



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational
needs and disabilities



Innovation

Inspection Report 2015-2016

Al Safa Private School

Curriculum: UK

Overall rating: Good

[Read more about the school](#)



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“Don't look
behind to
see who is
following you,
but look forward
to be ahead”



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

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School information

General information 	Location	Al Safa
	Type of school	Private
	Opening year of school	2004
	Website	www.safaschooldubai.com
	Telephone	043884300
	Address	Al Quoz 1, PO Box 71091, Dubai
	Principal	Maureen Chapman
	Language of instruction	English
	Inspection dates	9 to 11 November 2015
Students 	Gender of students	Boys and girls
	Age range	3-11
	Grades or year groups	Foundation Stage 1 to Grade 6
	Number of students on roll	865
	Number of children in pre-kindergarten	Not applicable
	Number of Emirati students	16
	Number of students with SEND	41
	Largest nationality group of students	UK
Teachers / Support staff 	Number of teachers	51
	Largest nationality group of teachers	British
	Number of teaching assistants	30
	Teacher-student ratio	1:17
	Number of guidance counsellors	0
	Teacher turnover	38%
Curriculum 	Educational permit / Licence	UK
	Main curriculum	UK
	External tests and examinations	None
	Accreditation	British Schools Overseas
	National Agenda benchmark tests	None

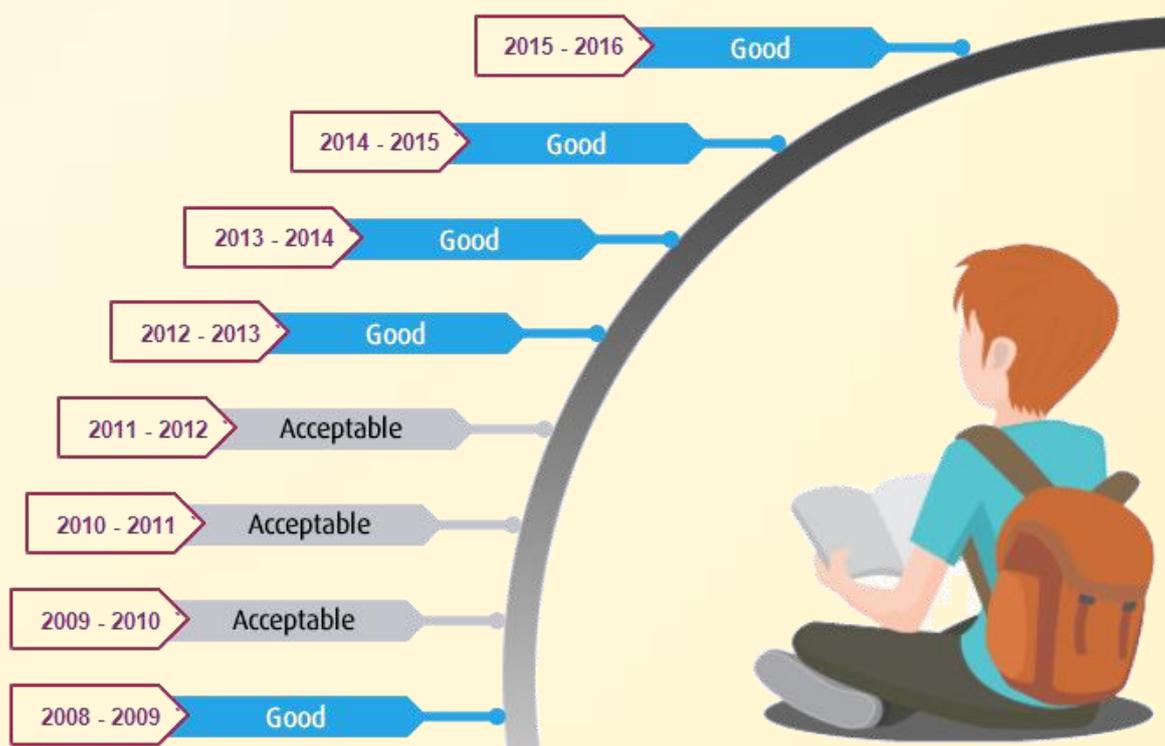


Summary for parents and the community

Al Safa Private School was inspected by DSIB from 9 to 11 of November 2015. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **good**.

