

المعرفة

Knowledge

Crescent English School...



National Agenda



Early Years



Special  
Educational Needs



Innovation

## Inspection Report 2015-2016

Crescent English School

Curriculum: CBSE

Overall rating: Weak

Read more about the school



www.khda.gov.ae

“Do we have to  
stand still to  
avoid the risk  
of falling...?  
...I have encountered  
several challenges.  
But I never bowed  
to them”



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

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## School information

### General information



Location	Al Qusais
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	1984
Website	www.crescentenglishschool.com
Telephone	04-298-8866
Address	PO Box 76311 Al Qusais
Principal	Susan Rubin Varghese
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	19 to 21 October 2015

### Students



Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	4-15
Grades or year groups	Kindergarten 1 - Grade 10
Number of students on roll	1,371
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	0
Number of students with SEND	20
Largest nationality group of students	Indian

### Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	65
Largest nationality group of teachers	Indian
Number of teaching assistants	8
Teacher-student ratio	1:21
Number of guidance counsellors	1
Teacher turnover	62%

### Curriculum



Educational permit / Licence	Indian
Main curriculum	CBSE
External tests and examinations	IBT
Accreditation	
National Agenda benchmark tests	IBT

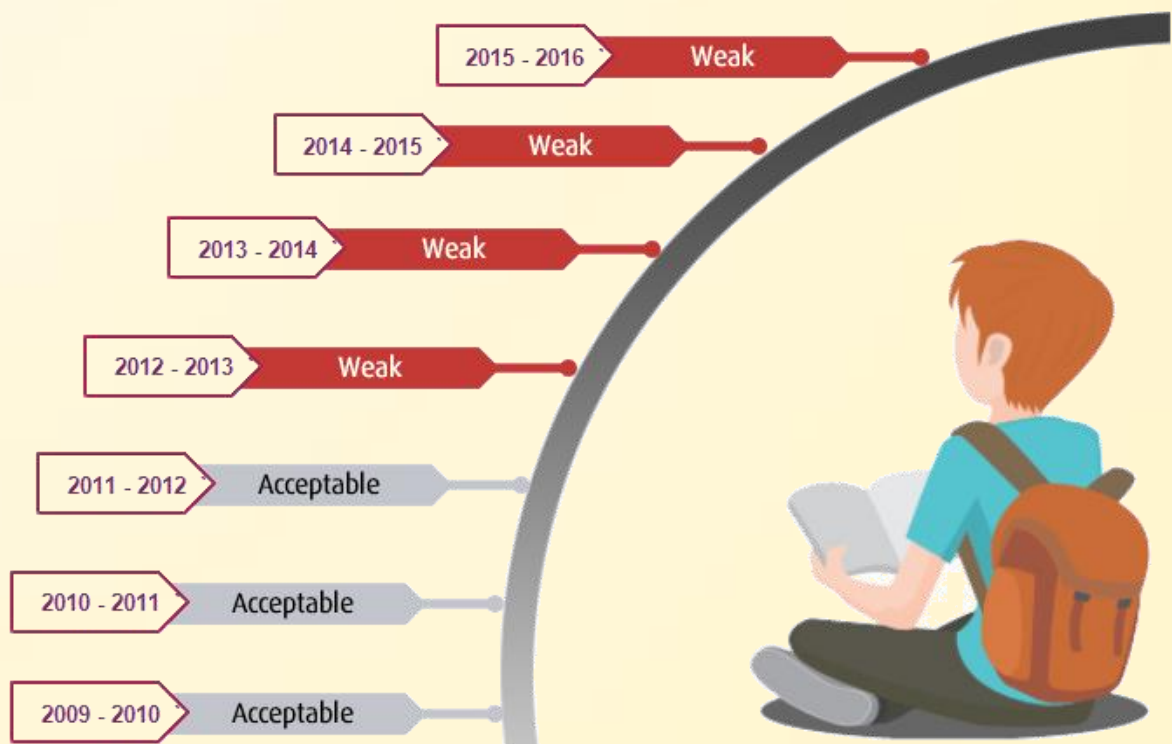


## Summary for parents and the community

**Crescent English School** was inspected by DSIB from 19 to 21 October 2015. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **weak**.

