



International Academic Sc...



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational  
needs and disabilities



Innovation

## Inspection Report 2015-2016

International Academic School

Curriculum: US

Overall rating: Weak

Read more about the school ➔



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‘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 Warqa'a
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2006
Website	www.ias-dubai.ae
Telephone	04-2800993
Address	PO BOX 262, Al Warqa'a 1, Dubai
Principal	None
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	11 to 14 January 2016

### Students



Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	4-18
Grades or year groups	Kindergarten 1 to Grade 12
Number of students on roll	1,194
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	1171
Number of Emirati students	481
Number of students with SEND	15
Largest nationality group of students	Emirati

### Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	104
Largest nationality group of teachers	Syrian
Number of teaching assistants	17
Teacher-student ratio	1:20
Number of guidance counsellors	0
Teacher turnover	40%

### Curriculum



Educational permit / Licence	US
Main curriculum	US / California State
External tests and examinations	Iowa Test of Basic Skills
Accreditation	None
National Agenda benchmark tests	Iowa Test of Basic Skills

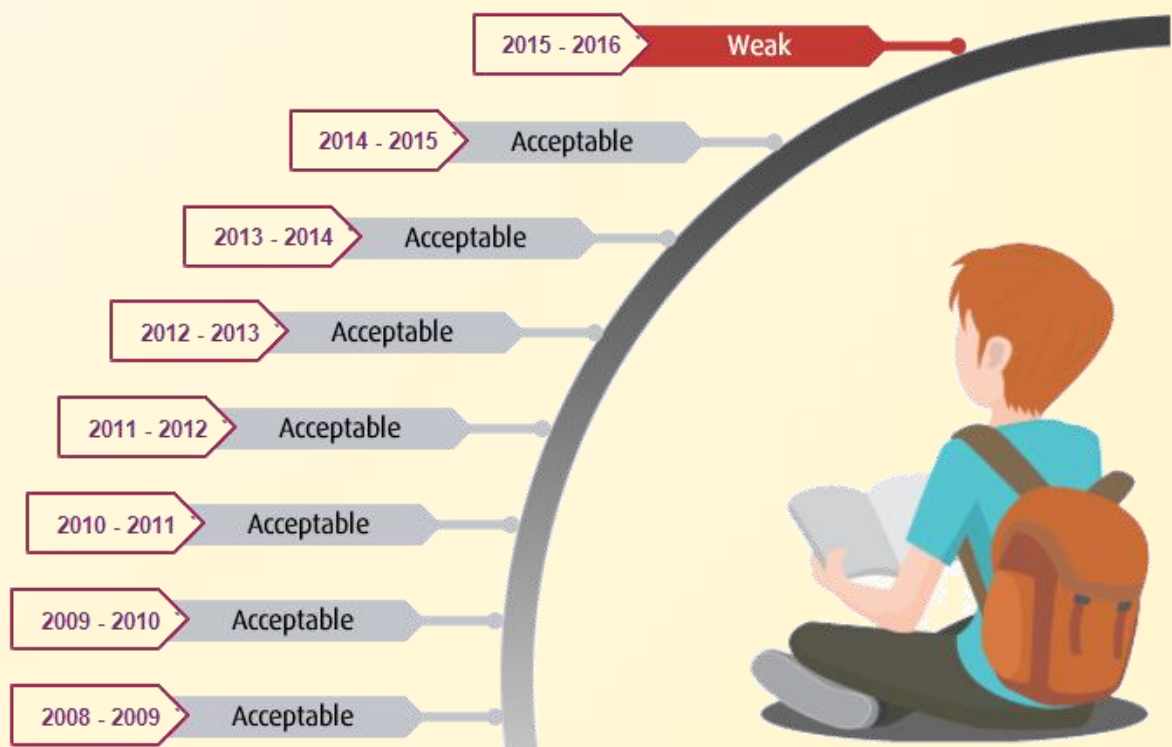


## Summary for parents and the community

**International Academic School** was inspected by DSIB from 11 to 14 January 2016. 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, the **International Academic School** provided a **weak** quality of education for its students.