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

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





How well did the school perform overall?

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

- Primary students made good progress and achieved high standards in English, mathematics and science. In the Foundation Stage, children made good progress but did not achieve high standards in these subjects. In Islamic education and Arabic students' progress and attainment were acceptable.
- Across the school, students' personal and social development was a major strength.
- The quality of teaching was good throughout the school. Teachers used assessment well in primary but not as well in the Foundation Stage.
- The curriculum was broad across the school. Teachers had carefully modified programmes of work to meet the needs of different groups of students.
- The health and safety of students was given the highest priority by the school.
- The management and leadership were strong features of the school. The school was very well resourced and benefited from very effective links with parents.



What did the school do well?

- The personal and social development of students
- The positive relationships between staff and students
- The broad curriculum which included a wide range of extra-curricular activities and residential experiences
- The communication and links with parents
- The provision of resources, specialist teaching facilities and the secure and well-maintained premises.



What does the school need to do next?

- Build on the improvements made in Arabic and Islamic education since the last inspection to improve further the progress and attainment of students by applying the good teaching practice and higher expectations from other departments.
- Improve the attainment in English, mathematics and science in Foundation Stage by making better use of assessment to identify children's prior knowledge and skills, and providing appropriate support and challenge.
- Broaden the admission criteria to enable more children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) to enter the school.
- Streamline improvement planning in order to have a sharper focus on the school's priorities.



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

- Students with SEND were admitted to the school following the school's admission criteria. The school had a newly appointed, experienced staff member with the skills to work with teachers and develop the support for students.
- Processes for the identification of students with SEND supported good provision in mathematics and science but this was not as good in the Foundation Stage English and Arabic. In the majority of classes, support and targets matched the needs of the students but in some cases this was not evident in practice.
- The partnership and communication with parents had improved since the last inspection. Parents were fully involved with the school in all arrangements to support their children's learning
- The majority of teachers planned their lessons well for students with SEND. Communication passports had been developed with information on the students for specialist teachers. These were also translated into Arabic.
- In the best lessons, assessment was used by the teachers to meet the learning needs of students. Results showed that the majority of students with SEND had made good progress.

National Agenda Parameter



In 2014, H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of UAE, and Ruler of Dubai, launched the UAE National Agenda 2021, with education being a prime focus. The National Agenda includes two major objectives developed with the intent of placing the UAE among the most successful countries that provide world-class education. By 2021, it is expected that the UAE will feature in the top twenty countries in the 'Programme for International Student Assessment' (PISA) test and in the top fifteen countries in the 'Trends in Mathematics and Science Studies' (TIMSS) test.

In response to this, each participating school was issued a report on their students' performance in these international assessments and in addition, they were provided with clear targets for improving their performance. This academic year, KHDA introduced the National Agenda Parameter, which is a method for measuring and monitoring schools' progress towards achieving their individual National Agenda targets through the use of external benchmarking assessments.

Main points:

- The school did not meet the registration requirements of the National Agenda Parameter. Progress towards the National Agenda targets was below expectations.
- There were no visible signs in the school of the promotion of National Agenda. Students were unaware of the National Agenda and were unable to comment on how it may affect them in the coming years. Although the National Agenda was known to the governors and senior leaders, the purpose and scope had not been disseminated effectively to stakeholders.
- Modifications had taken place to the curriculum following the analysis of TIMSS results. These had highlighted areas to be enhanced, such as the earth sciences. Greater emphasis had been placed on skills development, such as enquiry, problem-solving and critical thinking. Teachers had received training in questioning skills and further training on enquiry skills was planned. Recent modifications and developments had not become embedded sufficiently well.
- Planning in the key subjects included sections on critical thinking. This was a slightly stronger feature of English classes than in mathematics and science. Although varied in quality, there was clearly an emphasis on open questions. Problem solving was being used where there were opportunities for research and investigation. Some opportunities were beginning for students to apply their learning in a range of real life contexts.
- Some interesting and appropriate technologies were used by students, for example in a topic session on business planning. However, the use of resources including learning technologies was still developing and not properly embedded. This weakness was recognised by the school and work had begun on helping teachers to plan for the effect use of resources and the further development of research skills.