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, Crescent English High School provided a weak quality of education for its students.

- Attainment and progress made by students in the middle and secondary phases were acceptable in the majority of the key subjects. Attainment and progress were weak in all the key subjects in the Kindergarten (KG) and in the majority of subjects in the primary phase. The development of students' learning skills was more rapid in the secondary phase.
- The development of students' personal skills, their understanding of Islamic values and the UAE culture, their awareness of environmental issues and their involvement in and with the community were good in all phases.
- The quality of teaching was weak in the KG and the primary phase. It improved as the students got older; it was acceptable in the middle and good in the secondary phase. The assessment of learning was weak throughout the school, except in the secondary phase, where it was acceptable.
- The quality of the curriculum was weak in the KG and the primary phase. It was better in the middle and secondary phases, as opportunities for independent learning, research and critical thinking were planned as part of many lessons. The curriculum was modified in the secondary phase to provide greater support and challenge to groups of students.
- The levels of care for students' safety, and support for their well-being, were acceptable across all phases.
- The effectiveness of senior leaders and governors was generally weak. New senior leaders had been recruited and training was being given, but it had not developed their skills sufficiently to allow them to undertake their roles effectively. One notable success was the strong inclusion of parents and students in the improvement process, both at the school level and among each individual learner.



### What did the school do well?

- Students in the secondary phase received a good standard of teaching and developed their learning skills to good levels.
- Parents were effectively involved in their children's education and were able to support them at home.
- Students across all phases showed good attitudes towards learning and were knowledgeable about Islamic values, the heritage of the UAE and their own culture. They had a good awareness of local and global environmental issues and undertook their roles in the school and the local communities responsibly.



### What does the school need to do next?

- Ensure that all staff members understand and follow the school's policy for safeguarding students.
- Raise students' attainment in all core subjects and across all phases by improving the design of the curriculum to include more opportunities for the development of learning skills.

- Improve the quality of teaching, especially in the KG and primary phases by increasing the capacity of senior and middle leaders to develop teachers' skills, especially in evaluating their students' performance.
- Make use of prior assessments of students' performance to:
  - support the learning of students who are having learning difficulties
  - challenge the more able students to learn beyond the expectations of their grade levels.
- Improve provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) through:
  - accurate identification of their needs
  - appropriate adaptation of their Individual Educational plans (IEP) in order to provide better support
  - regular monitoring of students' progress from their starting points
  - effective professional development of all teachers.
- Raise the quality of information provided to the Governing Body so that it is more able to support and challenge the school's leaders.



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

- The school welcomed students with SEND. Senior leaders were committed to ensuring that these students engaged in school activities.
- The school had positive relationships with parents and involved them fully in the process of identification of needs and making individual education plans for their children. The guidance for parents on how to help their children at home was not clear enough.
- The school identified students with SEND at an early stage. There was not enough specialist staffing to make reliable and accurate assessments of students' specific needs.
- Many teachers did not use assessment information sufficiently well to provide tasks which were well matched to students' abilities. The tasks were sometimes too difficult or too easy and so some students did not make sufficient progress in their learning.
- The school did not have enough age-appropriate resources, particularly for younger students to help them learn and understand.

### 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 fully meet the registration requirements of the National Agenda Parameter. The attainment data was not sufficient to make a full judgement on the progress towards National Agenda targets.
- The school promoted awareness and understanding of the National Agenda among some of its stakeholders. Students demonstrated their understanding of some of the requirements in English and cited some examples. However, the majority of students did not understand what was expected of them in order to develop the critical thinking skills required to meet the National Agenda Targets in mathematics and science.
- The curriculum was not aligned to the TIMSS and PISA test requirements because the targets used by the school were below those that had been formally set. Consequently, the expected levels of attainment in these subjects were lower than they should have been.
- In English in the middle and secondary phases, teaching promoted some of the requirements of the skills outlined in the National Agenda. The importance of reading, comprehension and critical thinking was made explicit to students. However, in mathematics there were too few opportunities provided for students to develop independent skills of investigation and inquiry. Consequently, students were not skilled in applying their learning to real life situations. In science, students had few opportunities to engage in scientific investigation and develop skills of prediction.
- Students did not routinely access a wide range of resources to support National Agenda priorities in English, mathematics and science. Consequently, they lacked the necessary opportunities for independent research needed to meet the National Agenda Targets. Opportunities to use information and communication (ICT) to identify, extract and record high quality information were not regularly available to the majority of students.

