



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational  
needs and disabilities



Innovation

## Inspection Report 2015-2016

Repton School Dubai

Curriculum: UK/IB

Overall rating: Outstanding

Read more about the school



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"The race for  
excellence has  
no finish line"



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

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## School information

### General information



Location	Nad Al Sheba
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2007
Website	www.reptondubai.org
Telephone	04 4269393
Address	PO Box 300331 ,Dubai Nad Al Sheba 3 & 4
Principal	Wyndham Jonathan Hughes D'Aeth
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	21 to 24 March 2016

### Students



Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	3-18
Grades or year groups	Foundation Stage to Year 13
Number of students on roll	2111
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	N/A
Number of Emirati students	268
Number of students with SEND	151
Largest nationality group of students	UK

### Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	201
Largest nationality group of teachers	UK
Number of teaching assistants	60
Teacher-student ratio	1:10
Number of guidance counsellors	15
Teacher turnover	14%

### Curriculum



Educational permit / Licence	UK
Main curriculum	UK / IB
External tests and examinations	IGCSE, IBDP
Accreditation	IB, BSO
National Agenda benchmark tests	

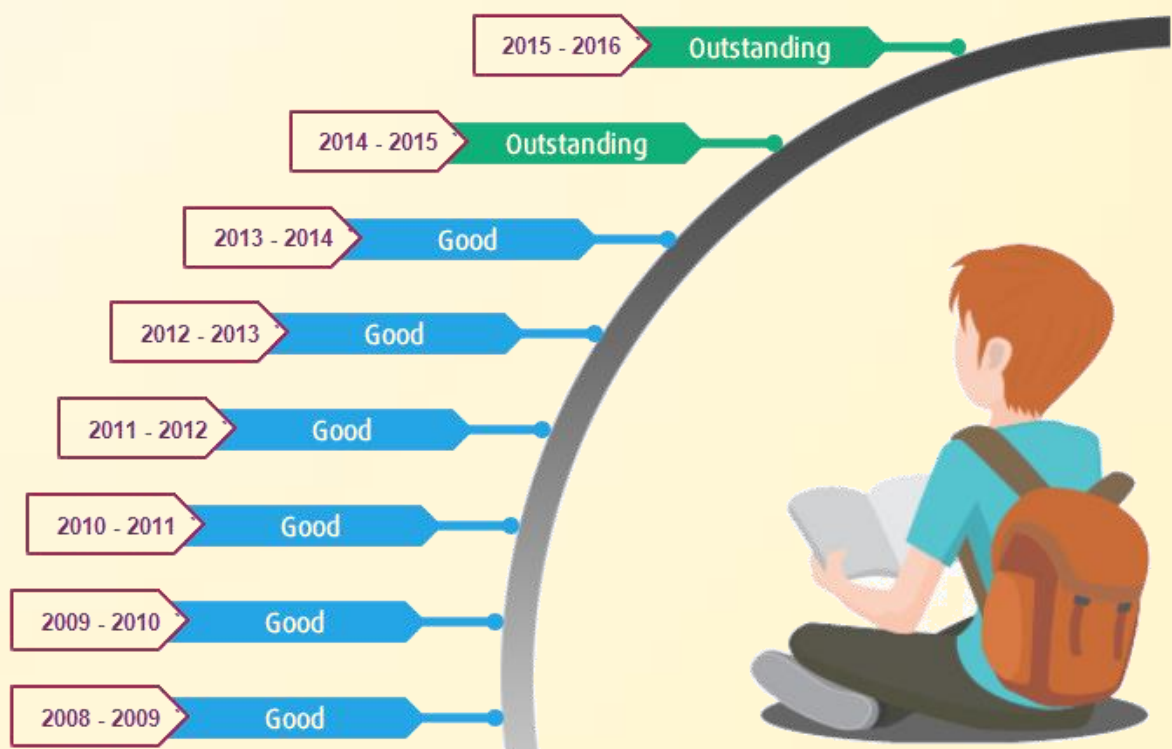


## Summary for parents and the community

**Repton School Dubai** was inspected by DSIB from 21 to 24 March 2016. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **outstanding**.

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, **Repton school** provided an **Outstanding** quality of education for its students.

- Repton School, helped its students reach high academic standards in most subjects and ensured that they made outstanding progress from their starting points. These high standards had been maintained over time. Children fared exceptionally well in the Foundation Stage (FS), which laid a solid platform for further academic success. The school had improved since its previous inspection by addressing the issues that were then raised. Although there had been significant improvements to the quality of Arabic teaching and the impact was being observed in some improved progress, more effort was needed.
- The school educated the whole child and this could be seen in students' personal and social development, which was at least very good and also in the outstanding quality of their learning skills.
- Students' strong outcomes stemmed from a variety of sources within the school, its external links and its outstanding partnership with parents.
- The accuracy and use of assessment information had improved. This enabled teachers to be even more precise in matching tasks in lessons to students' needs. Although there was some variation in this, what was very notable was the consistent support provided for students with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).
- Teachers drew on and helped create a vibrant curriculum, which inspired students to give their best. They did this in a safe, very well equipped environment for learning where the quality of care and guidance was outstanding.
- This quality of provision and outcomes had come about because of sustained, high quality leadership by the Headmaster well supported by his senior team. They had secured incremental gains over time by remaining true to the school's distinctive vision and through the strategic support, challenge and commitment of the governing body.