Overall school performance

Good

1. Students' achievement

		Foundation Stage	Primary
Islamic education 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable
Arabic as an additional language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable ↑
English 	Attainment	Acceptable ↓	Good
	Progress	Good	Good
Mathematics 	Attainment	Acceptable ↓	Good
	Progress	Good	Good
Science 	Attainment	Acceptable ↓	Good
	Progress	Good	Good

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Learning skills	Good	Good

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Outstanding	Outstanding

3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good
Assessment	Acceptable ↓	Good

4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Good
Curriculum adaptation	Good	Good ↑

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Care and support	Good	Good

6. Leadership and management

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



Main inspection report

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

Judgements are made on a six-point scale



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

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

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

1. Students' achievement

Foundation Stage

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

- Attainment in English against the school's curriculum standards for the early years was acceptable. The practice in lessons and information in the school's own tracking data indicated that the majority of groups of children made better than expected progress to develop speaking and early reading skills that were in line with curriculum standards. Attainment and progress in writing was weaker. Most children could hear and say the sounds that letters make and use their knowledge to sound out and read simple words. Higher attaining children were beginning to write in sentences. Most children were still learning to form letters, for example, those needed to write their names.
- Attainment was in line with the school's curriculum standards in mathematics overall, but some areas were better. School data and discussions indicated that children attained standards in shape, space and measure above curriculum standards. For example, children were able to identify shapes such as triangles and squares and explain their properties. The practice in lessons and the school's data indicated that the majority of groups of children made better than expected progress to attain standards in number that were at least in line with curriculum standards. Generally children could count and order numbers to 20 and could calculate accurately one more or one less than a given group of objects. Conceptual understanding of addition and subtraction was at an early stage of development. Problem solving skills were under-developed.
- Children's attainment in science was in line with the school's curriculum standards for the early years. The school's data indicated that children made good progress from below age-related starting points. In lessons, the majority of groups of children made better than expected progress and could talk about the things they had observed. They confidently considered the similarities and differences between their own environment and those under the sea. Most children were less confident as independent thinkers and seldom investigated why things worked. Overall the scientific knowledge and skills demonstrated in lessons indicated similarly good progress for the different groups of children.

Primary

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

- In Islamic education, most students attained levels that were in line with the curriculum standards. External assessments were not used for benchmarking. Most students could adequately apply their learning to real life situations. Their knowledge of the Pillars of Islam and the faith and the prophets Yunus's and Ismail's stories was sound. Although, their work samples supported sound attainment, their recitation skills were weak, with limited links to what they learned about the Qur'anic verses. Most students made steady progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to the learning objectives in the lessons. The progress of the different groups of students including those with SEND was inconsistent. The school's analysis of the assessment information of attainment and progress was still at an early stage of development.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students' knowledge, understanding and skills were in line with national curriculum standards. Their listening and responding skills were strong but not always using Modern Standard Arabic. Reading skills were acceptable when students read familiar texts but with more challenging unfamiliar texts they exhibited difficulty. Their free and extended writing skills were less strong than their reading, partly due to limited opportunities to develop these skills. No external assessment for benchmarking was conducted in Arabic. The school's internal information was not sufficient to enhance learning. Most students made adequate progress in relation to their starting points over time and against the learning objectives in lessons. All groups made similarly expected progress.
- In the absence of national and international benchmarks, most students' attainment in Arabic as an additional language were in line with curriculum expectations. Students could listen and follow basic classroom instructions and were able to hold a simple conversation. They could read short written phrases and sentences with familiar words. Their independent writing skills were more limited. No external assessment was conducted to inform the next steps of learning and the school's internal information was not sufficient to enhance learning. Most students made adequate progress over time and against the learning objectives in lessons. Their progress in speaking and independent writing was slower than in reading. As with Arabic first language speakers, all groups learning Arabic as an additional language made expected progress.
- In English, the majority of students attained above national and international curriculum standards. They made good progress through the school, particularly in writing. Most students read fluently with expression. They understood and applied different genres in analysing and writing text. Older students wrote extensively for a range of purposes, using appropriate and challenging grammar. Most applied critical thinking skills well through discussion and peer review. Year 5 students created imaginative scenarios through looking at photographs of animals and discussing what they might mean. Students' listening and speaking skills were particularly well developed across the years. By Year 6, they used iPads to create video clips as part of a topic on advertising. Those with SEND made more variable progress which was less good.

