



دائرة التعليم والمعرفة
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
AND KNOWLEDGE

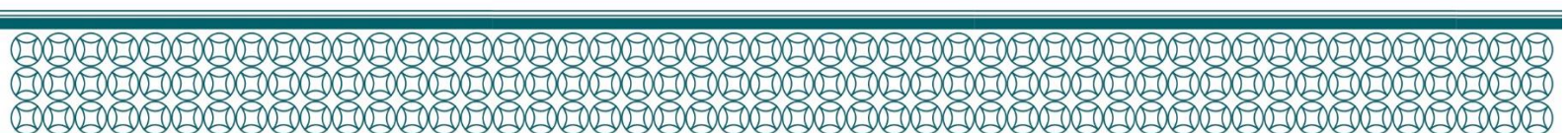
Inspection
Report of

Polaris Private Academy

Overall
Effectiveness

Acceptable

Academic year: 2018-2019





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School Information

School Profile			
School Name:	Polaris Private Academy		
School ID:	9219	School phases:	KG-High
School Council: **	N/A		
School curriculum: *	MoE	Fee range and category*	AED 9,150- 14,500 Very low to low
Address:	Al Najda Street, Abu Dhabi	Email:	Polaris.pvt@adec.ac.ae
Telephone:	+971 (0) 26425117	Website:	www.polarisschools.com

Staff Information			
Total number of teachers	64	Turnover rate	12%
Number of teaching assistants	11	Teacher- student ratio	KG 1:20 Other 1:14

Students' Information				
Total number of students	1005	Gender	Boys and Girls	
% of Emirati students	2%	% of SEN students	3%	
% of largest nationality groups	24% Syrian	17% Jordanian	14% Egyptian	
% of students per phase	KG	Primary	Middle	High
	19%	31%	27%	23%

Inspection Details				
Inspection date:	from	8/05/1440	to:	01/06/1440
		03/02/2019		06/02/2019
Number of lessons observed:	115	Number of joint lessons observed:	30	

*Relevant for Private schools only

** Relevant for Government schools only



The overall performance of the school:

- During the last two years the school has been through a period of significant change. The principal, appointed in January 2018, is the third to lead the school in the last two years. The school does not have a vice principal and many subject coordinators are very recent appointments. Six hundred students left the school during the last academic year and four hundred new students joined the school this year.
- The school's performance is acceptable overall. The school leaders have taken action on all the areas for improvement from the last inspection report including developing teachers' skills. This has led to an improvement in students' personal development and has maintained students' acceptable achievement overall. Many new initiatives are at an early stage of development.

Performance Standard 1	Students' Achievement		
Judgment	Acceptable	Change from previous inspection	No Change
Justifications	- Children' achievement in KG is good in all subjects providing students with a good start in their education. Students' achievement in primary, middle and high phases is acceptable. It is good in science in middle and high phases. - Students with special educational needs (SEN) and the more-able are not consistently supported or challenged to make the progress they should. - Students show positive attitude to learning particularly in KG, interact and communicate their learning adequately. Their innovation, enquiry, research, critical thinking and independent learning skills are less well developed.		

Performance Standard 2	Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills		
Judgment	Good	Change from previous inspection	Improved
Justifications	- Students' behaviour, attitudes and relationships are all good. - Students enjoy coming to school and their attendance is very good. - Students' understanding of UAE culture, heritage and Islamic values is good, but their knowledge of other world cultures is less well developed. - Students' innovation and enterprise skills are less well developed.		

Performance Standard 3	Teaching and Assessment		
Judgment	Acceptable	Change from previous inspection	No Change
Justifications	- Most teachers have secure subject knowledge. Teachers plan effective and interesting lessons in KG and in science. - Planning to challenge gifted and talented (G&T) and high achieving students, and to develop students' critical thinking, problem solving,		