## Innovation in education

The *UAE Vision 2021* sets out the National Agenda for the UAE to be among the most innovative nations in the world. The National Innovation Strategy sets the context for 'innovation' and 'innovative leadership'. It provides a basis for evaluating public and private schools in order to deliver a world-class education for all children in the UAE.

Innovation is driven by a commitment to excellence and continuous improvement. It is based on curiosity, the willingness to take risks, to experiment and to test assumptions as well as questioning and challenging the status quo. Being innovative is about looking beyond what we currently do well, identifying the great ideas of tomorrow and putting them into practice.






## Promoting a culture of innovation:

- School leaders understood the importance of responding to the national innovation agenda and were aware of the need to promote a culture of innovation. They had not articulated or communicated a vision to stakeholders to promote a culture of innovation. There were plans to train teachers to integrate the development of students' innovation skills into the teaching and learning practices, and to develop teachers' and leaders' capacities for promoting innovation. The school had identified some physical spaces for promoting innovation in teaching and learning. Senior leaders could articulate where innovation learning opportunities appeared in the curriculum.

Overall School performance

Weak

1. Students' achievement

		KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
<b>Islamic education</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good ↑
	<b>Progress</b>	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good ↑
<b>Arabic as a first language</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
	<b>Progress</b>	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Not applicable	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓
	<b>Progress</b>	Not applicable	Weak ↓	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>English</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	<b>Progress</b>	Weak ↓	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Mathematics</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓
	<b>Progress</b>	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓
<b>Science</b> 	<b>Attainment</b>	Weak	Weak ↓	Acceptable	Acceptable
	<b>Progress</b>	Weak	Weak ↓	Acceptable	Acceptable

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
<b>Learning skills</b>	Weak	Weak	Acceptable	Good ↑

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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
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	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good ↑

## 3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Weak	Weak	Acceptable	Good ↑
Assessment	Weak	Weak	Weak	Acceptable ↑

## 4. Curriculum

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum design and implementation	Weak	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable
Curriculum adaptation	Weak	Weak	Weak	Acceptable

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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Care and support	Acceptable ↑	Acceptable ↑	Acceptable ↑	Acceptable ↑

## 6. Leadership and management

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



## 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

### KG

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

- In English, children were too often colouring and copying. They were easily distracted due to activities that were not meeting their needs or interests. Their reading and writing skills were underdeveloped, due to ineffective teaching of the sounds that letters and letter combinations make. Overly directed teaching and questioning limited the opportunities for children to develop their speaking skills.
- In mathematics, children were taught through rote learning and had few opportunities to develop an understanding of numbers. Most teachers did not connect mathematical activities to children's everyday lives and their problem solving skills were underdeveloped. Play-based learning activities were often insufficiently challenging for children to gain knowledge, skills and understanding appropriate for their ages.
- Children had some experience of taking part in planned science investigations such as 'Pot a Plant' and recycling initiatives, but the curriculum was mostly based on gaining knowledge through simple topics such as naming fruits and the parts of the body. Children did not have daily, practical learning opportunities to nurture their enquiry and investigative skills.

### Primary

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

- Most students showed reasonable understanding of the pillars of Islam and some given Islamic Laws (Fiqh). They had clearer knowledge about the migration of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and the features of mosques. Most of students attained levels that were in line with the curriculum standards. In lessons, students' knowledge and understanding progressed at the expected rates.

- The majority of students learning Arabic as an additional language were able to listen and respond appropriately using words and phrases. Their speaking was usually restricted to a few simple sentences, which students repeated after their teachers. Students' writing was often limited to copying words and phrases. Students' progress was weak because the learning objectives were only loosely based on the curriculum standards.
- In English, the majority of Grade 1 students understood the purpose of a verb and could identify verbs in sentences as well, including them appropriately in their writing. By Grade 4 students were able to identify unknown words in a poem, find their meanings and create their own sentences with these words. Most students were learning English as an additional language. By the end of the phase, their skills in speaking and listening had developed more quickly than those of reading and writing.
- In mathematics, the majority of students in Grade 5 could add and subtract fractions and also find the decimal equivalent of fractions. Students understood the basic properties of two-dimensional geometric shapes and could identify different representations of number such as roman numerals. However, the ability of students to solve problems using fractions or apply their learning to the real world was developing at a much slower rate.
- Students' focus in science was on knowledge acquisition. However, only a minority of students gained a good understanding of the physical, life, earth and space sciences. Students had few opportunities to develop practical and laboratory skills or to use technology. Consequently, the skills to hypothesise, to predict and develop fair tests were not well developed.