- The majority of students were working at levels that exceeded curriculum requirements in mathematics. Year 6 students used algebra with accuracy to solve ‘missing number’ problems. The recently introduced external assessments showed that the majority of students continued to perform strongly against international benchmarks. As they moved through the school students successfully completed more complex problems with fluency. Over the past three years, attainment had been consistently good. This was supported by the recent introduction of external testing which showed there to be good progress. The majority of students achieved well against their learning objectives, including those with SEND. For example, Year 5 these students used equipment effectively to enable them to visualize and solve problems.
- The available attainment data in science indicated that the majority of groups of students made better than expected progress in relation to their starting points and that their attainment was above national and international standards. This was particularly so for the older students, reflected both in their lessons and their workbooks. Progress in investigative science was evident throughout the primary school. Clear understanding of important scientific skills, such as hypothesising, predicting, choosing suitable equipment, fair testing and the analysis of results, showed in the progress students made. The older students were also making progress in developing independent research skills using electronic tablets. Knowledge and understanding was gained in many areas, particularly in the physical and life sciences.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Learning skills	Good	Good

- In almost all classes except in Arabic, students were highly motivated and eager to learn. They responded positively to their teachers’ questioning and, when given the opportunity, evaluated their own and others’ work. They knew their strengths and weaknesses and took steps to refine their learning in order to improve.
- ‘Think, pair and share’ strategies were an integral part of almost all lessons, thus providing opportunities for most students to listen to one another and contribute their ideas. Younger students occasionally had difficulty sharing when using resources but, in general, most were able to talk about their learning with clarity and accuracy. In Arabic lessons, students’ interactions and contributions were hindered by their limited communication skills.
- When given the opportunity, students made clear connections between areas of learning and related these to their understanding of the world. Planning indicated some connections between areas of learning and with real life situations but this was not a strong feature in the lessons seen, especially in Arabic.
- Students could do basic research with teachers’ direction. They used learning technologies in limited ways. Students were developing critical thinking through being encouraged to form their own opinions by evaluating what they had learned. They had less opportunity to lead learning through presenting personal research. Problem solving skills were better in the upper grades than in the lower ones.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students demonstrated a strong sense of personal responsibility to the school's ethos. They were passionate about their beliefs and were articulate and independent in presenting their ideas. Older students were good role models to young children. They helped them with their work, took supervisory roles at break times and helped to keep classrooms in order. In all phases students responded positively to peers and adults.
- Very positive attitudes existed. Students maintained caring and respectful relationships with both peers and staff. They demonstrated genuine concern and sensitivity to the needs of their friends and people in the community. A few younger boys were understandably still learning to manage their own behaviour.
- Given their multicultural compositions, students invariably maintained respectful relationships between themselves and adults. Younger children enjoyed particularly nurturing relationships with their teachers.
- Healthy living was embedded in the curriculum and, as such, students had a strong commitment to following a safe and healthy lifestyle. This was evident in the many celebrations of achievements in sports, music, arts and drama.
- Students were punctual in arriving at school and to lessons throughout the school day. Students were aware of how good attendance can affect their achievements. Attendance was good.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good