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	innovation and creative skills is less well developed. Many teachers are too reliant on textbooks. Assessment is regular and data is analysed, but it is not used effectively to plan activities for all groups of students and individuals.
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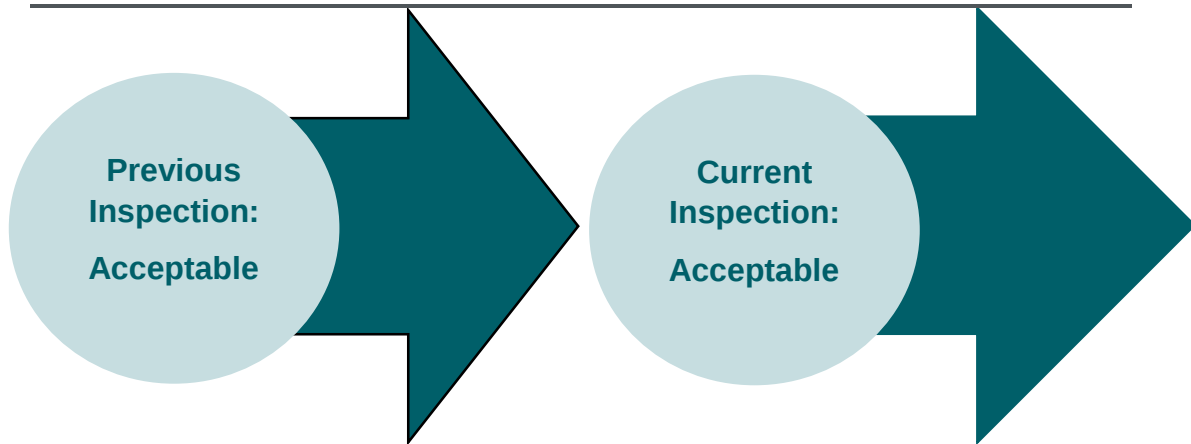
Performance Standard 4	Curriculum		
Judgment	Acceptable	Change from previous inspection	No Change
Justifications	- The curriculum is reasonably broad and balanced but focuses on gaining knowledge more than acquiring skills. - It develops students' knowledge of the heritage and culture of the UAE and there are adequate cross curricular links most subjects. - The curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of most students, but this is less effective for students with SEN, high achieving and G&T students. - There are few opportunities for enrichment, innovation and enterprise in the curriculum.		

Performance Standard 5	The protection, care, guidance and support of students		
Judgment	Acceptable	Change from previous inspection	No Change
Justifications	- School procedures ensure students are safe and protected in school. - Facilities are appropriate but not fully inclusive. - Relationships, behavior and attendance management are positive. - Support and challenge for students with special educational needs (SEN) and those who are G&T are less well developed.		

Performance Standard 6	Leadership and management		
Judgment	Acceptable	Change from previous inspection	No Change
Justifications	- The principal has managed a number of difficult issues well. She has ensured that the school continues to provide at least an acceptable standard of education and that students are safe. - School self-evaluation is regular and systematic, but the effectiveness of monitoring of teaching by middle leaders is an area of further development. - Communication and relationships with parents are constructive and supportive. - Day-to-day management of the school is effective. Technology resources in classes are limited.		



Progress made since last inspection and capacity to improve



- The school leaders have made progress in addressing most of the recommendations in the previous inspection report.
- Students' learning skills are now acceptable overall and good in the KG. Children in the KG have opportunities to plan their work and to discuss their ideas with their peers. They can reflect on their work and suggest how it might be improved. Students in other phases interact and communicate well with their peers and their teachers. Most students in the primary and middle phase can now work effectively in groups, particularly in science, although opportunities are inconsistent.
- Students in the high phase have now appropriate opportunities to work as part of a group on research projects. They identify a research topic and present their findings through a range of media. Students can now transfer their learning through meaningful links particularly in Arabic medium subjects. Students' critical thinking, enquiry, innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurial skills remain less well developed.
- Students' attainment in science has improved and now is good. Older students have opportunities to apply their scientific skills in practical experiments, however their independent investigation skills remain less well developed. Students have too few opportunities to write at length in Arabic and English. Most students can relate their learning in Islamic education and social studies to their lives in the UAE but, their knowledge of the wider world is limited.
- Teachers use resources appropriately to meet the needs of most students. However, students do not have access to technology in most classrooms.
- Teachers are responding well to the training and development they have received. They modify lesson plans to meet the needs of most students. They often use differentiated work sheets, but plans are not always adapted effectively to all groups and individual needs.
- The principal and subject leaders monitor the quality of teaching and provide accurate feedback to staff. The principal holds teachers to account for students' achievement using evidence from lesson observation and work scrutiny. The school leaders have been able to maintain overall acceptable standards and improve students' personal development during a time of significant change. They show acceptable capacity to further improve the school.