### What did the school do well?

- The school had sustained high levels of academic achievement in most subjects across the curriculum, secured good progress in others and promoted students' personal and social development exceptionally well.
- The school provided an exciting, challenging and safe atmosphere for learning through its vibrant curriculum and high quality teaching.
- The school was led and governed with purpose in continuing pursuit of excellence.





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

- Improve students' achievement in Arabic, by ensuring the department works together to continue with their present initiatives and devise and follow a common pathway for accurately recording students' attainment and tracking their progress.



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

- Children in the Foundation Stage (FS) made consistently very good or better progress. In the primary phase, progress was almost always very good during lessons. Students in the secondary phase, generally made good progress during whole-class sessions although this was variable. During individual and small group sessions provided by experienced specialist support staff, students made outstanding progress over time.
- Regular and very detailed reports outlining students' small steps of progress were very much appreciated by parents.
- Various communications systems between home and school enabled both parties to share information and concerns regularly.
- Parents were involved at every stage of the identification process: from the earliest discussions and concerns; to the setting of targets in the personalised plans; to the suggestions offered for supporting their children's learning at home and through their attendance at review meetings.
- The support for students' personal development was excellent. Specialist support staff provided highly effective support for students during individual and small group sessions. In-class support for children in the FS was consistently effective. In-class support was more variable in the secondary phase, particularly when students had more complex needs.

### National Agenda Parameter



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

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

#### Main points:

- The school did not meet the registration requirements of the National Agenda Parameter.
- Progress towards meeting the National Agenda targets was as expected.
- The school provided information and opportunities for discussion for all stakeholders. All stakeholders were positive about the initiative and its benefits for the school. They were informed about key features of the National Agenda.
- Critical thinking and problem solving were increasingly built into the curriculum across all phases but some unevenness, across science for instance, remained.
- Critical thinking was very well established in some parts of the curriculum such as English and mathematics. This was also reflected in the wider curriculum such as art and PE.
- Students used a wide variety of resources for research. Information and communication technology (ICT) equipment was used throughout the school but not to a sufficient extent. Children's use of ICT in the FS was very good.

## 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 school's leadership recognised the importance of innovation. It was embodied by the schools' core values that targeted the promotion of student risk-taking, inquiry, leadership, creativity and extra-curricular opportunities. Staff professional development focused on the newly developed concept of distributed leadership and the provision for child-centred classes. School facilities promoted hands-on opportunities for students in all phases. There were many stations in the spacious hallways for each year level to explore innovation through planning and designing. On-line homework was being explored to promote a rich range of approaches to motivate students. The IB program provided natural links to innovation skills' development, promoting critical thinking and problem solving. The school's innovative approach to the alignment of Arabic, English and French had fostered better planning and interdisciplinary connections.



Overall school performance

Outstanding

1. Students' achievement

		Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Islamic education</b> 	Attainment	Not applicable	Good	Good	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Good
<b>Arabic as a first language</b> 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good ↑	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b> 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not applicable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good ↑	Acceptable	Not applicable
<b>English</b> 	Attainment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding ↑	Very good ↑
	Progress	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding ↑	Very good ↑
<b>Mathematics</b> 	Attainment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Very good ↓
	Progress	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
<b>Science</b> 	Attainment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Very good ↑
	Progress	Outstanding	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Learning skills</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Outstanding ↑	Very good ↑
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Outstanding	Very good ↓	Very good ↓	Very good ↓

## 3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Assessment	Outstanding	Outstanding ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

## 4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum design and implementation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Curriculum adaptation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding ↑

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Care and support	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

## 6. Leadership and management

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



## Main inspection report

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

### Judgements are made on a six-point scale



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

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

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

## 1. Students' achievement

### Foundation Stage

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

- From their varying starting points, most children exceeded curriculum standards in all aspects of English. Children, including those with SEND made outstanding progress. Exciting activities ensured most children responded well to instructions and listened carefully. They rapidly gained confidence sharing thoughts and ideas with both their friends and teachers. Vocabulary and subject related terminology expanded swiftly. Systematic development of their phonic and word recognition skills resulted in secure early reading skills and a love of books. Their letter formation and understanding of sentence construction meant that most FS2 children could write basic sentences with a clear purpose.
- Most children were working well above expected curriculum standards in mathematics. Outcomes exceeded UK national average scores. Children could count accurately and most were able to order numbers confidently to 20 and beyond. They were also gaining confidence in adding and subtracting orally and a majority could write number sentences for their calculations using symbols. Through play, children in FS2, used dirhams accurately and knew what change to expect. They could describe the properties of two-dimensional shapes, identify light and heavy objects and could halve and quarter whole objects. All children, including those identified with SEND, made outstanding progress in mathematics because learning was exciting, relevant to their daily lives and skilfully woven into all aspects of the curriculum.
- In science, most children were attaining levels well above curriculum expectations. Standards reached exceeded UK national average scores. All children, including those with SEND made outstanding progress in developing scientific skills and concepts. FS1 children learned about reversible changes in materials such as chocolate and FS2 found out what made bread rise. Children learned about camels and a variety of farm animals through first hand experiences, enabling them to expand their knowledge of the world in real life contexts. Scientific vocabulary increased rapidly alongside the development of knowledge, skills and understanding.