- Students demonstrated a clear understanding of Islamic values but were unable to explain how these values influence their everyday lives in the UAE. They identified many Islamic celebrations and religious monuments in and outside the UAE.
- Emirati heritage and culture were well known and understood by both foundation stage children and students in the primary phase. They were involved in a range of cross-curricular cultural activities such as "The Resident Trip" competition, the "Silhouette of Dubai" project and the "Traditional Dress" exhibition. Year 4 and 5 students could discuss the history, arts, and sports of the UAE.
- Across the phases, students had very good knowledge of their own culture and a variety of other cultures. They could identify languages and key landmarks in the major cities known by their classmates. Most of the older students were eager to interact with students from other cultures in school and across their local community.
- Children in the Foundation Stage were in the process of developing these skills as part of their expected social development.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students had a deep understanding and commitment to their roles and responsibilities at the school and as active citizens living in Dubai. Older students showed care and consideration for others and frequently initiated and lead activities to benefit the school and the wider community.
- Excellent work ethics prevailed. Older students had creative and very practical ideas. They applied these in well-planned projects and enterprise activities that had a significant impact on the school and the community. They consistently made informed economic decisions.
- Students had an excellent understanding of environmental conservation and sustainability. Older students were seriously committed to improving and conserving the school and community environment through a variety of prevention projects and volunteer activities. Energy and water conservation concepts were still emerging in the younger students.

3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good

- Most teachers in the primary phase used their subject knowledge skillfully to develop students' learning, particularly in English, the expressive arts and information technology. Teaching of Islamic education and Arabic was not as well developed. Teaching was inconsistent in the Foundation Stage. Across the phases, teachers worked well with teaching assistants. In most subjects they explained accurately what they wanted students to learn.
- Most teachers planned stimulating learning activities, which were appropriately challenging to support learners. In the primary phase a few teachers did not always ensure that they achieved these objectives, particularly in Arabic. In the Foundation Stage teaching was most effective when teachers worked directly with children to adapt their approaches to meet the children's needs. It was less effective when children were working independently.
- Most teachers used challenging questions to develop students' thinking while providing them with time to discuss their views and form opinions. In English this was particularly effective in developing students' critical thinking skills.
- In the primary there was a growing emphasis on using a range of teaching approaches to meet students' abilities and their varying learning styles. This was not sufficiently developed in Islamic education, Arabic and in the Foundation Stage
- In most lessons, teachers were increasingly focusing on developing students' independent learning, problem-solving and information technology skills. This was particularly evident in English and in the upper phase in mathematics and science. It was underdeveloped in Islamic education, Arabic and at the Foundation Stage.

- Teaching Arabic as a first language was adequate. Teachers had secure subject knowledge and some understanding of how students learn the language. However for too much of the time, teachers dominated the lessons, with limited strategies used to meet the different needs of students. In a minority of lessons, students were involved effectively in their learning. Low expectation and limited differentiation were the main weaknesses.
- The quality of teaching in Arabic as an additional language was inconsistent. Teachers had a secure subject knowledge but too variable understanding of how the students learn and hold the language. In the majority of lessons, the 'whole class approach' was the main teaching strategy which failed to meet the different needs of students.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Assessment	Acceptable ↓	Good

- Assessment was good in the primary phase and acceptable in the Foundation Stage. In both phases, assessment of students' attainment and progress had improved. The primary phase was beginning to bring assessment in line with the new English National Curriculum requirements.
- The school had introduced international benchmark tests last session. This was assisting in measuring students' attainment and progress in addition to the established tests at Key Stage 1 and 2. The outcomes of one of these tests had helped moderate the teachers' predicted assessments of Year 6 students. However, assessments by teachers were not consistently externally moderated to measure standards reliably.
- Standardised assessment was supporting the teachers' measures of students' achievements. This was underdeveloped in relation to Islamic education and Arabic. At the Foundation Stage, National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) baseline tests were identifying children's abilities accurately, but this information was not used well in teachers' planning.
- Assessment was informing teaching and the curriculum, but only at an early stage in Islamic education, Arabic, science and in Foundation Stage. Reading recovery and accelerated reading programmes in English were helping assess more accurately students' reading skills and understanding. These had generated a positive sense of competition in personal reading among the students.
- Most teachers knew their students' strengths and needs well. Students were being encouraged to assess their own and other students' progress in English through measuring their progress against specific learning outcomes. This helped set targets for improvement. These approaches were not being used in Islamic education, Arabic and science. The revised assessment approaches at the Foundation Stage were not being applied consistently.