Provision for Reading



- The library is a bright and attractive room. It includes areas for individual and group work and there are comfortable seating areas for independent reading. Teachers are encouraged to use the library during lesson time.
- There is a reasonable range of new and attractive books in Arabic and English. These are organised into reading levels and are well matched to the age and interests of students. Students are encouraged to borrow books.
- The school has a reading plan and most teachers have been trained to teach reading. Students' reading skills are well developed in all phases in Arabic and English. A phonics programme is used in KG and grades 1 and 2 and early reading skills are linked to reading and speaking skills, so students gain a sound understanding.
- Students in all phases are encouraged to read out loud in lessons and they can apply a range of reading strategies to decode unfamiliar words and identify their meanings. Reading is a feature of all lessons, usually from the textbook but occasionally students use books borrowed from the library
- Students' comprehension skills are well developed. A majority are capable of applying higher order skills to independent reading, but they rarely get the chance to do so as most teachers questioning requires only simple retrieval of information
- The school does not track students' reading skills, leaders indicate that reading tests may have been administered in the past, but no data is available
- Teachers focus too much on textbooks and do not make sufficient use of poems, plays, drama and other texts during English lessons where this does occur students participate well.



Key areas of strength and areas for improvements:

Key areas of strength

- Improvement in students' achievement in KG and in science.
- Students' behaviour, attitudes, relationships and attendance.
- Communication and relationships with parents.
- Effective day-to-day management of the school.

Key areas for improvement

- Improve students' achievement in most subjects by:
 - planning activities that allow students to apply their knowledge in problem solving tasks
 - providing opportunities for extended writing in all subjects particularly in English and Arabic
 - ensuring all teachers have high expectations of students' achievement
 - effective planning to ensure time and resources are used effectively to accelerate students' progress.
- Improve the use of data to inform teachers' planning by:
 - analyzing assessment data regularly to identify different abilities groups
 - using assessment information to plan activities to meet the learning needs of groups and individual students
 - monitoring the progress of groups and individuals
 - ensuring all students are making good progress from their starting points.
- Modification of the curriculum to meet the needs of all students by:
 - planning regular and frequent opportunities to develop students' creativity, critical thinking, problem solving and innovation skills in all lesson
 - providing students with opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning
 - providing opportunities for extra-curricular activities and more involvement in competitions and visits to places linked to the curriculum
 - modify teaching strategies and tasks to match the needs of all groups of students
 - ensuring planning includes challenging activities for the more able students.
- Further improve monitoring teaching and learning skills of middle leaders particularly the recently appointed by:
 - ensuring middle leaders are aware of their roles and responsibilities
 - providing professional development on effective monitoring
 - providing opportunities to shadow the more experienced senior and middle leaders
 - holding them responsible for students' performance in their subjects.



Performance Standard 1: Students' Achievement

Indicators:		KG	Primary	Middle	High
Islamic Education	Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic (as a First Language)	Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic (as additional Language) *	Attainment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Progress	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Social Studies	Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
English	Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mathematics	Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Science	Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Good	Good
	Progress	Good	Acceptable	Good	Good
Other subjects (Art, Music, PE)	Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Learning Skills		Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

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Islamic Education	- Students' achievement in Islamic education is acceptable overall and good in KG. School's internal assessment indicates outstanding attainment overall. - In lessons and in students' work, most students attain levels that are in line with curriculum standards. They have reasonable understanding of the Holy Qur'an and Hadeeth and gain acceptable knowledge of Islamic teaching and rules as they progress through the school. However, their skills in recitation verses of the Holy Quran following appropriate 'Tajweed' rules are less secure. - In KG, attainment is good. Children in KG can recite short 'Surah' and explain the meanings confidently. They can make links to previous learning. - Most groups of students make acceptable progress. In KG, children make good progress.
Arabic	- Students' achievement in Arabic is acceptable overall and good in KG. School's internal assessment indicates outstanding attainment overall. - In lessons and in students' work, most students develop acceptable listening, understanding, reading and grammar skills. Reading comprehension skills are well developed particularly when reading poem in the high phase. Extended writing and speaking in standard Arabic language are less well developed. - In KG, the majority of students attain above curriculum standards and make good progress. By KG2, children can express their ideas confidently, read good range of sight words and write simple sentences. - Most groups of students make acceptable progress. Children in KG make good progress.
Social Studies	- Students' achievement in social studies is acceptable overall, and good in KG. - School's assessment data indicates outstanding attainment overall. - In lessons and in students' work, most students show acceptable understanding of UAE and region geography and history, However, linking their learning of history with current world issues to deepen their understanding is less well developed. - In KG; attainment is good, and children make good progress as they apply their learning of the seven emirates, UAE flag and their love for UAE rulers in art work and songs. - Most groups make acceptable progress from their starting points. Progress in KG is good.