### Middle

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

- Most students had a good understanding of the story of Suleiman the Prophet. Most students' knowledge and understanding of 'Seerah' and 'Hadeeth' were developing at the expected levels.
- Most students were able to listen and respond appropriately using words and phrases in Arabic as an additional language. Reading was done from their textbooks and involved reading a few sentences slowly. Students' writing was limited to copying words and phrases from the book, or from their teachers' dictation. Most students' progress was stronger in understanding spoken words than in speaking, reading and writing.
- In English, speaking and listening continued to be the students' strongest skills. Many students were able to present their ideas clearly and persuasively in class debates and spoke with confidence in assemblies. Students' skills in reading and writing were developing at an expected rate. By the end of the phase, most could interpret and analyse a text and relate it directly to their own experiences.
- In mathematics, the majority of older students understood coordinates as part of geometry and could use mathematical language appropriately. Students knew about a range of different shapes and most could calculate perimeters. Students' problem solving skills, using a range of calculations, were not well developed.

- Most students had acceptable scientific knowledge and understanding of elementary scientific principles. The majority of students in Grade 6 could understand the terms associated with magnetism. By Grade 7, they could describe the characteristics of virtual and real images from simple experiments conducted in the laboratory. The majority of students in Grade 8 were able to arrange metals in the order of reactivity using simple practical and laboratory skills. The development of scientific thinking, for example to construct a fair test or to explore a hypothesis, was a weakness in this phase.

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

- The majority of students performed above curriculum expectations. They had a good understanding of 'Zakat' and knowledge of the 'Seerah' of the Prophet Mohamad (PBUH). Although most students were developing a strong understanding of the knowledge in the curriculum, they were less secure with how these values impacted upon the lives of Muslims.
- Most students were able to listen and understand Arabic reasonably well. Students' understanding of grammatical structures was weak and this affected their progress in reading and writing.
- The majority of students were secure in their knowledge of how to speak, listen, write and read in English. Opportunities to research, both at home and in school, developed their oral and written presentation skills. When given the opportunity, students showed skills in gathering and synthesising information in order to make a persuasive argument.
- In mathematics, the majority of students demonstrated their understanding of geometry and could calculate the volume of a range of three dimensional shapes. Students could formulate algebraic expressions. However, the skill of using algebraic techniques to solve problems was not sufficiently well developed by most students.
- In Grade 9 most students were able to use scientific terminology to describe the sources of energy and structure of a biogas plant. Grade 10 students could distinguish communicable diseases from non-communicable ones. However, students rarely had the opportunity to develop their enquiry skills as most of the lessons were based upon textbooks.

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Learning skills	Weak	Weak	Acceptable	Good ↑

- Students in the KG and primary phases were able to work independently when given the opportunity. Students in the secondary phase regularly enjoyed learning independently and readily took responsibility for their own learning.
- Opportunities for collaboration in the primary grades were planned. However, it was often superficial and so the benefits of students learning from each other were limited. Students in the middle and secondary phases communicated their learning adequately and often had thoughtful discussions with their classmates.
- Learning by students in the primary phase was centred on textbooks and links to real life were not explicitly made. As the students progressed through the middle and secondary phases, they made clear connections between the different areas of learning and many students were able to apply what they had learned to real world situations.
- Students in the KG and primary phases were given few opportunities to develop their critical thinking skills. Most students in the middle phase could undertake research under the general direction of their teacher, using technology to collect information. Most students in the secondary phase were able to work independently and they were accustomed to critical thinking activities, some of which were designed by them. For example, students were allowed to create lesson plans and to teach their peers in English.