- Students' attainment and progress in Arabic and Islamic education were acceptable across the school. Students' progress in Arabic as a first language was good in the high school. Students' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science were weak in the lower phases of the school and broadly acceptable in the upper phases of the school. High school students' attainment and progress in mathematics were good. Students' learning skills were weak in the lower phases and acceptable in the upper phases. Students were passive, heavily reliant on their teachers and lacked independent learning skills. Students' learning skills were more developed in the middle and high school phases.
- Students' personal and social development were inconsistent across the school. The high school students demonstrated mature and sensible attitudes and behavior. Students in the kindergarten and high school phases showed a good awareness of Islamic values. Students were keen to socially contribute to their communities. Their awareness of environmental issues was acceptable.
- The quality of teaching was inconsistent and variable across the school. Lessons were more engaging in the middle and high school phases and often resulted in acceptable learning experiences for students. In the lower phases of the school, teachers' basic knowledge of the curriculum and the teacher-led lessons resulted in restricted progress especially in English, mathematics and science. The school had yet to develop a cohesive assessment policy and align assessment expectations to the school's curriculum, particularly in the lower phases of the school.
- The school's curriculum followed the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the California State's in English and mathematics and the Future Generation Standards in Science. Islamic education and Arabic were aligned with the Ministry of Education standards. There was no common curriculum in the kindergarten. There was limited modification to the curriculum to meet the needs of all students.
- The school was generally a safe place for all students. However, the school had not carried out a fire evacuation drill this academic year. Support and care for all students including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) was weak across the school. The school did not have a SEND coordinator and teachers did not provide effective support in lessons.
- Governors had not as yet replaced the previous principal who had left the school, and the current leadership team were few in number and limited in authority. The school had not evaluated its performance and no practical action plan existed. The governing body was supportive of the school but was ineffective in improving the quality of education offered. The quality of learning resources available in most areas of the school was acceptable, except the in kindergarten, where resources were insufficient. Parents had access to teachers and leaders of the school but no formal report cards had been created thus far to show students' progress.



### What did the school do well?

- The provision for Arabic and Islamic education in Kindergarten.
- The attainment and progress of high school students in mathematics and their progress in Arabic as a first language.



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

- The governing board should:
  - appointing a competent and qualified principal
  - establishing a leadership structure that meets the needs of the school
  - ensuring effective governance through wider representation, clarifying understanding of its role and working in partnership with the school's leaders.
- School leaders should:
  - develop a comprehensive and accurate self-evaluation process which includes the effective monitoring of teaching and learning
  - develop an effective improvement plan
  - effectively manage boys' behavior throughout the school.
- Improve progress in English, mathematics and science, especially in the elementary phase by:
  - providing targeted professional development to ensure that teachers improve their knowledge, understanding and application of the stated curriculum standards
  - setting progress targets for all groups of students
  - developing an overall assessment policy that will guide coherent and consistent assessment practice across the school and ensure that analysis of student data is used to promote effective learning.
- Improve the provision for students with SEND by:
  - appointing a qualified specialist with expertise in SEND to assume responsibility and accountability for the provision and outcomes of students with SEND
  - assessing and identifying the needs of students with SEND and providing them with the appropriate support
  - providing training and ongoing support to ensure teachers effectively modify the curriculum and adapt their teaching to ensure that students with SEND make progress in their learning and against individual targets.
- Improve provision in the kindergarten by:
  - providing sufficient classroom learning resources
  - ensuring the kindergarten phase leader and coordinators work together to implement the kindergarten curriculum for California that is aligned to the CCSS, and work with teachers to develop a wider range of teaching and assessment strategies.



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

- The school lacked the systems and processes required to support students with SEND through additional interventions or in lessons. Consequently, most students made slow progress in their learning and failed to make progress towards or achieve age-related expectations.
- Parents were informed of their child's progress through whole-school reporting methods. In addition, when information was requested, informal discussions were made possible.
- Parents usually had a positive relationship with the school and felt that they could approach particular members of staff if they were concerned. However, information exchange lacked the consistency and rigor necessary to ensure that parents had insightful and regular updates.
- Parents' involvement in their children's education at school was limited. Opportunities for the regular review of their child's progress and conversations about additional support were not planned. Most parents were unaware of any individual education plans or targets for their child.
- Although many parents of students with SEND thought that the school did their best, there was insufficient help and guidance given to assist them in supporting their children at home.

### 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 met the registration requirements of the National Agenda Parameter. Progress towards meeting the National Agenda targets was not secure.
- The governors, owners and principal had yet to promote an awareness and understanding of the National Agenda amongst the school's wider community.
- The school was yet to align its curriculum to the TIMSS and PISA requirements and the development of appropriate subject skills. The English department had started to improve students' ability to interpret and make inferences from texts, but this was not systematically embedded. Professional development to improve teachers' ability to plan for enquiry-based learning and develop students' critical thinking to appropriate TIMSS and PISA levels had not taken place.
- Teachers did not consistently employ strategies to facilitate critical thinking and enquiry even though subject leaders were modifying planning procedures in an attempt to develop these skills.
- Classrooms were insufficiently resourced and organized to encourage students to source information and to effectively develop their research skills in line with the National Agenda requirements. Most students were capable of working under their own initiative to meet the learning objectives, but too few opportunities were given for students to self-select additional resources and learning technologies to further enhance their initial research findings and evaluations.