**Primary**

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students attained levels that were above curriculum standards. All assessments were internal with no external benchmarks. The majority of students knew and understood the key concepts in Islam. They knew the difference between Zakat and Sadaqqah and linked them to real life examples. They could explain the difference and similarity between Hajj and Umrah. They recited short Surahs from the Holy Qur'an. In relation to their starting points, a large majority of students made better than expected progress particularly in learning Islamic values and acts of worship.
- In Arabic as a first language, the attainment of most students was in line with MoE curriculum standards. In lessons, most students performed at expected levels especially in reading and listening. Students' listened well, they responded to teachers' questioning with acceptable clarity, and many could read basic short text. The majority of students made good progress in their reading and listening, and their writing was developing. Year 6 students found it interesting to write a short story by building up different characters and settings. However, speaking skills were developing quite slowly, with a small minority of Year 6 students not able to express their thoughts sufficiently well.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students reached levels that were in line with expectations. A few achieved beyond this. Most students could understand the basic classroom instructions. They were able to use simple sentences and read short written text made up of familiar words. They participated in short conversations and dialogues. Their independent writing was improving. In relation to their starting points, the majority of students made good gains in improving their Arabic linguistic skills.
- Attainment and progress in English were outstanding in relation to curriculum standards. In Year 6, almost all students were fluent, independent readers. They used their secure knowledge of punctuation to read with understanding and expression. Most students' writing was grammatically correct. They used a good cursive script and were able to write extended pieces for different audiences and different purposes. Progress in writing was underpinned by the opportunities provided for students to talk through their own ideas and listen to the views of others before writing. Almost all had high levels of speaking and listening skills and considerable self-confidence in expressing their ideas. Because teaching was well adapted for students with SEND, their progress in English was comparable to that of their classmates.
- In mathematics attainment and progress were outstanding. This was confirmed by lesson observations and students' recent work. Year 6 students could apply their knowledge and understanding to solve problems. They could solve word problems involving operations with whole numbers. Students could extend patterns to find a later specified term. They understood line symmetry and geometric properties and could interpret and use data in tables and graphs to solve problems. They could use information in pictographs and tally charts to complete bar graphs.








- Attainment and progress in science were outstanding when compared to curriculum standards. Students learned by exploring and investigating questions and through observations. Strong teaching ensured students' understanding of abstract ideas such as forces and electricity was deep. For example, a collection of activities about electricity helped students in Year 5 understand how to measure features of electricity in different types of circuits. They drew these circuits using correct science conventions. The progress of students with SEND was very good.

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students attained levels that were above curriculum standards. This was confirmed in the lessons observed and in students' recent work. They had a good understanding of Islamic practices such as fasting and Zakat. In relation to their starting points, students made very good progress particularly in acquiring knowledge of Islamic laws (Fiqh).
- In Arabic as a first language, lessons and students' work demonstrated attainment to be at expected levels, particularly in listening and reading skills. Most students generally, made adequate progress. By Year 11, students could read short familiar texts, such as on how best to choose friends. Students' writing and speaking skills were developing at a slower rates because students were not challenged enough. For example, Year 11 students were not writing sufficient detailed reports on historical events using evidence to support or refute different views.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students had attainment levels that were in line with expectations. In lessons and in their work, they performed at expected curriculum levels, particularly in reading and writing skills. By Year 9, students, who had been studying Arabic for three to four years, could answer simple questions related to weather with some visual cues. They were developing their acquisition of vocabulary adequately but lacked fluency and spontaneity in discussions with their peers. Generally, most students made acceptable progress over time.
- In English, attainment was outstanding and well above the IGCSE international average. Students made excellent progress in all aspects of the subject. Advanced reading and comprehension skills enabled most to extract information from text to support a point of view. Students' oral skills were particularly well developed and, in discussion, they articulated their thoughts clearly and confidently. Extended writing showed imagination and reflected the high quality of students' speaking skills, for example, in composing eyewitness accounts of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. Students could draft, edit and evaluate the effectiveness of their own texts, guided by a very clear understanding of the assessment criteria.