4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Good

- The curriculum was aligned to the revised English National Curriculum. It provided breath and balance and was enhanced by the opportunity for older primary students to study an additional two languages. Activities were well matched to the age of students. In Arabic as an additional language, time requirements were met but the curriculum did not provide a good balance between the different elements taught.
- The curriculum built progressively on students' knowledge, understanding and skills as they moved from one year to the next. Progression was not as carefully considered in the planning for Arabic as an additional language. Students were prepared well for the next stage of education. In the Foundation Stage a sharp focus on phonic awareness prepared children well for moving into Year 1.
- The revised curriculum provided increased opportunities for students to make choices in their learning. Students were selecting different approaches to the ways they covered the curriculum through choosing different learning styles. In the Foundation Stage, children were able to make choices from a variety of activities, although these were not always linked well enough to the learning intention for the lesson.
- Opportunities were provided for students to apply their computer skills in a range of subjects. Writing skills were enhanced in topic work. In the Foundation Stage the development of children's speaking skills was integrated well into learning throughout each day. Apart from speaking, links between subjects were only at an early stage of development.
- The curriculum was kept under regular review to ensure that the academic and personal needs of students were met. For example in English, the introduction of phonics and an accelerated reading programme was helping students to make good progress.
- Social studies as pertaining to the UAE was implemented by reference to relevant aspects within the coverage of other subjects. The revised English National Curriculum provided many opportunities for local studies to be included.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Curriculum adaptation	Good	Good ↑

- The curriculum was adapted well to meet the learning needs of different groups of students, particularly those with SEND. A reading recovery programme was closing the gap between those students struggling and their age-related expectations. In mathematics there was an increased focus on investigation. In Arabic as an additional language, modifications were not successful in meeting the needs of some boys and the most able students.
- The recent focus on creativity, for example through role-play in English and increased use of critical thinking activities, motivated students to try their best. The school operated an extensive range of extra-curricular programmes that provided new experiences and challenges. A majority of students took advantage of these activities to follow their interests and aspirations for life beyond school. Opportunities for innovation and enterprise are inconsistent across subjects.

- Links were made between the school's stated curriculum and UAE values, culture and society in some subjects. For example, in a Year 4 English lesson, students developed their understanding of the UAE through mime and symbols. In a Year 5 project, students studied the Dubai Royal family. Links were not well established in mathematics and science.
- The school offered Arabic for one 30-minute session per week for Foundation Stage 1 and two for Foundation Stage 2. These included all children in the Foundation Stage whether Arabic first language speakers or not. The programme targeted speaking and listening skills with basic greetings, naming the days of the week and introductions. It was a good introduction to preparing children for Arabic in Year 1.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Health and safety was a clear priority for the school. Rigorous safeguarding and child protection procedures had been established. All teachers received relevant training at the start of the year in matters of safeguarding and child protection. The staff and students were made aware of the possible dangers associated with the internet and social media.
- Security checks were carried out at the main entrance. All other entrances were kept locked throughout the day. An electronic door inside the school provided an extra layer of security. All students travelling by bus were carefully supervised and an electronic tagging system ensured that no student was left alone on a bus. The security guards supervised those students being dropped off and collected by car.
- The school buildings and equipment were maintained in an excellent condition. All was kept clean and tidy. Fire extinguishers were regularly serviced and evacuation practices were held regularly. Hand sanitizer dispensers were situated outside classrooms and automatic electronic defibrillator equipment had recently been installed near the swimming pools. The science laboratory contained appropriate first aid equipment. Incidents and resulting actions taken were recorded in detail.
- The school buildings and facilities provided a safe environment which met the needs and interests of students. The students were carefully supervised in all areas of the school during and between lessons. A qualified lifeguard trainer had recently been appointed to supervise swimming sessions and to provide lifeguard training for relevant staff.
- The school had a fully-equipped clinic staffed by two full-time nurses who provided a full programme of health education that targeted many issues including oral hygiene, obesity and sugary foods. They also provided first aid training to members of staff and checked each class daily for illness-related absences. All students were actively encouraged to participate in sporting activities.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Care and support	Good	Good