## 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:

- The leadership team was knowledgeable of, and understood, the potential for innovation in the school. The governors and leaders had not produced a strategic plan or developed a vision to support the innovation agenda. The school's current situation had prevented any innovative developments by the leadership team or teachers. The acting principal was exploring ways in which the school's infrastructure could be developed to promote innovation throughout the school's learning environment. The school's curriculum had not been reviewed to identify opportunities for the integration of innovation skills into everyday learning.

Overall school performance

Weak ↓

1. Students' achievement

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Learning skills</b>	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Acceptable	Acceptable

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Personal development	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓	Good
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓	Good
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

## 3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Acceptable	Acceptable

## 4. Curriculum

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum design and implementation	Weak ↓	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Curriculum adaptation	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Care and support	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓

## 6. Leadership and management

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



## 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, the speaking, reading and writing skills of the majority of children were below the school's curriculum standards. Children's attainment was strongest in listening and weakest in learning to write. Over the past year, attainment in English had declined. In lessons, children were able to follow instructions given by adults and respond appropriately to their peers. A few could contribute to conversations and read without instructions or visual prompts. Overall, children's progress was below the expected curriculum levels although they made acceptable progress in their listening skills. There was no external examination of children's English attainment.
- By the end of kindergarten, the majority of children's mathematical skills were below the school's curriculum standards. Children's attainment in mathematics had declined over the year. Their attainment was strongest in number work. Children were able to sort and match two dimensional shapes and colored objects. However, they made much slower progress in other mathematical concepts such as estimating and measuring length. Boys made slightly better progress than girls. There was no external examination of children's mathematical skills.
- The majority of children's skills and knowledge in science were below curriculum standards. However, children remained curious and interested in the world around them. They enjoyed the practical side of science and they planted seeds together and observed how they grew. A minority of children had developed basic knowledge of plant and human growth. Children's understanding of a broader range of scientific concepts was underdeveloped. Over time, children's progress was weak. There was no external examination of their scientific skills.



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

- In Islamic education, the attainment of most students was in line with the expectations of the UAE Ministry of Education curriculum standards. They demonstrated an acceptable knowledge and understanding of the Five Pillars of Islam. Their recitation skills were more secure than their ability to make references to simple verses from the Holy Qur'an. Most students made appropriate progress in lessons judged against the lesson objectives. For example, in Grade 1, students were able to explain the importance of considering orphans and the expectations of all Muslims toward them. Overall, girls and boys made the similar progress but students with SEND made limited progress.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students demonstrated knowledge, understanding and skills that were in line with curriculum standards. Students were able to listen attentively and respond accurately. They used an adequate range of nouns and verbs in the correct tense to express themselves. Students could read texts with age-appropriate accuracy. Students were able to copy and write sentences however their independent and creative writing was weak. Students made progress against the learning objectives in lessons and over time. Progress in listening and reading was better than the progress in speaking and writing. Low attaining students and students with SEND made insufficient progress.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students achieved standards in line with the Ministry of Education curriculum expectations. Students could understand and respond correctly to basic classroom instructions. They were able to answer simple questions and read short familiar sentences. However, they lacked the confidence to participate in short conversations and their writing skills were limited to copying. In lessons, students made acceptable progress in listening and reading while their progress in speaking and independent writing was slower. Students with SEND made less progress.
- In English, attainment levels against curriculum standards were weak. Results of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills for the last three years showed students to be performing one to two grade levels below the norm, particularly in reading comprehension and writing. In lessons and work samples, students demonstrated weak reading comprehension and writing skills. Students' progress was adequate in developing listening skills and knowledge of words but slower in gaining sufficient writing skills. Students with SEND made much slower progress than their peers.
- In mathematics, the attainment level of only a minority of students was in line with curriculum standards. Internal tests were not aligned to curriculum expectations and were not an accurate measure of student attainment. On external Iowa tests, only a few students scored at the proficient level. During lessons, most students demonstrated adequate computation skills but weaker problem solving skills. Students' work books showed insufficient development in these mathematical skills. Girls' progress was slightly better than that of the boys. Students with SEND made much less progress.