- In mathematics, most students' attainment was above international and national standards in the IGCSE examinations. This had been the case for the past three years. Internal data for 2015 showed that student attainment was well above curriculum standards throughout the secondary phase. A small number of students had achieved A\* IGCSE grades in Year 10. In lessons, most students made outstanding progress in relation to appropriate learning objectives aligned with the new English curriculum, as did students with SEND. By the end of Year 11, students could analyse information, draw conclusions, make generalisations, and solve linear equations. They could solve a variety of fraction, proportion, and percentage problems and justify their conclusions. They could also find solutions to a variety of problems involving equations, formulae, and functions.
- In science, students' attainment and progress were very good when compared with international and curriculum standards. Students extracted and summarised key information about the nitrogen cycle from a series of activities about different stages of this cycle. Students continued to develop enquiry skills by investigating, for example, how different gases affect combustion. The strong focus upon key course content sometimes did not give students enough opportunity to broaden and deepen their understanding of important ideas. The progress of students with SEND was very good.

#### Post-16

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

- In Islamic education lessons, and in their recent work, most students demonstrated levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that were in line with the Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum expectations. All the assessments were internal. In By Grade 12, students could discuss Islamic laws to an appropriate level. The majority of students made better than expected progress in the different areas of the subject.
- In Arabic as a first language, recent attainment results from internal assessment were broadly acceptable. In lessons and in their work, most students attained at expected curriculum levels. By Year 12, students' listening skills were good and they could read about 'Justice in Islam' from the textbook adequately. However, their writing skills were inconsistent. The majority of their writing was based on worksheets requiring only brief responses that did not develop their skills sufficiently. Most students' progress was acceptable. By Year 12, students were developing their comprehension adequately but were not making sufficient comparison, for example, between novels and their writers' styles. Speaking skills in standard Arabic were not developing at an appropriate rate.
- Attainment in English was very good and above the IB standard. Students' skills of literary and textual analysis were very well developed. They could compare and contrast the work of different authors and used persuasive analyses to support a reasoned point of view. This was evident, for example, in a high quality discussion of the representation of social class and gender in Shaw's 'Pygmalion'. The large majority of students expressed their views confidently and listened intently to the views of others. Students understood how variations in language, form and context shape and change meanings in speech and writing. Students could evaluate the effectiveness of their own extended writing, guided by their understanding of the assessment criteria.

- In mathematics, a large majority of students attained above international and national standards in the IB. High standards had been maintained in recent years. In lessons and in their recent work, a large majority of students had levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that were above curriculum standards. Students' progress from IGCSE to IB was outstanding. Students could analyse data from several sources or unfamiliar representations to solve multi-step problems. Some understood mathematical modeling as applied in probability and statistics. Others could apply proof of logarithms confidently and could determine strategies, as well as execute techniques, to formulate quality solutions to more complex examination questions.
- In science, attainment and progress were very good when compared with international and curriculum standards. Students extended and consolidated important ideas in science, such as photosynthesis, by analysing leaf pigments and understanding more deeply how light drives plant nutrition. Students were increasingly able to apply their learning and use mathematics to add precision and detail, for example when learning about levers and forces in a range of complex contexts. A minority of students rose only slowly to the demands of this course because of their weaker independent learning skills and less secure knowledge about real-life applications of science.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Learning skills	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- In all phases, students were highly engaged and eager to learn. They took responsibility for their own learning and could work for long periods of time with little supervision. They were able to evaluate their strengths and identify what they needed to do to improve. In a Year 8 design technology lesson, for example, students built a picture of their strengths and weaknesses and as a result identified their next steps in learning.
- Across the school, students worked purposefully together. They enjoyed sharing their ideas and learning from each other. They listened carefully and showed respect for the views of others. This was observed, for example, in a Year 12 English lesson where students engaged in a high quality discussion of some of the moral issues related to crime and punishment.
- Meaningful connections were made to the real world in most lessons. In all phases and most subjects, students enjoyed being presented with challenging activities. They showed maturity in solving problems dealing with issues that reflected real life situations. In so doing, they were able to draw on the breadth of knowledge gained across all curriculum subjects.
- Critical thinking and enquiry skills were strong features in most subjects. Most students were very competent in the use of technology to support their research, investigation and personal development. In physical education, for example, students made use of tablet technology to compare their own performance with examples of excellence from the Internet. However, there was inconsistency in the extent to which technology was used to support learning in the secondary phase.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students across all phases had very positive and responsible attitudes. They were proactive and confident learners. They were prepared to take risks. Students responded extremely positively to critical feedback and worked hard to achieve their personal and academic goals.
- Students were self-disciplined and responded very well to peers and adults. They resolved problems in mature ways and showed empathy towards, and tolerance of, others. They sensitively gave and received feedback.
- Relationships amongst students and with staff were very respectful. Students were supportive of one another, and were sensitive to the needs of others, including students with SEND.
- Students had an excellent understanding of safe and healthy living and the importance of healthy lifestyles. Students made wise choices about their own health and safety. They ate healthy snacks and meals and participated in a wide range of sporting activities such as football and netball.
- Students were mostly punctual to school and lessons. The attendance rate was good and had improved since the last time the school was inspected.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Outstanding	Very good ↑	Outstanding ↑	Very good ↑