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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Personal development	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Most students across all phases showed positive attitudes towards their school and learning. Students in the upper phases were able to work independently and responded positively to feedback from their teachers.
- Behaviour was good; students exhibited strong self-discipline around the school. The majority of students saw the school as a harmonious family and most felt that they were well treated.
- Students demonstrated respect, mutual understanding and helpfulness to peers. Positive relationships prevailed throughout the school and support was readily given to those who were in need.
- Students had a good understanding of healthy living and took part enthusiastically in whole school initiatives such as 'Apple Day'. Most students were aware of the benefits of regular exercise and made wise food choices in the school canteen.
- Attendance was good and almost all students arrived promptly at the school and to their lessons.

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
<b>Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures</b>	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good	Good

- Students across the school demonstrated a clear understanding of Islamic values and how they influenced contemporary society in the UAE. They provided a variety of examples of how these values influenced people's lives in Dubai. For example, students in the secondary phase showed mature understanding of the sensitivities needed with regard to eating in public in the month of Ramadan. They linked the Islamic pillar of Zakat to their fundraising events at school.
- Students appreciated Emirati heritage and culture. They could talk knowledgeably about their visits to Emirati homes and the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Abu Dhabi. Most students in the primary phase had a clear understanding of how Dubai's economy had developed over the years. In secondary phase most spoke knowledgeably about 'majlis', the social gatherings of Arabic communities. They expressed their pleasure in being involved in the UAE National Day celebrations.
- Most students had a good appreciation of their own cultures and were able to make comparisons with what they saw in the UAE. Most children in the KG could describe their visits to India and students in the primary phase could make comparisons, for example, with regard to climate and lifestyle. They valued and respected different cultures.

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
<b>Social responsibility and innovation skills</b>	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good ↑

- Nearly all students were keen to engage with others in their community, at a level appropriate to their ages. They showed empathy for others through their voluntary work with the elderly and their support for those with SEND. Students appreciated the opportunity to share their ideas for school improvement.
- Students had a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in school and the wider community. They were keen to work creatively to share ideas and develop their learning skills. Students realised that they needed to have positive attitudes toward learning to help them to succeed.
- Most students had a developing awareness of how the environment could be harmed. They were able to relate their understanding of global damage to their own environment. Students were keen to engage in a range of projects and activities that helped them to protect the environment and promote conservation.

### 3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Weak	Weak	Acceptable	Good ↑

- Teachers in the middle and secondary phases were more secure in their subject knowledge than those who had responsibility for younger students. Additionally, teachers in the KG and primary phases had varied understanding of the rationale behind some of the practices that were being promoted. Teachers in the middle phase knew how to teach their subjects and consequently most students attained their grade level expectations. Teachers in the secondary phase were very secure in their knowledge and they were able to extend lessons to make them more challenging and engaging.
- Lesson plans followed a consistent format across all phases. There were inconsistencies, particularly in the KG and primary phases, in teachers' management of time, use of appropriate resources and establishing clear and challenging learning objectives. Teachers in the secondary phase often created more imaginative and challenging lessons. They used their time and resources effectively, including planning for the use of learning technology for independent and collaborative research.
- Teachers in the secondary phase were more often observed asking questions which promoted thoughtful discussions, resulting in well-reasoned responses from students. These higher-level discussions occurred most often in classrooms where teachers were not focusing quite as much on their textbook activities.
- Teaching in the KG and primary phases was often linked to the textbooks. There was little challenge to the more able and limited opportunities for students to progress beyond the minimum curriculum standards. Learning challenges, through targeted tasks, were stronger in the middle phase; teachers used strategies that were appropriate for the different groups of students. Teachers in the secondary phase were effective in meeting the needs of students, often challenging students beyond the curriculum objectives.
- Teachers in the upper two phases were more likely to ask open questions, which encouraged students to think deeply. A few teachers skillfully extended their lessons to the point where students were required to analyse, evaluate, make judgments and then state reasoned arguments.
- The majority of teachers of Arabic as an additional language were insecure in their pronunciation and use of grammar. They planned lessons, managed time and used resources appropriately but the lessons objectives were too easily achieved by students. The interaction between teachers and students were limited. Teaching strategies lacked differentiation and appropriate challenge.