- In science, students' attainment was weak when measured against the stated curriculum standards. Students' achievements in the Iowa tests were below the basic levels. In a few lessons, students demonstrated better attainment level. For example, in Grade 4, students set up meaningful experiments to observe evaporation, condensation and precipitation and observed and recorded the impact and phenomena. Students' progress in developing investigative skills was underdeveloped overall. The progress of students with SEND was limited.

### Middle

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

- In Islamic education, most students attained levels that were in line with the expectations of the MOE curriculum. Students' knowledge of the main concepts, beliefs and values, and their recitation skills were acceptable. Students' understanding of verses from the Holy Qur'an was not secure. In lessons, most students made appropriate progress against the stated objectives. For example, Grade 6 students developed sufficient knowledge of the reasons behind the Prophet Mohammed's (PBUH) migration from Mecca to Medina. Girls made slightly better progress than boys, and students with SEND made limited progress.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students demonstrated knowledge, understanding and skills that were in line with curriculum standards. All assessments were internal with no external benchmarking tests. In lessons, students demonstrated acceptable comprehension skills. For example, in a poetry lesson on 'The poet and the wolf', they responded appropriately to the poet's message. Students expressed their ideas using standard Arabic. The opportunities for writing independently were limited and students' writing skills were less well developed. Students developed their speaking skills through presentations and discussions. Different groups of students, including those with low achievement and those with SEND did not make acceptable progress.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students attained in line with curriculum expectations when judged against their starting points. However, their speaking skills were slightly below the expected level, and as a result their ability to discuss or explain their thinking was underdeveloped. Progress in speaking was better when students were expected to express their ideas using standard Arabic. For example, in Grade 6, students discussed the values in a story and related them to their real life. Girls made slightly better progress than boys and students with SEND made limited progress.
- In English, attainment and progress were in line with the expected levels according to the school's internal assessments. However, the results of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) carried out in the previous year, indicated that students' attainment was below grade level, particularly in reading comprehension. In lessons, attainment and progress were acceptable. Students were able to communicate their learning adequately. The amount and quality of work produced by students were inconsistent across the grade levels. Students' creative writing skills were under developed. Girls outperformed boys across the phase.

- In mathematics, internal assessment data indicated that most students had attainment levels that were in line with curriculum standards. However, attainment for a majority of students, was less than proficient on external Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. Progress for most students was acceptable as shown on data reported by the school. Attainment and progress for girls were higher than for boys.
- In science most students were working at the expected curriculum level. Students demonstrated a better understanding of the relationships between density, weight and volume. However, students' understanding of scientific methodologies was less well developed. The trends in externally-benchmarked tests, although at acceptable grades, indicated a need for students to develop a better understanding of scientific enquiry and the analyzing and evaluating of information. In lessons, students made acceptable progress in gaining knowledge of age-related scientific concepts such as matter and motion.

### High

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

- In Islamic education, the attainment of most students was in line with the UAE Ministry of Education curriculum standards. Students displayed age-appropriate knowledge of the main Islamic concepts, beliefs and values particularly when taught in English. Their ability to make references, justify or infer using verses from the Holy Qur'an was developing. Only a few students' had good recitation skills. In better lessons students made appropriate progress against lesson objectives. For example, Grade 12 students developed their understanding of the value of being protective of women by participating in an open contextualized discussion. Girls made slightly better progress than boys and students with SEND made limited progress.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students demonstrated knowledge, understanding and skills that were in line with curriculum standards. For example, students could critically analyze poems and give opinions about the author's view. The majority of students made notable progress as measured against the learning objectives in lessons and over time. Students were able to extend their thinking when engaged in deep discussions, independent learning and when they led presentations. However, as a result of limited opportunities for independent and creative writing, students' writing skills were less well developed. Students with SEND and low achievers were making weak progress.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students attained levels that were in line with MOE curriculum expectations. They were competent in most skills. Their speaking skills were below expectation and their ability to form sentences explaining, or reflecting on, real life examples was still developing. Progress was better when students were given the opportunity to practice standard Arabic. For example, in Grade 9, students gave well-structured examples on using possessive pronouns. Students with SEND made limited progress and girls made slightly better progress than boys.

