workbooks indicate that the majority of students make better than expected progress.

The school's implementation of the UAE social studies programme is meeting expectations.

Innovation

- Students are resilient and increasingly independent learners. They make good use of technology. They challenge themselves to find solutions to engineering problems using computer-aided design software.
- Students instigate and participate in various charitable programmes. The effective use of technology supports their exploration of innovative solutions to world environmental issues.
- Lesson planning incorporates opportunities for students to develop their skills and make logical connections between ideas. Currently this is inconsistent in the KG and the lower primary grades.
- The provision of specialist facilities for art, music, sport and design together with resources, such as robotics, Lego and Engineering is Elementary (EIE), successfully create a curriculum in which creativity flourishes.
- Leaders are very successful in developing worldwide partnerships which contribute to the systematic development of a climate of innovation.

The school's promotion of a culture of innovation is developing.

Main Inspection Report

1. Students' Achievement

Islamic Education

	KG	Primary
Attainment	Not applicable	Good
Progress	Not applicable	Good

- Students make faster progress and reach higher levels of attainment in relation to curriculum standards for their age in Grades 1 to 3 than their peers in Grades 4 and 5. Girls generally do better than boys.
- The majority of the students have a strong knowledge of the pillars of Islam and Islamic etiquette, values and morals. Their understanding of Seerah and recitation skills are less strong, especially in the upper grades. While students' progress is good in the majority of Islamic concepts, it is slower in understanding the Holy Qur'an verses and in linking them to other Islamic concepts.
- Improvement in students' understanding of Islamic etiquette and the pillars of Islam has helped them link what they know to real-life situations.

For Development:

- Improve students' understanding of recitation skills and their application and their ability to link Holy Qur'an verses to other Islamic concepts.
- Improve the rate of progress made by students in Grades 4 and 5.

Arabic as an Additional Language

	KG	Primary
Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable
Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable

- Progress in the development of reading skills is improving at a faster rate in lower Primary than in Grades 4 and 5. The acceptable progress made by all students in speaking, listening and writing, is not fast enough to raise attainment.
- Students' listening skills are at the expected levels. Speaking skills are less strong because they have limited opportunities to practise conversations with each other. Students are confident when reading familiar words and phrases, but only few are able to write independently.
- Reading skills have begun to improve because of the introduction of a new reading programme.

For Development:

- Improve students' speaking and writing skills and the rate of progress they make in Grades 4 and 5.

English

	KG	Primary
Attainment	Good	Very good ↑
Progress	Good	Very good ↑

- Students make better progress in the upper primary grades than in the KG and the lower primary grades. This is because letter sounds are not taught systematically enough to enable students to read independently. Younger students are not confident in reading unfamiliar words.
- Speaking and listening skills are developing well throughout the school. Reading is stronger in older grades because of the effective use of electronic learning programmes, which provide accurate assessments and high levels of challenge.
- The school's focus on developing critical thinking has meant that students, especially those in higher grades, now take an innovative approach to their tasks. They often present their written work in a variety of formats.

For Development:

- Improve reading skills in the KG and the lower primary grades by increasing the rate at which students learn letter sounds.

Mathematics

	KG	Primary
Attainment	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good

- Students in the upper primary grades use their mathematical knowledge and understanding effectively to investigate and solve problems. Their use of electronic learning resources has improved their rate of progress. This is less evident in the KG and the lower primary grades.
- Children in the KG have a well-developed knowledge of number and the properties of 2D and 3D shapes. Mental mathematics, number operations and data handling are strengths of student attainment by the end of the primary phase. Students have not fully mastered the relationship between ratios and fractions.
- Detailed analyses of external and internal assessments have led to improvement in students' ability to solve mathematical word problems and their critical thinking skills in the upper primary grades.

For Development:

- Improve students' ability to apply their knowledge and understanding through the use of practical resources in the KG and lower primary grades.
- Improve students' understanding of the relationship between ratios and fractions.