- Students, particularly those in the secondary phase, had a secure appreciation of how Islamic values influenced Dubai. They understood the ways in which UAE society was reserved and modest. Non-Muslim students understood many aspects of Islamic principles and values such as 'Tawheed' and the rights of women.
- Students were very respectful of the Emirati heritage and culture. Senior students talked confidently about Bedouin life, camel racing and traditional food such as 'Harees' and 'Lugaimat'. Primary students were aware of dress code in the UAE. Children in the FS enjoyed celebrating UAE's National and Flag Days.
- Students were proud about their own culture. Most students talked confidently about their cultural celebrations such as 'Sulnal' (Lunar year in South Korea). They celebrated International Day. However, their knowledge of other world cultures was weaker. Most students had a limited awareness of the cultures of their classmates. For instance, students had little to say about their friends' home countries.



	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Social responsibility and innovation skills</b>	Outstanding	Very good ↓	Very good ↓	Very good ↓

- Students, especially children in the FS, took seriously their responsibilities as members of a school community. They were proactive in the school, taking part in the 'The Community Action Service' (CAS) programme. For example, students were actively involved in the local community, helping the disabled through the Red Crescent charity.
- Most students enjoyed their schoolwork and were happy to be involved in the school's activities. They had the confidence to ask for help when they found aspects too difficult. They took advantage of the many opportunities to develop their enterprise and entrepreneurial skills. A good example of this, was their innovative designs for furniture.
- Students cared for their school. They had a very good understanding of environmental issues. This was clear when senior students actively participated in recycling and can collection. One interesting project in design and technology was the use of the shredded plastic to remake bottles.

### 3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Teaching for effective learning</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Teachers in all phases had strong subject knowledge and understanding of how students learn best. In most subjects, this knowledge was used very effectively to provide students with work that was both stimulating and engaging. In the FS, teachers' extensive knowledge of how very young children learn ensured that the activities provided enabled all to make rapid gains in their learning.
- Lessons were well planned and successfully taught in stimulating learning environments, particularly in the primary phase. Attractive displays in corridors and classrooms reflected the high quality of students' work. These displays contributed well to the highly supportive atmosphere in which outstanding learning could take place. Very good use was made of resources to capture students' interest and deepen understanding. In the FS and the primary phase, well-trained teaching assistants provided effective support for all groups of students.
- Excellent relationships were the basis of very effective class management. Skilled questioning by teachers, was used to challenge students' thinking and probe understanding. In a Year 5 social studies lesson, for example, challenging questioning promoted higher order thinking. In mathematics, questioning helped to reinforce the use of subject specific terms. There was some inconsistency in the use of questioning to promote thoughtful responses in science and Arabic in the secondary phase. Students had the ability to assess one another's work and provide constructive feedback.
- In most lessons, teachers used a variety of strategies to meet the needs of different groups of students. Teachers were aware of the range of students' abilities and most adjusted the work well to meet their individual needs. Their expectations of students' academic and personal progress were very high and most learning activities were carefully planned to challenge students to do their very best.



- The development of critical thinking skills was at the heart of teaching and learning. In most subjects, teachers were very successful in developing these skills. In English and Islamic education, for example, very effective questioning supported the development of critical thinking from an early age. The basis for the excellent independent learning skills, observed throughout the school, was effectively laid in the FS. Through constructive play and collaborative group activities, children quickly learned to be independent and made rapid progress as a result.
- In Arabic as a first language, teachers' subject knowledge was secure but lesson aims were too general. Sometimes lessons had a slow pace. In the primary phase, students had reading books and other work that was well matched to their abilities. In the secondary phase, work was not regularly set at the right level for different students. Standard Arabic language was not encouraged sufficiently.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most teachers had secure subject knowledge. The quality of lesson planning was better in the primary phase. In most lessons, questioning focused on simple recall. Group work in the primary phase helped to improve language skills effectively. In the secondary phase, teaching was mostly to the whole class and was less effective.


	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Assessment	Outstanding	Outstanding ↑	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- Internal assessment processes provided valid, reliable and comprehensive information that was used to evaluate students' progress against the school's curriculum standards and expectations. The information provided profiles of students' academic progress, and their personal and social development. There was innovative assessment development in art, design technology, music and PE. At the time of the inspection, assessment processes were not consistently applied across the school.
- The school made use of a range of international assessments, as well as IGCSE and IB examinations to monitor students' attainment and to predict future performance. Levels of performance were compared externally with the achievements of students nationally and internationally. The school planned to use recommended international benchmarking tests later in the year, for Year 9 students. The FS was researching online assessment tests to better judge children's attainment levels on entry to the school.
- Assessment information was analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses in students' attainment and to identify trends. Whole-school and individual targets were set, and students' performance was monitored through regular Pupil Progress Meetings (PPM). These were to ensure that students were meeting short and long-term targets. The learning support department tracked the progress of students with SEND very thoroughly.
- Teachers and school leaders made very good use of both formative and summative assessment. They used the analysis of data to plan lessons, to modify the curriculum and to address the learning needs of all students. Individual targets were agreed with students so that they could improve their progress. As yet, parents were not consistently involved in the target setting, though excellent practice existed in the learning support department.
- Teachers had very good knowledge of individual students' strengths and weaknesses, including those with SEND. Feedback and written comments to students were generally constructive but teachers were not rigorous enough in checking how well students responded to their guidance. Students did not use objective criteria consistently to evaluate their own and each other's work and to identify their next steps in learning.