- Most students attained levels in English that were in line with curriculum standards. For example, students were able to comprehend non-fiction literary text. In external exams, most students across the phase achieved at grade level in English. The quality of work samples was inconsistent across the grade levels. Students' creative writing skills were underdeveloped. Generally, girls made better progress than boys but students with SEND made slow progress.
- In mathematics, the attainment of a majority of students was good. Students had secure understanding of mathematical concepts. Internal assessments indicated that students made good progress. However, in contrast, less than a majority achieved proficient levels on the external ITBS tests taken the previous year. In lessons, the majority of students made good progress against appropriate learning objectives. Students' work demonstrated progress in developing their ability to apply complex mathematical formula to solve problems. The progress of girls and boys was inconsistent.
- In science, most students were working at the expected age-related levels when judged by both the school curriculum standards and by external tests. Students had the ability to solve problems using their knowledge of forces, speed and mass. Students also made expected progress in lessons. For example, they used calorimetry procedures and mathematical formulae to determine the specific heat capacity of metals. However, progress was not consistent across the high school phase. A majority of students displayed an underdeveloped understanding of scientific methodologies such as observation and investigation. Externally-validated tests showed uneven attainment and progress across the phase. Overall, girls made better progress than boys.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Most students in the upper phases of the school demonstrated positive attitudes towards learning and often their engagement and participation in lessons resulted in meaningful outcomes. However, in the lower phases of the school, students were passive learners and heavily reliant on their teachers for directions. As a result, their independent learning skills were restricted.
- Too many students did not experience the benefits of collaborative learning during their lessons. They sometimes worked as pairs and in small groups. In the best lessons, with teacher encouragement, students shared and discussed their findings.
- In the middle and high school phases, students' understanding was better developed when they related their knowledge and skills to a range of other learning contexts. For example when studying the 'Gold Rush' in English they deepened their understanding by reading, comprehending and analyzing a range of genres around the same topic. In the Kindergarten and elementary phases, the ability to make connections with the real world and between areas of learning was undeveloped.
- Students were rarely given the opportunity to find out things for themselves and to undertake individual research. There were many missed opportunities to engage in meaningful and innovative problem-solving situations in mathematics and science, especially in the elementary phase and kindergarten. In the middle and high school phases, better use was made of project work, sometimes as homework research. In these cases, students were motivated to find out information for themselves.



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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Personal development	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓	Good

- Students were generally positive, sensible, and responsible and knew what was expected of them. High school students were more confident in decision making and risk taking but occasionally, boys at the lower phases were not as positively engaged in learning as their older peers.
- Students' behavior was not consistent across the school. While behavior was good in the high school and the girls' section, it was moderate elsewhere in the school. In the elementary phase, a few boys disrupted the flow of lessons and the school's records reflected a few cases of bullying.
- Generally, students enjoyed positive and respectful relationships amongst each other and with their teachers. However, the high level of mobility in the staff and student population hindered the presence of more enduring and deeper relationships.
- Most students demonstrated a general awareness of the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle. Older students made wiser food choices and reflected well on the significance of regular exercising.
- Students' attendance was good overall. However, a significant number of students arrived late to school, especially in the lower phases of the school.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓	Good

- The Islamic education program promoted an age-appropriate understanding of Islamic values for all kindergarten children. Students in elementary and middle phases had an adequate understanding of Islamic values and their impact on everyday life in the UAE. They could provide some examples of how these values, including kindness and tolerance, influenced people's lives. Students in high school demonstrated an appreciation for Islamic values and often put them into practice.
- Students had a basic knowledge of Emirati heritage and culture. Emirati students reflected appropriately on how proud they were of their heritage. Students celebrated National Day and Flag Day of the UAE.
- Students knew about their own cultures and actively celebrated them during the International Day event. However, their knowledge and understanding of other cultures was limited. They were aware of what cultural diversity meant but had a limited knowledge of it. Students in the high school could reflect on similarities and differences between cultures. Their multi-cultural awareness was much better developed than that of the rest of the student body.



	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Social responsibility and innovation skills</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Students contributed to the school's life and the wider community through an adequate range of planned activities such as the "Kite Beach" event to raise awareness about breast cancer. Their opinions had some influence on school activities, for example, changing the exam schedule to a more convenient timing.
- Generally, most students had a positive work ethic and enjoyed participating and being involved in projects. When given the opportunity, they were ready to participate and contribute, but were often reliant on the school for direction and initiation.
- Most students had a general awareness of environmental issues. However, kindergarten children's awareness was less well developed. Older students took appropriate care of the school but younger students were less active in caring for their environment.