Science

	KG	Primary
Attainment	Good	Very good
Progress	Good	Very good

- Most primary phase students are developing very good scientific understanding and skills. They make very good progress as measured against international standards. Similar progress is not made in the KG because children do not have the opportunity to learn in classrooms that stimulate scientific thinking.
- Students develop very good standards of scientific enquiry and investigation by the end of Primary. Students' scientific knowledge does not always progress at the same rapid pace.
- Many curriculum developments have improved upper primary students' ability to use technology in applying science to real world situations. This is not as effectively developed in lower Primary because of inconsistencies in teachers' scientific knowledge.

For Development:

- Accelerate students' acquisition of scientific knowledge and understanding.
- Improve standards in the KG to match those in the primary phase by providing resources that stimulate scientific thinking.

Learning Skills

	KG	Primary
Learning skills	Good	Very good ↑

- From Grade 3 onwards, most students demonstrate skills of self-management and collaboration and willingness to take responsibility for their learning. Younger students are slower to develop the personal qualities needed to be self-disciplined and organised when not directed by adults.
- Critical thinking skills develop strongly and are evident when students produce computer-aided designs related to everyday life. They make logical connections between what they know and what they want to find out. Children in the KG use technology but lack the skills of cooperation. They occasionally lack motivation.
- Students' literacy, computational skills and investigational skills are improving rapidly because electronic learning enables them to measure their own improvement. Students increasingly apply their learning skills across the subjects. However, opportunities for them to develop their practical and investigational skills are inconsistent.

For Development:

- Ensure that younger students are provided with motivating activities that promote independent learning.

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

	KG	Primary
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding
- Students in Grades 4 and 5 display strong self-discipline that contributes to their very good learning in lessons. A few younger students are more dependent upon adults to control their behaviour. - Students enjoy very positive relationships with staff, which leads them to feel safe and secure at school. Strong relationships, teamwork and outstanding behaviour are evident in the wide range of coaching sessions that take place before school starts each morning. - Students are in regular attendance. Many arrive well before the start of the school day to be involved in the before-school activities. They understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and physical exercise. Many take part in the school's wide range of team sports.		

	KG	Primary
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Very good	Very good
- Students have a very strong understanding of Islamic values and UAE culture. Students in the upper grades have deep knowledge of Emirati heritage and traditions and how Islamic values impact on daily life in modern Dubai. - Across the school, students are proud of their own cultures and traditions. They speak knowledgeably of the culture of the UAE. They demonstrate their respect in assemblies and when singing the national anthem. - The school's activities and initiatives improve students' understanding of their own and other cultural backgrounds represented in the school. Their understanding of how different cultures and beliefs around the world influence behaviour is not strong.		

	KG	Primary
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Outstanding	Outstanding
- Students in both phases have a very strong work ethic. They are very conscious of the needs of others, which they exhibit through charitable fund-raising events. Older students show their sense of social responsibility when reading to students in the lower grades. - Students have a keen sense of environmental awareness. The Eco-Friendly Flag, a project for maintaining sustainable goals, has been running for the last three years. They exhibit great pride in the school and the work they do, such as recycling newspapers to make pencils. - A large number of innovative teaching approaches, introduced this year, have enhanced students' learning by developing their enquiry, research and problem-solving skills. These provide a drive for further learning.		

For Development:

- Increase students' understanding of how differences in world cultures and beliefs influence behaviour.

3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Primary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good

- Teaching is stronger in Grades 3 to 5 where students are taught by subject specialists. Where teachers are required to teach all curriculum subjects, inconsistency in their subject knowledge affects students' learning, particularly in knowing how young children learn through play.
- Teachers plan lessons with clear learning objectives, but these and their use of questions are not always targeted precisely at individual students. Work is not always sufficiently challenging for more able students, especially in lessons of Arabic as an additional language.
- Teachers make effective use of digital resources to enhance learning. These support the development of critical thinking skills and inspire students' curiosity to learn more. In the lower primary grades, teaching approaches do not always ensure students can engage in enough practical learning activities.