#### 4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum design and implementation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The curriculum had a clear rationale, breadth and balance across all subjects. It consistently included creative, physical and practical experiences to strengthen students' knowledge and skills' development. All key subjects were given the appropriate amount of time. Statutory requirements were fully met and an improvement in the Islamic education and Arabic curricula was noted.
- The curriculum was comprehensively structured to ensure that students learned smoothly and progressively through the carefully arranged scope and sequence of programmes. Planning across the phases of education, both within the school and at the point when students made transitions, prepared students well. Transition arrangements had been reviewed and further improved from the FS to primary and from IGCSE courses to IB programmes. The school intended further refinement in the latter case.
- The curriculum had considerable variety of provision in and out of classrooms that promoted and responded, to particular students' needs and interests. There was a significant choice of subjects especially for older students so that they were very well prepared for their chosen careers. Plans were in place to introduce an option for art and drama in Year 9 to accommodate the growing talents of an increasing number of students.
- In the FS, rich theme-based learning supported carefully planned and innovative cross-curricular links, often embedded in real-life experiences. Elsewhere, themes were systematically planned to ensure that students' skills across a range of subjects were developed in interesting contexts. These included STEM days to link science, technology, engineering and mathematics and a number of trips and events. In lessons, opportunities to strengthen links between subjects were sometimes missed.
- The curriculum was reviewed termly and updated as part of the school's self-evaluation process taking into account the views of students and parents. Staff evaluated the impact of the curriculum on students' academic outcomes and their personal development. Consequently, curriculum innovation was well planned and ensured that the needs and interests of all students, including those with SEND and the gifted and talented, were met.
- The curriculum for social studies had recently been reviewed. The MoE programme now permeated the National Curriculum for history and geography providing opportunities for students from many cultural backgrounds to learn about themselves as individuals and citizens living in the UAE.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum adaptation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding 

- The curriculum was planned effectively to provide stimulating learning opportunities for all groups of students. It was modified as necessary to ensure the full engagement and challenge for students of all abilities. The school had obtained permission to offer the IB careers path from 2016 in response to feedback from the previous inspection.

- The curriculum was interesting, motivating and diverse. Students had many opportunities to engage in activities that promoted enterprise, innovation, creativity and social contribution. Among these were Community Action and Service, robotics, debating and musical performances. The PE curriculum had been redesigned in consultation with students to ensure that they would be able to maintain a healthy lifestyle tailored to their individual needs.
- The curriculum, at all stages, included interesting and relevant programmes, which developed students' knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the heritage of the UAE. Significant improvement had taken place in social studies where the MoE curriculum had been integrated with the English National Curriculum. This ensured that students understood Emirati traditions, culture and the values, which influenced UAE society.
- Arabic was provided in FS. Three sessions per week were provided for all children who studied Arabic as a first language. Children studying Arabic as an additional language were provided with two sessions per week. Each session was 30 minutes in duration. The curriculum focused on letters and their phonics.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding


- The school had high quality systems in place to ensure safeguarding of students including child protection, anti-bullying and cyber-safety. Policies were in place and understood well by staff, students and parents.
- The school was a very secure, supervised, and safe environment for students. Security checks and supervision of students were very effective including the arrangements for school transport. Students felt very safe at all times. Risk analysis and assessment were thorough, and regular evacuation plans were well rehearsed.
- Buildings were clean and well maintained. The school kept very detailed and secure records of incidents and the follow up actions taken. Medical staff provided very good support to students. Routine checks were carried out and followed up.
- The school premises were spacious and provided an excellent learning environment for all students. The facilities were freely accessible for all students including those with SEND.
- Healthy living was promoted in all aspects of school life. Very good advice was provided to students and their parents on food choices. The school offered a wide variety of sporting options, which promoted personal fitness. Measures were taken to provide reasonable protection from the sun, including shading, headwear and ready access to fresh drinking water.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Care and support	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Relationships throughout the school were exemplary. Teachers respected their students and treated them as unique individuals. High expectations of behaviour were instilled from the outset. Rewards and sanctions were clear and applied consistently. Students were encouraged to, "Do the right thing," and responded very well.
- Systems for promoting attendance and punctuality were increasingly effective. Rewards were given for excellent attendance. Persistent absentees and latecomers were monitored. By engaging parents in a positive partnership and giving fair and timely warnings of the consequences, attendance and punctuality had improved over time.
- Admission procedures were wholly inclusive. The effective systems for identifying students with SEND and those who were gifted and talented were well established. Students' achievements were closely monitored; specialists within the school assessed those who were not making the expected progress to identify the barriers to learning. Where school staff did not have the necessary expertise, parents had their children assessed by external professionals in order to reach an accurate diagnosis of need.
- The support for students with SEND enabled them to make their best personal progress. Planning for the academic development of students was increasingly personalised, effectively implemented in most cases and regularly reviewed. Specialist staff provided highly effective support during individual and small group sessions. Class teachers' effectiveness in meeting students' academic needs during lessons was improving, although it was variable particularly in the secondary phase and where students' needs were more complex.
- Teachers and pastoral staff cared very much for their students and collectively provided highly effective support. They set an excellent example and students looked up to them. In turn, older students became role models for the younger ones who aspired to be like them. Students had confidence in their teachers and knew who to go to if they had a concern. Academic guidance was very effective in most cases. Careers' guidance and support was of the highest quality.