- Staff and students’ relationships were underpinned by the school’s mission statement and vision that focused on putting the child at the centre of school life. Teachers knew the students well and were aware of their individual needs. Positive behaviour, was promoted and managed well in the school. In Foundation Stage, the teaching assistants effectively supported the children's behaviour and learning in classes and at play.
- The school kept accurate records on attendance and punctuality. Appropriate action was taken when students were repeatedly late or absent and parents were contacted promptly where there were concerns about individual students. However, at the time of the inspection, the attendance figures were not consistently high for all grades.
- Early identification and screening before entry was seen as a key factor in the provision for students with SEND and the gifted and talented. The majority of lessons provided sufficient challenge to promote the development of gifted and talented students and this has been an area of focus for the school.
- The school had good systems to support students with SEND and, in the best classes, identification procedures were matched to interventions and support. However, this was inconsistent and not always effectively delivered to have a positive effect on progress.
- The school did not have a dedicated counsellor, although the class teachers, the nurse and teaching assistants provided an effective system of support for all groups of students. The year heads had overall pastoral responsibility for students in their year groups.

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

The overall effectiveness of provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities	Good
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- Students with SEND were admitted to the school following the school admission criteria. On entry, there was a whole school commitment to supporting the students with SEND. The school had a newly appointed, experienced staff member with the skills to develop the support for students. Good systems were in place to monitor the teaching of students and advise school staff of students’ needs.
- Students were assessed on entry and parents were encouraged to use the link with outside agencies to support the process. The identification of students with SEND supported good provision in mathematics and science. However this was inconsistent in the Foundation Stage, English and Arabic. In the majority of classes, support and targets matched the needs of the students but this was inconsistent in practice.
- The partnership and communication with parents had improved since the previous inspection. Parents were involved in arrangements to support their children and worked closely with the SEN department and school leaders. Guidelines for parents were clear. Individual education plans (IEPs) were effective and parents were invited to regular meetings to review their children's progress. Parents were complimentary about the support they received and the caring ethos.
- Classroom practice was guided by the outcomes and recommendations of individual student assessments and teachers’ planning included differentiated learning objectives. However in some classes the provision and resources did not match the students’ needs. The curriculum was well modified and learning was scaffolded to support progress.

- Progress was monitored through the IEPs, student tracking sheets and by evaluating student assessment data. In the best lessons, assessment information was used by the teachers in their planning to meet the learning needs of students. Results indicated that the majority of students with SEND had made good progress and met curriculum expectations. However, there were inconsistencies across the grades and subjects, particularly in the Foundation Stage, Arabic and English where support and progress were acceptable.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Good

- The headteacher set a clear direction for the school and effectively communicated this to stakeholders. She was capably supported by the deputy headteacher and the recently appointed assistant headteachers. Leaders demonstrated a commitment to improving the provision for students with SEND.
- The headteacher and other senior leaders had a good knowledge of the curriculum. They were focused on improving students' learning experiences and outcomes. They had been successful in maintaining standards in English, mathematics and science at the primary stage and bringing about some improvements in Arabic as an additional language. They had provided a culture and opportunities for students to improve their personal and social development.
- The senior leaders had very good relationships and communicated very effectively with all stakeholders. The headteacher had distributed leadership effectively across the school, giving assistant headteachers and year heads greater responsibilities. The morale throughout the school was high.
- The new management structure had not embedded fully and as a consequence improvements across the school had not been consistent. For example, the momentum in the Foundation Stage had been lost and greater attention was required to make assessment more effective. The quality of teaching and learning remained good but further improvement was required to increase progress and attainment.
- Leaders had been effective in bringing about improvement in the provision for SEND and in improving the quality of teaching in Arabic as an additional language, which resulted in improved student progress. The school was compliant with KHDA standards.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Good

- The school had recently introduced a better approach to assessment in the primary stages. Standardised assessments had been used in English, mathematics and science and indicated the students' performance in each cohort against English norms. Assistant headteachers monitored the progress students made in their year group classes. The new assessment system was not fully embedded in the school and was not having a positive impact on Islamic education and Arabic.
- The headteacher and other senior leaders regularly sampled the quality of learning and teaching by observing lessons. This was effective in primary in identifying and sharing good practice but was less effective in Foundation Stage where there was less capacity to monitor all 13 classes.