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Assessment	Weak	Weak	Weak	Acceptable ↑

- The gathering of assessment data was a priority across all phases and was fairly consistent across the primary, middle and secondary phases. Assessment in the KG followed the United Kingdom's (UK) Early Learning Goals. The assessment of students' progress was based primarily upon internal tests. Data collected from the assessments were not sufficiently accurate and valid, except in the secondary phase, as the assessment tasks were insufficiently rigorous against the curriculum standards.
- The school was at an early stage of measuring students' progress against international tests. Some students in Grades 3 to Grade 10 were assessed using the International Benchmark Tests; however, the sample numbers were too small to make meaningful comparisons. Students in Grade 10 sat the Indian national Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) examinations.
- As a consequence of weaknesses in the quality of data available to the school, the analysis of students' performance at the individual, phase and school levels was unhelpful for planning future school improvements.
- There was limited use of assessment information to review the curriculum, align it with identified strengths and weaknesses, and alter teaching strategies to meet the needs of all groups of students.
- Although teachers provided feedback to their students, in many instances it was inconsistent and not constructive enough for students to identify their areas of strength and weakness. The school's system of self and peer evaluation was insufficiently focused for the students to understand how well they were doing.

#### 4. Curriculum

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum design and implementation	Weak	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable

- The KG curriculum was linked to the English early years learning goals, but narrow. It was broader and more relevant in the middle and secondary phases and followed the requirements of the licensed CBSE curriculum. The curriculum in Islamic education met the minimum UAE statutory requirements. The curriculum, across all phases, was based more on knowledge acquisition and was less focused on skill development and conceptual understanding.
- There was a lack progression in the curriculum between KG and the primary phase and this affected students' continuity of learning. Across all phases, the curriculum was insufficiently detailed in order to meet the needs of students with SEND and to extend the learning of the more able students.
- There were wide opportunities for students to develop their language skills; Hindi, Malaya, Arabic and English were offered to students. Outside this strong language provision, the choice of subjects was narrow; little provision was made for the arts in all phases or commerce in the secondary school.
- Cross-curricular links were planned. Application of the curriculum to the real world was limited in the KG and primary phases, but more consistent across the other phases. Opportunities for independent learning, research and critical thinking were features of some lessons in the middle and secondary phases.

- The school reviewed its curriculum on an annual basis. The review was insufficiently focused on an accurate evaluation of the needs of the students for it to be truly effective.
- The school taught social studies mainly through stand-alone lessons.

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum adaptation	Weak	Weak	Weak	Acceptable

- The curriculum was not modified successful enough to cater adequately for the educational needs of all groups of students, particularly those with SEND and those who had already mastered the expected learning. In Arabic as an additional language, the content and the textbooks chosen were not clearly aligned to the demands of the curriculum.
- The curriculum approach in the KG and the primary phase was narrow and did not promote enough creativity and innovation. As a contrast, in the secondary phase, activities such as the school enrichment programme, the summer guided learning programme, digital days, and career counselling were beneficial to students' overall progress.
- The school had created links with local and wider communities. Many after-school learning activities, especially in the middle and secondary phases, supported students' understanding of the UAE's culture and their all-round development.
- In KG children were helped to understand the regular greetings in Arabic and taught to value the culture and richness of the language.

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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- There was a child protection policy in place, but it was not always consistently known or applied. Students were learning how to keep themselves safe from cyber bullying.
- The school was well maintained and secure and there were established procedures to carry out regular checks of the premises. Students were well supervised and all relevant safety checks were carried out in the school buildings and on school transport.
- The school kept detailed and up-to-date records and logs which informed the staff and parents about illness, injury and health issues related to students. These records included the actions taken and the follow-up done. The school buildings and resources were well maintained.
- The premises provided a safe environment for students to learn. Some aspects of the school facilities did not meet the needs of all students. Access to all areas of the school was limited for students with disabilities.

- The school consistently promoted safety and healthy living, which was evident in the day-to-day life of the community. Curriculum activities and partnerships with parents to support healthy lifestyles were embedded into the work of the school.