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English	- Students' achievement in English is acceptable overall and good in KG. Internal assessment shows outstanding attainment. - In KG; attainment is good, and children make good progress. Early phonic, reading, writing and speaking skills are well developed. Students' basic skills are very well developed throughout the school. Their handwriting is legible and work in books is well presented. Grammatical rules are applied accurately at an age appropriate level and spelling is accurate however; writing at length independently and in different genres is less well developed. Students can apply a range of strategies to decode unfamiliar words in a text and most can use inference and deduction to establish deeper meanings but higher level comprehension skills are under-developed. - Most groups of students make acceptable progress whilst children in KG make good progress.
Mathematics	- Students' achievement in mathematics is acceptable overall and it is good in KG. Internal assessment shows good attainment overall. This is evidenced in KG, but not in students' work and lessons observed in the main school during the inspection. - Most students attain in line with expected curriculum standards. Most students have secure mental mathematics skills and can apply them in simple problem-solving tasks and reasoning. By Grade 12, students can tackle algebraic operations at the expected curriculum level. However; students' skills in solving complex mathematical problems is less well developed. - In KG2, children develop good knowledge of numbers and count confidently everyday objects. - Most groups of students make acceptable progress in lessons. Children in KG make good progress.
Science	- Achievement in science is good overall. It is acceptable in primary. School's internal assessment indicates very good attainment overall. - In lessons and in students' work, attainment of the majority of students in KG, middle and high phases is above curriculum standards. For example, in KG children show good understanding of the importance of personal hygiene and how it is related to their health. In middle and high phases, students show good knowledge of life science and physics. They can apply their knowledge in solving theoretical problems. - In the primary phase, most students demonstrate acceptable knowledge in chemistry; for example, in matter and mixtures. - In most lessons, students show curiosity when carrying out practical activities, However, independent investigation and writing comprehensive scientific reports are less well developed. - Most groups of students make good progress in lessons. The progress of the more able is less evident.



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Other subjects	• Students' achievement in other subjects is acceptable overall and it is good in KG. • In KG, children have access to various physical equipment to help them develop good physical skills. They enjoy singing with rhymes in music lesson. Across the school, students develop basic physical skills. • In design and technology, and computer science, students develop acceptable understanding and knowledge. • In health science, students gain acceptable knowledge, but they do not discuss beyond the level set by the text book missing good opportunity to extend their learning. • In art, although students learn a variety of techniques in use of color, they don't have the opportunity to be creative, innovative, initiate their ideas and work independently within lessons. • Most students make acceptable progress.
Learning Skills	• Students' learning skills are acceptable overall and good in KG. • Most students have positive attitude towards learning. In KG, children are curious and enjoy learning. • Students interact and communicate well with teachers and one another. They work in groups and collaborate, although not always effectively. They make appropriate cross-curricular links and with real-life situation particularly in KG. • Students' critical thinking, innovation, enquiry, and research skills are less well developed, and students lack opportunities to participate in entrepreneurial or enterprise activities.



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Subjects	Relative Strengths	Areas of Improvements
Islamic Education	In KG, children's confidence in reciting and explaining 'Surah'.	Students' recitation of the Holy Qur'an following 'Tajweed' rules.
Arabic	- Reading, speaking and writing in KG. - Reading comprehension particularly in the high phase.	- Extended writing across the school. - Speaking in standard Arabic.
Social Studies	- Students' knowledge of UAE and region geography. - KG children progress in their learning about UAE.	Deep understanding through linking learning of history with current world issues.
English	- Phonics, reading, writing and speaking skills in KG - Students' handwriting and grammar skills	- Writing independently and at length - Higher level comprehension skills.
Mathematics	- Knowledge of numbers and counting in KG - Adequate mental mathematics skills to solve simple problems and reasoning	Students' ability to solve complex mathematical problems
Science	- Students' applying their scientific knowledge in theoretical problem solving in middle and high school - KG children linking their understanding of personal hygiene to their health	- Independent investigation. - Writing comprehensive scientific reports.
Other subjects:	KG children acquisition of new songs and rhymes and development of their physical skills.	- Students' ability to be creative, innovative and work independently in art lessons. - students' extended learning in health science.
Learning skills	- Students' positive attitude to learning particularly in KG - Students interaction and communications skills.	- Effective collaboration when working in groups - Students' critical thinking, innovation, enquiry, research and enterprise skills.



