



Al Diyafah High School

🇬🇧 Curriculum: UK

Overall Rating:

Good



"We are keen to prepare the new generation that is ready to be creative and innovative to help us achieve our ambitions for even greater prosperity"

Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum



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School information



General information

Location	Al Nahda
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	1981
Website	www.diyafah.com
Telephone	0097142671115
Address	P O BOX.24023, AL QUASIS, DUBAI.UAE
Principal	Patricia Johnston
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	14 to 17 November 2016

Teachers / Support staff

Number of teachers	138
Largest nationality group of teachers	Indian
Number of teaching assistants	18
Teacher-student ratio	1:12
Number of guidance counsellors	2
Teacher turnover	18%

Students

Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	3-18
Grades or year groups	FS 1-Year 13
Number of students on roll	1606
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	3
Number of students with SEND	20
Largest nationality group of students	Indian

Curriculum

Educational permit / Licence	UK
Main curriculum	UK
External tests and examinations	IGCSE, Cambridge Checkpoints
Accreditation	UK Curriculum
National Agenda benchmark tests	IBT, CAT4



The DSIB inspection process



In order to judge the overall quality of education provided by schools, inspectors consider the six standards of performance that form the basis of the UAE School Inspection Framework (the framework). They look at children's attainment and progress in key subjects, their learning skills and their personal and social development. They judge how effective teaching and the assessment of learning are across the school. Inspectors consider how well the school's curriculum, including activities inside and outside classrooms, meet the educational needs of all students. They judge how well schools protect and support children. In addition, inspectors judge the effectiveness of leadership, which incorporates governance, management, staffing and facilities.

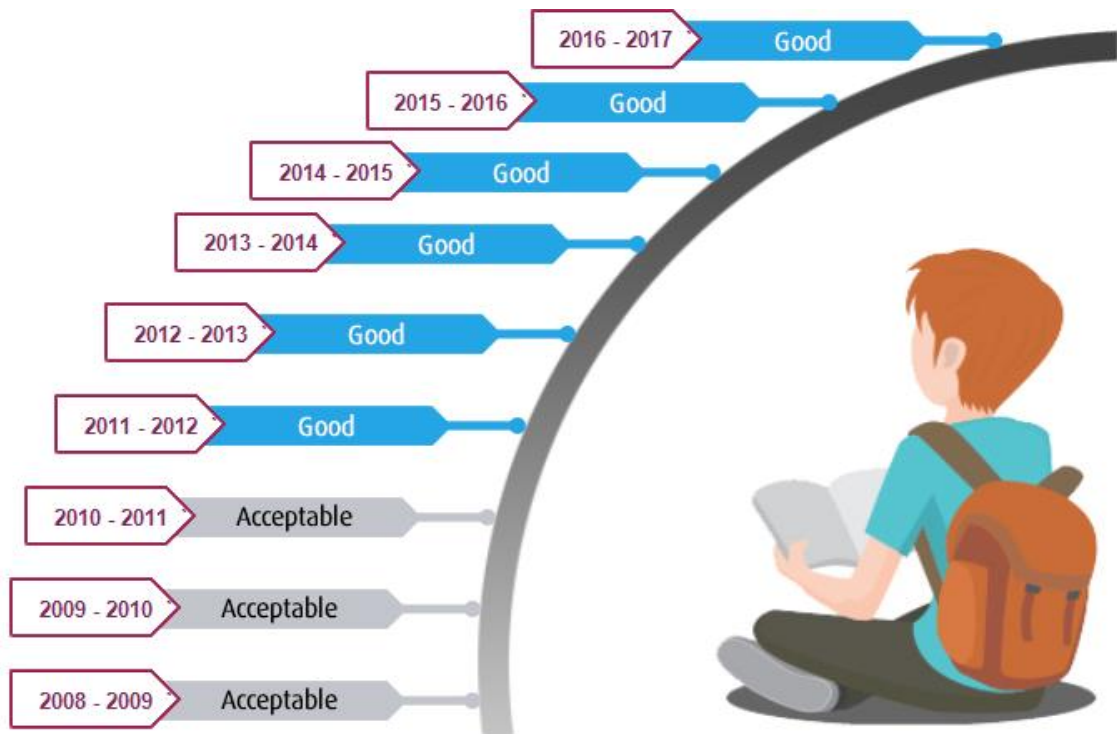
Inspection judgements are drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observation of students' learning in lessons, review of their work, discussions with students, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and review of surveys completed by parents, teachers and students.