### 3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Teaching for effective learning</b>	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Acceptable	Acceptable

- Teachers in the middle and high school phases were knowledgeable about their subject areas. This was inconsistent in the kindergarten and elementary phases. Many teachers across the school did not demonstrate an effective understanding of how students learn. Lessons were mainly teacher directed and students were passive, especially in the lower phases.
- Planning for differentiation, collaboration and independent learning tasks to meet the needs of all students was limited, especially in the lower phases of the school. Teachers did not always implement what they had planned well and did not include links to other subjects or the real world in lessons. Resources in some areas, such as kindergarten were limited.
- Teachers and students interacted sufficiently, but the dialogue was often fact based and did not extend students' thinking. More open-ended questions to develop deeper thinking were used in the middle and high school phases.
- Teaching strategies to meet the needs of all students were ineffective in all phases. Most classes were conducted as whole group lessons, and teachers did not offer effective feedback to individuals. There was a low level of challenge and the support was not sufficiently personalized.
- Only a few teachers used probing questions and challenge to encourage critical thinking. Open-ended questioning was not regularly used by teachers and problems relating to real life were usually not evident in lessons. Strategies to develop independent learning skills and innovation were not common.
- In Arabic as a first language, most teachers demonstrated secure subject knowledge and, to a lesser extent, understood how students learn. They planned their lessons appropriately and time and resources were used to enhance students' learning. Planning for differentiation, collaboration or independent learning tasks to meet the different needs of students was limited. Levels of challenge and support were not sufficiently personalized. Opportunities for developing students' critical thinking, problem solving and independent learning skills were limited.

- In Arabic as an additional language, most teachers had secure subject knowledge and in the best lessons it was evident that teachers understood how students learned an additional language. Despite teachers planning lessons that included teaching strategies such as group work and brain storming, these approaches were seldom used in practice. Many teachers asked closed questions which limited student interaction. Teachers did not generally challenge students or promote critical thinking skills.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Assessment	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Acceptable	Acceptable

- There were inconsistent and sometimes ineffective assessment practices, especially in the kindergarten and elementary phases. Attainment data in student reports lacked full validity since some internal assessments were not linked to curriculum standards. Some staff members had started to link assessments to curriculum standards and track student progress against curriculum expectations but these initiatives were still developing, particularly in the lower phases of the school.
- While students in Grades 3 to 12 took the ITBS, these were not used to benchmark students' academic outcomes. Results from previous years were not readily available.
- A process for teachers to input data to be used for analysis was in place. However data entry for term one had been delayed and was not available for analysis. Assessment data from the previous few years lacked validity as an accurate measure of student achievement against the school's stated curriculum standards.
- Assessment data had not yet been effectively used to inform teaching and curriculum planning. Some initiatives, such as the use of diagnostic tests, and alignment of summative assessments to curriculum standards, were examples of steps taken in some subjects in the middle and high school phases in an attempt to start to meet the needs of students.
- Teachers did not consistently use knowledge of student strengths and weaknesses to adapt teaching and learning strategies. Students were not consistently challenged or given support. Feedback was not regularly used to guide next steps for learning. Students rarely assessed their own learning in the younger year groups.

#### 4. Curriculum

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum design and implementation	Weak ↓	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- The curriculum was reasonably broad and balanced. It followed the Common Core State Standards and the California State's standards for English and Math, and the Future Generation Standards in Science. Islamic education and Arabic were aligned with the UAE Ministry of Education standards. In the kindergarten, some teachers had recently started to use the Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes from the National curriculum for England. These expectations were not aligned with the school's licensed US curriculum.

- With the exception of the kindergarten, the curriculum was sufficiently planned using a common planning format. Curriculum standards were identified at the planning stage for English, math and science but were delivered inconsistently across the subjects. Initial discussions on transitions between phases had taken place for English, but this was not evident in other subjects.
- An appropriate range of electives such as statistics, entrepreneurship, guidance, art and music provided older students with some course choice in the high school, but the range of electives offered was not broad enough to allow for sufficient enrichment of the curriculum.
- In the middle and high school, the planning format included cross curricular links, facilitated by the textbook series in use. However, they were not systematic nor well implemented in lessons.
- There was limited review and development of the curriculum. Initial discussion had occurred in most subjects to ensure adequate provision, but it was not systematic across subjects and phases.
- The social studies program was based on the Ministry of Education curriculum and was delivered in Arabic for the elementary phase, and in English for the middle phase. However, in the high school phase it was integrated with English, science and Arabic.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum adaptation	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak

- The curriculum was planned appropriately to meet the needs of the majority of students but failed to cater adequately for students with SEND or for low attaining students. The curriculum did not provide sufficient challenge in lessons to meet the needs of higher-attaining students. Boys generally underperformed and the curriculum was not effectively modified to address this issue.
- The curriculum was functional, but it rarely provided opportunities for students' enterprise, innovation, creativity or significant social contribution. However, a variety of interesting extra-curricular activities, including an acceptable range of after school clubs, enhanced students' personal and academic development.
- The school provided some appropriate learning experiences which helped to develop students' knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the heritage, culture and values of the UAE. These included extra-curricular events such as a simulation of the Hajj pilgrimage, celebration of Arabic festivities and visits to local places of interest. However, these events were not yet fully integrated into a multi-curricular program.
- The school provided Arabic lessons for the all children in the kindergarten. The program was based on children recognizing letters and sounds, reading simple words and repeating short phrases.