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Care and support	Acceptable ↑	Acceptable ↑	Acceptable ↑	Acceptable ↑

- Members of staff had positive relationships with students and there was an atmosphere of mutual trust. The school had a consistent approach to the management of students' behaviour and set high expectations. As a result, students demonstrated good levels of self-discipline in lessons and at break times.
- Efficient attendance tracking and procedures to follow up absences helped to ensure that the attendance rates of students were consistently high in all phases. Punctuality at the beginning of the school day and at the start of lessons was good.
- The school lacked sufficient specialist staff members to lead the identification process for students with SEND and to provide suitable training for teachers in understanding their needs. Individual education plans were developed for each SEND student. Yet they were not used well enough by teachers to guide their lesson planning.
- The quality of provision was too varied and a majority of teachers lacked the skills and expertise to adapt tasks and tailor support to meet the specific needs of the identified students well. As a result, students did not make sufficient progress. Those with particular gifts and talents were not sufficiently extended or encouraged to excel in activities beyond the classroom.
- The school ensured that students had access to support if they had any concerns, including their academic progress. The counsellor provided useful careers and higher education guidance and had created structured programmes to enhance students' leadership and communication skills.

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

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

Weak

- The school welcomed students with SEND. Senior leaders were committed to ensuring that these students engaged in school activities.
- The school had positive relationships with parents of students with SEND and involved them fully in the process of identification of needs and making individual education plans for their children. The guidance for parents on how to help their children at home was insufficiently clear.
- The school identified students with SEND at an early stage. There was not enough specialist staffing to make reliable and accurate assessments of students' specific needs.
- Many teachers did not use assessment information sufficiently well to provide tasks which were well matched to students' abilities. The tasks were sometimes too difficult or too easy and so some students did not make sufficient progress in their learning.

- The school did not have enough age-appropriate resources, particularly for younger SEND students, to help them learn and understand.

## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Weak

- The principal and some members of the senior and middle leadership teams understood the importance of improving teaching and learning in order to increase students' progress and attainment. They endorsed the school's vision of seeking to maximise academic potential, along with personal and social growth. They also demonstrated commitment to the UAE and Dubai priorities, and inclusion of all students, regardless of need.
- The quality of educational leadership was inconsistent within the school. Only a few leaders had a secure grasp of the curriculum and best practices in teaching, learning and assessment. Some recently-appointed leaders showed a developing understanding of the processes through which the school vision could be achieved. The school was only just beginning to use the expertise of these leaders to develop school improvement practices.
- Relationships and communication were generally professional; channels for communication were clear and schedules for the gathering, sharing and analysis of key data had been established. Some senior leaders had clear roles and responsibilities and knew what was required of them. The school delegated leadership and all leaders felt involved in the school's direction.
- Although the Principal and other leaders were committed to improve aspects of school life, they had not been sufficiently successful at improving outcomes for students. Their efforts were generally too wide spread and lacked sufficient focus on the progress made by students. A general lack of understanding of the best educational practices was a barrier to future improvement. All too often, initiatives had been introduced without the understanding needed in order to maximise effectiveness.
- Since the last inspection report, only some aspects of the school had been improved, notably its partnership with parents, and ensuring compliance with statutory requirements. School leaders had however not managed to bring about sufficient improvement in students' attainment and progress in key subjects.

### School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Weak

- School self-evaluation involved different members of the school community. The accuracy of many of the school's judgements was limited by the leadership team's varied understanding of the UAE inspection framework. Apart from Grade 10, the school had not used benchmarked data in order to make comparisons with students elsewhere in the world. As a result, the school had an inflated view of students' performance and consequently misjudged the extent of the improvements that were needed.
- There were systems in place to monitor teaching and learning and leaders consistently used a rubric, to help ensure reliability of the process. However, their understanding of what constituted best educational practice varied. This resulted in many inaccurate evaluations. A teacher appraisal system was in place, but it did not regularly include attainment or progress targets, focusing mainly on classroom management tasks.

- Because of the school's emphasis on the school community and external agencies, several improvement plans had been written. There had been no attempt to consolidate the various initiatives into a small number of key improvement targets. This situation created a barrier to identifying, monitoring and evaluating the school's priorities. Additionally, improvement plan targets rarely had measurable student performance outcomes. Consequently, school improvement had been slow.
- Progress in addressing the previous DSIB recommendations had been limited. In some areas, for example the development of more active learning in the KG, it was evident that practices were starting to change for the better.