Performance Standard 2: Students' personal and social development and their innovation skills

Indicators:	KG	Primary	Middle	High
Personal development	Good	Good	Good	Good
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good	Good	Good
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
- Students' personal and social development is good overall. Innovation is weak. Students behave well and have positive and responsible attitudes to learning. They are courteous to each other and their teachers. Bullying is rare. Students know how to stay safe and healthy and make appropriate choices about their own health and safety. They enjoy participating in sporting activities. Attendance is very good at 97%. They are punctual to school and lessons. - Students gain a good understanding of the UAE culture, heritage and Islamic values. They apply Islamic values in their learning. They recite Quran and hadeeth in assemblies on daily basis. They take part in all Islamic and UAE national events. Students gain a good understanding of their own cultures, but their awareness of other world cultures is not consistently well developed. - Students take responsibility for activities in their school and community. For example, they organise and lead on assembly. Students take part in competitions between schools in sports, science and art however, their involvement in the community as volunteers is less evident. - Students take part in environmental projects like recycling, they know how to keep their school clean and have planted and care for a botanical garden. Their awareness of world environmental issues and sustainability is less well developed. - Students enjoy work and take part in research and environmental projects but, developing their innovation and enterprise skills through extra-curricular activities and lessons are not well developed.				
Areas of Relative Strength: - Attitudes, behavior, relationships and very good attendance. - Students understanding of Islamic values and appreciation of UAE culture.				
Areas for Improvement: - Students' knowledge of other world cultures. - Community involvement as volunteers and awareness of world environmental issues. - Innovation and enterprise in school activities and in lessons.				



Performance Standard 3: Teaching and assessment

Indicators:	KG	Primary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Overall, the quality of teaching and assessment is acceptable. It is good in KG.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge. In most lessons, teachers are too reliant on the textbook to support their teaching and they do not introduce a range of varied and interesting activities and resources to make learning exciting.
- Teachers use questioning to review previous learning, to check understanding and to help students think about their work. This is particularly clear in KG and science.
- Teachers often use differentiated activities to meet the needs of groups of students, however; it is not planned carefully to match students' learning needs particularly the G&T and high achieving students. Teaching is more effective in KG and in science where the planned activities are better matched to the needs and abilities of all the students.
- In the best lessons, students are given opportunities to manage their own learning. They are particularly skilled in presenting their work to others, however, this is not a feature of most lessons in the school. Critical thinking, problems solving and innovation opportunities for students in lessons are limited. The use of learning technologies in lessons is very limited.
- Assessment procedures are basic but consistent and systematic in all subjects. Data are analysed to identify gaps in learning and monitor progress of groups of students. Although teachers know the strengths and weaknesses of most students, assessment information is not used effectively in teachers' planning to develop activities to meet the needs of different abilities particularly the more able.
- Marking is regular but, it does not consistently provide students with information about the next steps in their learning. There are few opportunities for self or peer assessment.

Areas of Relative Strength:

- Teachers' secure subject knowledge particularly in KG and science.
- Teachers' questioning particularly in KG and science.

Areas for Improvement:

- Over-reliance on textbooks for teaching and learning.
- Planning for critical thinking, problem solving, innovation and creativity.
- Using assessment information to plan activities that meet the needs of all students.
- Feedback to students, and the use of self- and peer- assessment.