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

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

Very good 

- The deputy head for inclusion and the head of learning support, shared a clear and inclusive vision for provision and ensured all staff were aware of their collective responsibilities. They provided very effective support for teachers. Learning support liaison championed the cause of students with SEND during progress review meetings. Leaders for SEND were in the process of refining the analysis of students' achievements.
- Admission procedures were inclusive and the systems for identifying students with SEND and those who were gifted and talented were effective. The achievements of all students were closely monitored; those who were not making the expected progress were assessed by specialists to identify barriers to learning and support arranged.



- Parents spoke highly of the swift action taken as soon as either party had any concerns about children's progress. Parents were involved at every stage of the process; the earliest discussions, agreeing improvement targets with appropriate interventions, suggestions for home support, and review meetings. Parents welcomed the discussions and detailed reports about their children's progress.
- The support for students' personal development was excellent. Specialist support staff were highly skilled in modifying the curriculum and in providing support for students' academic progress. In-class support for children in the FS and primary phases was consistently effective. It was more variable in the secondary phase particularly where students' needs were more complex.
- The progress of children with SEND in the FS was consistently very good at least. In the primary phase, progress was almost always very good. Students in the secondary phase generally made good progress during whole-class sessions although this was variable.

## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Outstanding

- The very strong leadership provided by the headmaster was a significant factor in the school's improvement. High calibre senior staff focusing on student academic progress and personal development ably assisted him. The leaders' ambitious vision was shared with staff and other stakeholders. It was informed by the UAE National Agenda and senior leaders and governors were at one in supporting this. Senior leaders, through their policies and practice, ensured that the school was inclusive in its quality provision.
- Senior and middle leaders were experts in their field. Different school sections were led confidently and less experienced staff received guidance if needed. Effective teamwork was a notable school feature but there was still room for more liaison between the primary and secondary phases, particularly concerning the teaching of Arabic. Leaders shared common goals related to students' academic and personal achievement goals. Leadership of SEND had ensured staff were well informed of students' specific needs.
- Relationships were cordial and professional. Communication channels were clear. Leadership was devolved to the points of delivery. For instance, the student progress meetings ensured that maximising student progress was at the forefront of class teachers' work and provided the spur to further action in terms of training or additional resources. The year group and departmental structure encouraged collaborative effort such as expertise sharing and problem solving. Staff at all levels worked with pride in their school.
- Through their action plans and practice, leaders had firm ideas on how to bring about improvement. They tried out new ideas such as the innovative curriculum in the PE department. In all examples, students worked together successfully to evaluate their learning and so overcome the possibility of misunderstanding what the teacher expected.
- Senior leaders were successful guides of whole school improvement because they knew the school very well. They had clear expectations of themselves and others. They worked closely to bring together their ideas for improvement and this model of collective working was a notable management feature. Discussion and sharing of ideas were common and excellent communications ensured that useful solutions arose from a range of sources. Senior leaders, with governors, ensured that the school complied with the statutory requirements.




## School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Outstanding

- School self-evaluation was thorough and provided accurate information to senior leaders and governors to guide their school improvement and strategic planning. Nearly all departments made very good use of the school's internal and external assessment information and analysed it very well. The exception to this was the Arabic department, which used different methods in the primary and secondary phases. Apart from this, all the school priorities arose from secure evaluations.
- Regular monitoring of the quality of teaching, guided improvements in practice and supported teacher training. The improvement in teaching quality in Arabic was beginning to improve student achievement, which was more advanced in the primary than the secondary phase. Across the school, the quality of teaching had been positively influenced by the monitoring and post lesson evaluations. In the primary phase, the judgements referred more specifically to generic teaching strategies. In secondary, some observations tended to be more general.
- Very accurate self-evaluation gave the school a firm platform on which to base its improvement plans. Departments had detailed plans for taking their areas forward and these contributed to and were guided by the whole school improvement plan. Amongst the detail of these plans there were several examples of innovation, which included linking Arabic as a first language with the English department; Arabic as an additional language with the Modern Foreign Languages department and, in the SEND department, the appointment of learning support liaison personnel (children's champions).
- The school was committed to long-term incremental gains to achieve its goals. The school had acted promptly on the previous report's recommendation and on the minor weaknesses identified in the detail. All the actions identified in a post-inspection action plan had resulted in improvement. For instance, in Arabic there had been some improvement in students' progress and significant improvement in the quality of teaching. Over time, the school had a clear record of continuing improvement.