### Partnerships with parents and the community

Good ↑

- Parents were very positive about the opportunities that they had been given to be involved their children's learning. For example, the parent teacher association (PTA) acted as a channel for parents to express their ideas about future school improvements. They had some success in improving facilities for the students. Most parents felt that the school listened to their views. Parents had some knowledge of the UAE National Agenda and the benefits of international benchmark testing.
- The school employed a range of methods to communicate with parents. For example, termly newsletters, e-mails, bulletin boards and the school's website. An online system for reporting students' achievements was under discussion with the PTA. Nearly all parents felt that the school operated an 'open door' practice and that concerns were dealt with in a timely and effective manner. All parents of students with SEND were very positive about the information that they received from the school.
- Reports to parents contained graded evaluations of academic progress, personal development, attendance and data related to the student's health. No mention was made on the reports about the student's next steps in learning. The reports were accompanied by 'Open Houses' to discuss progress with the teachers. Parents completed surveys after their visits. Students' assessment papers were sent home to inform parents about their children's performance.
- There was a range of partnerships with the community, some of which, like the 'Dubai Astronomy Group' and the 'Cosmic Crescent,' directly benefited students' learning. Students engaged in a variety of charitable events such as 'Dubai Cares,' supporting the Al Noor Centre through cake sales, and raising funds for the Nepal Relief project and the 'Pink Marathon'. The school had established links with other local schools that involved academic challenge and support as well as competitions among groups of students.

### Governance

Weak

- The governing body contained representatives from parents, staff, educationalists and the technology business sector. Governors met regularly and received reports from the school principal. These reports did not focus enough on the quality of teaching and students' progress. There was insufficient focus on measurable outcomes as well as some inaccurate evaluations by school leaders. This resulted in the governing body having insecure knowledge about the school.
- The governing body did not sufficiently hold school leaders fully to account for their actions and was not able to function as a 'critical friend' to the school. Consequently, governors were not able to challenge and support the school's leadership team.

- The governing body did have some influence on the school's direction, supporting a range of initiatives. For example, it had extended the team of senior leaders through the appointment of a quality assurance officer, offering professional training of middle leaders, providing an electronic tablet project for Grades 5 and 6, and covered an external courtyard. The governing body was, however, unable to accurately evaluate the benefit of these initiatives for students.




#### Management, staffing, facilities and resources

Weak ↓

- Daily management of the school was usually adequate; for example, timetabling was accurate, systems and procedures were well understood and key documents were to hand.
- The school had insufficient staff for meeting students' needs. It was noted that the SEND coordinator had a number of roles and the SEND teacher was part-time. Sixty per cent of teachers were new to the school and many did not have teaching qualifications. Orientation programmes were in place to support teachers transitioning to the school and training programmes were in place to develop their capacity. However, there were no formal systems to evaluate the impact of the training on teachers' performance and students' progress.
- Most classrooms were too small for the number of students in them. This limited the quality of teaching and the development of learning skills. The three science laboratories were fully serviced and had been recently updated. An achievement centre had been created for students with SEND, but was not conducive to effective teaching. Classroom displays in the KG supported learning and celebrated the children's achievements.
- Resources to support practical learning were limited; for example, in one science lesson, one pair of magnets had to be shared by six students. Teachers had been resourceful in creating supporting material that engaged and interested their students. The use of technology for the teachers had improved through the provision of digital projectors in nearly all learning spaces. The school had enabled the campus-wide Internet connectivity to allow students to bring and use their own devices. Emergent use was being seen of online applications that enabled close communication between teachers, students and parents.

## 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	
<b>Parents*</b> 	2015-2016	384
	2014-2015	0
<b>Teachers</b> 	18	
<b>Students</b> 	72	

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

- Most parents, students and teachers who participated were extremely positive about almost all aspects of school performance;
- Several comments from parents were about the high turnover of teachers and parental wishes for school uniforms to be more suited to their Islamic values.
- A significant minority of students and their parents did not know how well they were doing in Arabic as an additional language or in Islamic education.
- A third of parents were unaware of the school's cyber protection policy.
- Almost all teachers felt well informed about the school's UAE National Targets, the school's PISA and TIMSS results and the school's DSIB inspection report.

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