	KG	Primary
Assessment	Good	Good

- Assessment procedures enable teachers to accurately measure students' academic progress and to have a good understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. In Arabic, assessments are not always accurate enough to set the correct next stage targets for students' learning.
- Academic outcomes are improving because student targets are set against challenging national and international benchmarks. Feedback to students in lessons and in their books is not sufficiently personalised to accelerate their progress or to give them clear guidance on what they should do next.
- Analyses of assessment information are used well to inform curricular changes. These are improving students' subject knowledge and learning skills. Ongoing assessment is not used consistently by teachers in lessons to check students' understanding and redirect learning when necessary.

For Development:

- Make more consistent use of ongoing checks of students' progress in lessons to identify and correct any misunderstandings.
- Ensure that teachers have the depth of subject knowledge needed in order to provide students with appropriately challenging learning activities.

4. Curriculum

	KG	Primary
Curriculum design and implementation	Very good	Very good ↑

- The curriculum is successfully aligned to CBSE and National Agenda priorities. This is underpinned by analyses of TIMSS and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) test results. These ensure a broad, balanced and progressive curriculum. There are, however, inconsistencies in the opportunities for children to develop their understanding of letters and sounds in the KG.
- The school adopts a rigorous, ongoing approach to curriculum review. An exceptional programme of before-and-after-school activities, provides students with numerous opportunities to pursue their interests, talents and aspirations.
- Innovative developments in English and science combined with the school's 'theme-based curriculum', Lego, robotics and the engineering programme provide rich opportunities to link different areas of students' learning.
- Moral education is taught as a stand-alone subject in Grades 1 to 5 and is integrated into activities such as circle time in the KG.

	KG	Primary
Curriculum adaptation	Very good	Very good ↑

- The curriculum has been modified effectively to ensure that students study topics that enable them to be successful in international assessments. Modifications to lesson planning to meet the needs of all students, including students of determination, is inconsistent.
- The curriculum offers a wide range of opportunities for enterprise and creativity in Grades 3 to 5, but these are not as strong in the other grades. The targets in the individual education plans (IEPs) of students of determination are not directed at reducing barriers to learning.
- The study of the Emirati culture has high visibility throughout school. This enables students to develop a broad understanding of the UAE's culture and modern society.
- The school provides Arabic in the KG for one 40-minute period per week.

For Development:

- Ensure the curriculum supports the systematic development of students' understanding of letters and sounds in the KG.

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

	KG	Primary
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Very good	Very good

- Rigorous safeguarding arrangements are very effective in ensuring the safety and security of all, both in school and on school transport. All staff, students and parents understand these procedures. The school protects students very effectively from all forms of abuse.
- Medical staff monitor students' health very successfully and provide very effective care. Appropriate action is taken to minimise the risk of injuries. Health and fitness for all is strongly promoted through workshops, in the physical education lessons and during the after-school activities.
- Buildings are very well maintained and have been upgraded with new furniture, lifts and ramps. The need for modifications to a few health and safety procedures, following building upgrades, was brought to the attention of the school during the inspection.

	KG	Primary
Care and support	Good	Good

- The school's core values of courtesy, consideration and individual responsibility underpin staff-student relationships. These, together with the school's high expectations of student behaviour, result in a school that is defined by the nurturing and considerate behaviour of all.
- The identification of students of determination is carried out on entry to school, and support is provided. The effectiveness of the support is variable. The support provided for gifted and talented students is inconsistent.
- Students have open access to the school's counsellors. Information on subject choices, vocational and academic options and the transition process itself effectively supports students and their parents.

For Development:

- Ensure consistency in the support provided for students of determination and the level of challenge provided for students with particular gifts and talents.

Inclusion of students of determination

Provision and outcomes for students of determination

Good

- A governor for inclusion and an inclusion champion have been appointed, but their roles are not fully embedded. The effectiveness of the transition of shadow teachers to the role of learning support assistants has not been evaluated. Where learning support assistants are not well trained, they hinder rather than support inclusion.
- Effective assessment procedures have led to improvement in the speed and accuracy of identification procedures. Individual education plans are in place; however, targets do not always link directly to students' barriers to learning.
- Parents are welcomed into the school and are positive in their praise of the support their children receive from the school. Some speak of the financial challenges of having a student with special educational needs that requires therapies and a learning support assistant.
- A variety of models of support are planned. Additional support sessions after the end of the school day are offered for children in the KG to help them reach their individual targets. Support and modification in lessons across the school remain variable.
- Internal and external assessments indicate that students of determination and those who are gifted and talented make good progress over time. In lessons, progress is variable and dependent on the quality of support and understanding of staff of how to modify learning to meet students' needs.