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

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

- The school had adequate provision for safeguarding students across the school. A child protection policy was in place and relevant training for staff have been carried out. Records for adults who worked in the school were up-to-date.
- Adequate procedures and arrangements were in place to ensure the health, safety and security of all students. Evacuation plans and exits were clearly signposted, but evacuation drills were overdue and had not been carried out during the academic year. Fire extinguishers were regularly checked and maintained, although the fire alarm in the kindergarten had not been checked recently. Students were adequately supervised and monitored on the school's busses. However, parents had reported a few incidents when seatbelts had not been securely fastened.
- The building and equipment were appropriately maintained and areas of urgent attention were addressed as needed. Regularly-scheduled maintenance had been carried out. Records including medical and security incidents were sufficiently maintained and updated.
- The condition of school's building and facilities was acceptable. The premises were suitable for most students, and a few ramps were available to ensure adequate accessibility to different areas of the school.
- The school had adequate arrangements to encourage students to adopt safe and healthy lifestyles. Sufficient physical activities were provided to all students and most could explain how to maintain a healthy daily routine.

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Care and support	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Weak ↓

- Relationships between staff and students were generally courteous in most phases of the school. However, some boys in the upper elementary and lower middle phases of the school showed disrespectful and inconsiderate attitudes to their teachers. The school's systems and procedures for managing such behavior were ineffective and therefore staff were insufficiently supported to maintain good order in these classes.
- The school's approach was effective in promoting good attendance for almost all students. Punctuality in the morning remained an issue despite the school's increased vigilance, increased sanctions for lateness and follow up with parents. Persistent late-comers continued to arrive after the beginning of the first lesson and so missed learning at the start of the school day.
- The school had an appropriate policy for admitting students with SEND. However, the school lacked systems or procedures to accurately identify students' specific needs or to plan effective provision for them. In the absence of specialist staff, individual teachers, who had students in their classes presenting significant difficulties, did their best to identify the main causes for concern.

- The school provided very limited support for students with SEND and for those who were gifted and talented. The absence of a SEND coordinator in the school, meant teachers were not sufficiently trained or supported on how to modify the curriculum in lessons to ensure that students with SEND progressed in their learning. Consequently, students with SEND made mostly weak progress in lessons. They were provided with little additional support both in and outside of the classroom.
- The school counsellor was effective and sympathetic in dealing with students' questions, concerns and welfare needs. Students were confident to turn to her, or to another trusted member of staff, for personal guidance and support. Older students received some career and higher education guidance at specific times during the year, but the lack of an appointed career counsellor significantly reduced this necessary service for high school students.

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

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

Weak

- No member of the school staff was responsible or accountable for the outcomes of students with SEND. Providing adequate provision for students with SEND was of low priority.
- The school lacked assessment and identification systems for identifying and categorizing students with SEND. Teachers individually identified those students having significant difficulty in learning, but there were no procedures for referrals to external agencies or planning for provision.
- Most parents of students with SEND had positive relationships with the school and felt able to ask for information and support. However, their contribution to the review of their child's progress and provision was limited.
- Support for students with SEND was not effective in the majority of subjects and phases. The lack of specialist staff with appropriate expertise in SEND resulted in teachers having very little guidance on effective strategies to support students who were having significant difficulties with learning. The curriculum was infrequently modified to allow these students to learn well.
- Most students with SEND were not making adequate gains in their academic development. No systems were in place for thorough tracking and monitoring of their progress, and insufficient information was available.

#### 6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Weak ↓

- The school was ineffectively led. The vice-principal was working in the capacity of acting principal. The vision and direction of the school were unclear to teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders. Commitment to the UAE National Agenda was superficial and limited steps had been taken to meet national priorities.
- A few middle management roles existed. Ownership and accountability for the performance of various aspects of the school were not well established. Knowledge of the school's stated curriculum and best practices in teaching and learning were basic, particularly in the lower phases of the school.