Performance Standard 4: Curriculum

Indicators:	KG	Primary	Middle	High
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Curriculum adaptation	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- The curriculum is reasonably broad, balanced, relevant and age appropriate, and follows the MoE requirements. It helps students to develop adequate knowledge and skills although the focus is more on knowledge.
- In KG, the curriculum successfully builds on children's prior learning. Children have access to a good range of activities to help them develop their knowledge and skills in all areas of learning. Most students are adequately prepared for the next phase of their education.
- There are adequate cross-curricular links in most subjects to help students transfer their learning, for example, in Arabic with social studies.
- School leaders review the curriculum initially for science and mathematics but at early stage of development in other subjects.
- The school makes adequate modifications to the curriculum to meet the needs of most groups. However, in most lessons, students with SEN, those who are G&T and the more abled do not always receive effective support and challenge.
- The curriculum provides few opportunities to enhance students' learning. These include special events as National and Flag Days. In KG, children can access different resources to support their learning and creativity. In other phases; there are limited opportunities to help students to develop their enterprise and innovation skills.
- The curriculum helps students to develop their knowledge of UAE culture through appropriate links in most subjects. This is particularly strong in KG.
- The moral education programme is taught in Arabic for all grades. Moral values are adequately integrated into other subjects with a focus on tolerance, positive relationships and respect. Students respond positively to the moral education programme and this is reflected on their relationships and behaviour.

Areas of Relative Strength:

- Wide range of activities in KG.
- Cross- curricular links and links with UAE culture, particularly in KG.

Areas for Improvement:

- Opportunities for innovation, enterprise and the development of entrepreneurial skills.
- Curriculum modifications to meet the needs of all students.



Performance Standard 5: The Protection, care, guidance and support of students

Indicators:	KG	Primary	Middle	High
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection/ safeguarding	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Care and support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
• Overall, the quality of protection, care, guidance and support for students is acceptable. Child protection policies are shared with students, staff and parents. Staff have received appropriate training. • The school environment is safe for students and staff. School maintenance and records are adequate. • The school premises provide an appropriate learning environment. There are specialist teaching rooms which are fit for purpose. Facilities for physically disabled students are lacking. • The school promote healthy life styles by conducting awareness activities. Parents have been advised on healthy food choices. • Staff have positive relationship with the students. Systems for managing attendance and punctuality are very good. • Students with SEN and those who are G&T are appropriately identified. Teachers are made aware of their needs and the support provided for them is improving. However, tasks are not always well adapted to their needs. G&T students are not challenged sufficiently in lessons or through enrichment activities. • Older students receive appropriate guidance on future learning.				
Areas of Relative Strength:				
• The school's arrangements for safeguarding students and for promoting attendance. • Relationships and behaviour management.				
Areas for Improvement:				
• The support and challenge provided for students with SEN and the G&T. • Facilities for physically disabled students.				



Performance Standard 6: Leadership and management

Indicators:

The effectiveness of leadership	Acceptable
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
Partnerships with parents and the community	Good
Governance*	Acceptable
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable

- The overall quality of leadership and management is acceptable. Leaders set a clear direction and vision for the school and demonstrate a commitment to the UAE national priorities. The principal is strongly committed to improvement. Senior leaders show secure knowledge of best practice. The principal has provided training on monitoring for the recently appointed middle leaders which is improving their practice, but this is too recent to have an impact on students' outcomes. Communications and relationships are professional.
- Senior leaders have a secure understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas which require improvement. The Self Evaluation Form provided an accurate view of priorities for improvement which has been used to inform the school development plan. However, judgements in SEF were not always aligned with the guidance in the inspection framework. The principal reviewed the SEF during the inspection.
- Leaders monitor students' learning and personal development and take appropriate actions to bring about improvement. Teachers have responded well to the guidance provided by the principal and her team.
- Relationships with parents are good. Communications with parents and reporting on their children's progress is effective. The school has some links with other schools, but links with the wider national and international community are limited.
- The governors body provide appropriate support and challenge to the school. They are well informed through regular visits to the school and meeting with students and staff. Governors are aware of the needs of the school and hold the school leaders accountable for the school performance. Their impact on improving students' achievement is less evident.
- Day to day management of the school is effective. Staff are appropriately qualified. The facilities are adequate but access for disabled students is limited. Although resources are adequate; it is not used always effectively. Technology in classes for the use of students is limited
- The school prepare students for the international exam 'TIMSS'. Students participate in the 'Question a Day' programme. School support students by giving them access to technology in school. There are quizzes and competitions to encourage students' participation and monitor their progress.

Areas of Relative Strength:

- Relationships and communication with parents.
- Day to day management of the school.

Areas for Improvement:

- Aligning SEF judgments with the guidance of inspection framework.
- Further development of the recently appointed middle leaders.
- Effective use of resources and the availability of technology resources in classes.

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