## Partnerships with parents and the community

Outstanding 

- Parents appreciated what the school provided for their children. Through many ways, including the innovative school forum, the school listened to parents. It took their views into account when planning its improvement priorities. The school valued parental involvement at various levels. Parents' support for children at events such as the Foundation Stage super heroes and special assembly was warmly appreciated. In the Year 1 Romans project, an architect and an artist added their expertise to lessons.
- The school had a very effective system of keeping parents up to date with school matters in general and their children's progress and development in particular. The parents of students with SEND readily appreciated the skill and understanding of teachers and the school leadership in building a strong partnership between home and school. This was a major factor in the progress the children made.
- School reports were regular, informative and detailed. They set targets for the next steps in learning. Meetings with teachers expanded on them further. These and other contacts gave parents a helpful guide as to how they could support their children better at home.
- The school had a very wide range of contacts with the local community and further afield. Students took part in local, national and international competitions to pit themselves against others and learn from the experience. These activities included a variety of sporting competitions, charitable activities, international debating and design technology events. By testing themselves in this way, students were better able to assess their own performance in a wider context.

## Governance

Very good ↑

- The governing board was very well organised. To carry out its business effectively, it included representations of all stakeholders and took seriously the views of parents from sources including the school forum. Governors directly involved themselves in school events such as international day to ensure a high profile of representations and to increase their knowledge of the school at first hand.
- Through their sub-committee system, the governors kept the school's performance systematically under review. For instance, the education sub-committee regularly monitored student achievement and personal development standards. The structure enabled the finance committee to plan strategically and make recommendations to the board. The board also took into account the school's self-evaluation and its development planning and worked with senior leaders to set and monitor the school's strategic plan.
- The governors were properly involved in the school's development. They provided resources in response to clearly identified need. They had planned for completion of the Performing Arts building during the coming academic year. They set clear criteria for the employment of all staff to promote the school's performance. They had ensured largely first class facilities and a level of resourcing to support the school's curriculum. They employed a compliance officer to meet all statutory requirements.




## Management, staffing, facilities and resources

Outstanding ↑

- The school ran very smoothly because well-embedded systems were fully understood by students and staff. Supervision levels at lesson breaks ensured students' safety and did not restrict choice. Students' responsible attitudes meant that rules were obeyed. The timetable kept movement between classes to a minimum. School administration was very efficient but unobtrusive. Security staff were vigilant and support staff were diligent and very well managed.
- Very well qualified teaching staff's subject expertise was a school strength. Staff selection was rigorous and the retention of key staff provided stability. Teachers were very well deployed to fulfil the potential of the rich curriculum. Teachers had good general staff training and, as a follow up to lesson observations, support was more personalised, especially in the primary phase. The sharing of teaching strategies, some of them innovative as in the PE department, were a continuing feature.
- Except for the Performing Arts building which was nearing completion, the school had an extensive range of outstanding specialist facilities that supported the school's vibrant curriculum exceptionally well. Design technology facilities encouraged aspirational work; this had led to success in international competitions, Extensive sporting facilities promoted healthy lifestyles and success in competitions. The FS area encouraged the exploration of learning inside and outside the classroom. Displays of students' high quality work raised expectations and created an exciting learning environment.
- High quality resources sustained the drive for further improvement and supported outstanding teaching quality. The school had improved some of the resource shortages reported at the last inspection such as the provision of Arabic books. Teachers made very good use of digital technology but students' use of this technology was a developing area. For instance, ICT use in PE promoted higher performance through self-assessment but students generally did not seek ICT solutions in their everyday work.

## 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	149
	2014-2015	232
<b>Teachers</b> 	115	
<b>Students</b> 	27	

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

- Most stakeholders were satisfied with the school's quality of education.
- More parents knew more about their children's progress in Islamic education than they did about progress in Arabic. A large minority of students was uncertain of their progress in these subjects. However, most parents and their children thought that there was good progress in other core subjects.
- Almost all students were positive about their personal and social development. This matched parents' views.
- Most parents agreed that the school's teaching, assessment and curriculum resources were good. Teachers thought along similar lines. Students were not as positive, yet broadly agreed. A minority was unhappy with the quantity of homework and its impact on their performance. Almost half felt that resources, facilities and extra activities were not keeping pace with their rising expectations.
- Most students felt safe and well cared for but a minority thought that school leaders did not listen enough to their views.
- Most students welcomed the activities of the student council.
- Teachers were generally satisfied with the quality of school leadership but felt leaders could listen a little more.
- Nearly all parents agreed that the school was well led.

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)