- Improvement plans were available for each core subject and each key stage with the means of addressing the recommendations of the previous inspection report. These plans were comprehensive, but there were too many of them and they did not provide a sharp enough focus on what needs to improve. The impact of the plans had therefore been limited.
- The school had addressed the recommendations of the previous inspection well. Senior leaders and staff had brought about significant improvements to the provision for SEND. They had developed a more strategic and effective approach to collecting and using assessment data. Staff had also made improvements to the teaching of Arabic.

Partnerships with parents and the community

Outstanding

- The school was very effective at involving parents in the education of their children. School staff listened to and took account of their views.
- The school was very effective at using a wide range of media to communicate frequently to parents. They were kept informed about their children's education and school events. The headteacher and other senior leaders were accessible and took time to listen to parents.
- The school provided very good bi-annual reports to parents on students' progress. They contained detailed information on students' academic performance and their next learning targets. In addition, the reports provided information on students' personal and social development.
- The school had productive links with a group of associated schools which provided opportunities for staff to share practice and training. Students had opportunities to play competitive sports with a number of schools. They also benefited from links with a local mosque and a range of organisations in Dubai. Links were also formed with local businesses and the school premises were made available to local community groups.

Governance

Good

- The governing board included both staff and parent representatives. The board had taken account of parents' views and the governors were readily accessible to parents and staff. Board members had a detailed knowledge of the school and the UAE national priorities.
- The board held the headteacher to account for the performance of the school on a systematic and regular basis. The academic performance and achievements of students were regularly scrutinised at board meetings.
- The board exerted a positive influence on the school. It had provided the budget to appoint additional assistant headteachers, more heads of year and extensive information technology and specialist resources. These included extra resources for the revised English National Curriculum and play equipment for the Foundation Stage.

Management, staffing, facilities and resources

Very good ↑

- The school was well organised and operated very effectively on a day-to-day basis.
- The school was appropriately staffed with well qualified class and specialist teachers. Few of the teachers in Foundation Stage had specialist qualifications. Staff benefited from frequent professional learning sessions in school. A significant proportion of staff were new to the school this session.
- The premises provided a very good learning environment with specialist facilities for science, information technology and sports. Staff used display spaces very well to celebrate students' work and achievements. Access for the disabled was limited as there was no lift to the upper floor.
- All classrooms were very well resourced. The school had an extensive range and amount of information technology equipment, which included interactive white boards, tablets and free standing computers. There was a good supply of books and learning materials to support and extend learning.

The views of the parents, teachers and students

Before the inspection, the views of the parents, teachers and senior secondary students were surveyed. Key messages from each group were considered during the inspection and these helped to form inspection judgements. A summary of the survey statistics and comments from those who responded to the survey follows:

Responses to the surveys		
Responses received	Number	
Parents* 	2015-2016	129
	2014-2015	259
Teachers 	33	
Students 	0	

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

- Almost all parents who responded to the survey were satisfied with most aspects of the school.
- Parents and teachers thought that students were safe and enjoyed attending the school.
- Approximately half of the parents who responded felt that their children had made good progress in Arabic; the majority felt that their children had made good progress in Islamic Education; the large majority felt their children had made good progress in science; most felt that their children had made good progress in mathematics and almost all felt that their children had made good progress in English.
- Almost all parents felt that their children had developed good learning skills.
- Almost all parents thought that the school provided an appropriate range of resources.
- Parents were not well aware of the school's cyber safety policy.
- Almost all parents and most teachers thought that the school was led well.

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