For Development:

- Improve the quality and effectiveness of training provided for learning support assistants.
- Improve individual education plans to ensure that the targets set are specifically matched to students' individual barriers to learning.

6. Leadership and management

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

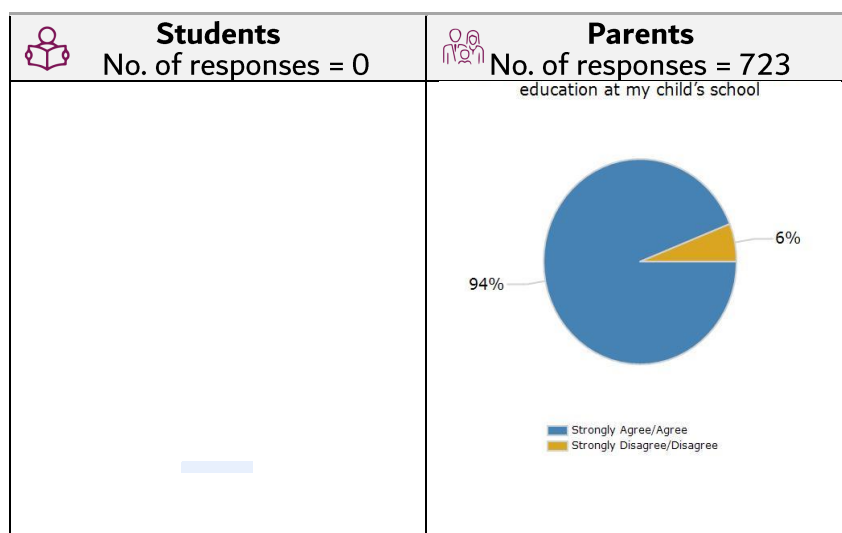
- Leaders set a clear direction for school improvement based on a vision that includes a commitment to UAE national priorities within an inclusive school. Systems of communication are effective and morale is very positive. Leaders are very focused on raising students' achievement. Leaders understand that to be successful, the quality of teaching needs to improve, but not all have an accurate view of the potential barriers to improvement.
- Processes for self-evaluation have been improved and are well established at the whole-school level. Internal and external data are used effectively to identify and plan for school improvement. The impact of actions is measured against students' progress and regularly checked. Subject action plans lack this level of precision and clarity. Regular checks are made of the quality of teaching, but these are not always evaluated in terms of the impact on students' attainment and progress.
- Effective partnerships with parents and the community is a basic principle of the school. This is evident in the value placed by the school's leadership on parents' views. Parents are offered a variety of opportunities to improve their understanding of their children's education and school life. Strong community links help raise students' philanthropic awareness.
- All stakeholders have an active voice in school governance. This contributes to the depth of knowledge governors have of the school. They use this knowledge to target support through investment in resources and the sharing of their expertise. The board has not, however, challenged the school sufficiently to ensure that the action taken to achieve the improvement priorities has been wholly successful.
- The day-to-day management of the school is very well organised. Teaching staff are well qualified and participate successfully in professional training. Where classes are too large, the resources for learning do not provide equal opportunities for effective practical work.

For Development:

- Improve all leaders' evaluation skills to ensure they obtain an accurate view of the progress the school makes towards achieving its priorities.
- Ensure that there are sufficient resources in all classrooms for all students to have equal learning experiences.

The Views of Parents

Before the inspection, the views of parents were surveyed. Key messages from each group were considered during the inspection and these helped to form inspection judgements.



 Students	Not Applicable
 Parents	Almost all parents who responded to the survey are happy with the quality of education in the school. They are confident that their children are safe at school and value the information they receive. One short break in the long day is an area of concern for a few parents as is the absence of hard-copy books in favour of electronic learning devices.

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