- Unproductive relationships and limited communication restricted and hindered the development of effective provision for students' learning. Some staff were demotivated and unsure of what was required of them.
- Although, a few staff members had the appropriate capacity to improve, they had insufficient delegation and authority to improve practices and impact positively on student outcomes, for example some middle leaders in the upper phases were not given enough opportunities to collaborate with staff in the lower phases, and consequently students' performance was variable in these subjects. The school lacked the capacity to develop effective systems and structures to improve the quality of provision.
- The school's performance had significantly dropped, and over recent years students' achievements, especially in the lower phases of the school, were declining. Leaders had little success in improving key aspects of the school.

#### School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Weak ↓

- The school had not established a tangible, reliable system and process for self-evaluation. As a result, the school's view of its strengths and areas for improvement were inaccurate.
- Self-evaluation practices were limited in scope. Senior and middle leaders had a flawed view of the quality of teaching and learning delivered in the school. Despite the existence of international examination results, the school had not analyzed available data or taken reasonable steps to improve the outcomes for students.
- The school lacked practical improvement planning processes. Although, a few key staff were broadly aware of the areas that were in need of urgent improvement, such as provision and support for students with SEND, few steps had been taken to rectify weaknesses.
- The school had made very limited progress towards meeting recommendations from the previous inspection report. Key aspects of the school had declined such as students' outcomes in the elementary phase and the kindergarten.

#### Partnerships with parents and the community

Acceptable ↓

- Although, channels for involving parents were few, most parents appreciated their involvement in some activities such as the National Day celebrations.
- Parents had direct access to teachers and the acting principal. However some parents indicated that their concerns were not addressed in a timely manner. Formal communication channels between parents and leaders of the school and the board of governors had not been established.
- Parents received an adequate overview of the performance of their children through parent-teacher meetings. 'Students' agenda' provided an appropriate daily reporting mechanism to parents. They were provided with information on what their children needed to do to improve. However, individual formal report cards had not been generated or sent to parents.

- There were adequate community links with local organizations and authorities such as the Dubai Police. These partnerships were aimed at improving students' personal development. Occasionally events were organized in collaboration with external organizations, for example the school community participated in a blood donation campaign for Thalassaemia patients at Rashid Hospital.

## Governance

Weak ↓

- The governing body did not include representatives from all stakeholder groups. The small group of governors met regularly. They helped the school to buy equipment and deal with some financial matters. Governors did not fully understand the extent of their role and responsibilities. This had led to difficulties in the working relationship with the former principal. Their impact on school decision making was limited.
- Governors occasionally visited the school to review developments such as building improvements but played no part in evaluating the school, or in challenging the school's view about itself or in setting the school's strategic direction.
- Governors did not ensure that the school had addressed all the recommendations from the previous inspection report. They did however buy some laptops and secure extra staffing but failed to ensure adequate resource levels for the Kindergarten. Governors had little impact on school performance because they did not monitor the performance of senior leaders or examine the school's processes sufficiently well. They did however ensure that the school fulfilled its statutory obligations.




## Management, staffing, facilities and resources

Acceptable

- The majority of the school's procedures and facilities were adequately managed. The school's administrative policies were understood and followed by all staff.
- Although the school had sufficient teaching and support staff, key positions remained unfilled. The school still needed to recruit a Principal, a special needs coordinator, and various curriculum coordinator positions. The Kindergarten lacked sufficiently qualified staff.
- The school's premises were generally sufficient and classrooms were of adequate size. Areas for physical education and specialist facilities such as laboratories for science were sufficient.
- Students had access to two computer laboratories, and the library had sufficient stocks of books. Learning resources were broadly adequate, however access to learning technologies in the classrooms was limited, and the kindergarten lacked sufficient resources to promote independent 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	
<b>Parents*</b> 	2015-2016	47
	2014-2015	157
<b>Teachers</b> 	64	
<b>Students</b> 	71	

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

- A few parents and the majority of students and teachers responded to KHDA's survey.
- Parents' levels of satisfaction with the school and the quality of education provided to their children was variable.
- Most parents thought their children were making good progress in Islamic education and English, and the majority indicated that their children were making good progress in science and mathematics.
- A minority of parents agreed that the school prepared their children for the next stage in their learning, however the majority of parents who responded disagreed. Their views on the school's resources and facilities were varied.
- The majority of parents agreed that an appropriate range of resources was available, only a minority of students agreed.
- The majority of students disagreed that the school upgraded its facilities to support their learning. Most students were appreciative of their teachers.
- Whilst most students agreed that they were treated fairly by the school, only a minority agreed that the school listened and acted on their views. The majority of students were not satisfied with the range of extra-curricular activities offered by the school.
- Most teachers indicated that students enjoyed the school and they behaved well.

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)