Judgements are made on a six-point scale

DSIB inspection teams make judgements about different aspects, phases and subjects that form the work of the school, using the scale below, which is consistent with the framework.

Outstanding	Quality of performance substantially exceeds the expectation of the UAE
Very good	Quality of performance exceeds the expectation of the UAE
Good	Quality of performance meets the expectation of the UAE (This is the expected level for every school in the UAE)
Acceptable	Quality of performance meets the minimum level of quality required in the UAE (This is the minimum level for every school in the UAE)
Weak	Quality of performance is below the expectation of the UAE
Very weak	Quality of performance is significantly below the expectation of the UAE

Inspection journey for Al Diyafah High School



- Al Diyafah School has grown substantially since it opened in 1981. At the time of the inspection, the school has 1606 students, aged from three to 18 years, an increase of 114 students from the previous year. The principal has been in post since September 2015. Teacher turnover at the time of inspection is 18 percent, compared to 26 percent the previous year.
- The three previous inspections have acknowledged strengths in students' personal and social development, their protection and care, and the quality of partnerships with parents. More recently, inspections have also acknowledged the quality of the curriculum. The positive impact of the newly appointed principal was acknowledged last year.
- Recommendations over the same period focused on the need for improvement in attainment and progress in Arabic and Islamic education. A recurring theme was the time allocated for teaching Arabic, which was not meeting MoE requirements. In addition, previous recommendations related to the provision in the Foundation Stage. Last year, weaknesses in self-evaluation were identified.



Summary of inspection findings 2016-2017



Al Diyafah High School was inspected by DSIB from 14 to 17 November 2016. The overall quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The section below summarises the inspection findings for each of the six performance indicators described in the framework.

- Children in the Foundation Stage (FS) make good progress and reach acceptable standards in English, mathematics and science. Progress and attainment are good in these subjects in the primary school, very good in the secondary school, and at least good in Post-16. Attainment and progress in Islamic education and Arabic as a first language are acceptable. In Arabic as an additional language, attainment is weak and progress is acceptable. Students' learning skills are good across the school.
- Students' personal and social development are strong in secondary and post-16, where their attitudes and behaviour are exemplary. Students' understanding of Islamic values is good in FS and primary, and outstanding in higher grades. Their social responsibility is very good in FS and primary, and outstanding in higher grades.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge in most subjects. In higher grades, teachers routinely involve students in problem-solving, independent research, and critical thinking. Lesson plans contain differentiated success criteria. This is most effective in FS, especially in literacy and numeracy activities. There are comprehensive assessment systems in place across the school. Data are analysed and used to inform teaching and curriculum review, although this is less effective in Islamic education and Arabic.
- The curriculum is generally effective in supporting the development of students' knowledge, skills and understanding, particularly in the secondary and post-16 phases. Modifications made to the curriculum for different groups of students, especially those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), are also very effective.
- The school pays close attention to students' health and safety. Relationships across the school are excellent. The well-maintained premises provide a very good learning environment. Students are well aware of safe and healthy life choices. Successful systems ensure very good attendance and punctuality. There are effective procedures and support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who are gifted and talented. Care and support for all students is a high priority and of a high standard.
- Leadership is effective and has resulted in significant improvements to student outcomes. Improved self-evaluation provides school leaders and the governing board with a clear understanding of areas that require further improvement. Relationships with parents are excellent and partnerships with the wider community are a significant strength. The management, facilities and resources are of good quality.

What the school does best

- The effective leadership of the principal and senior leaders promotes a shared commitment to ensuring all students do as well as they can.
- Students' progress in English and mathematics in the secondary and post-16 phases is very good.
- The personal and social development of students are outstanding in the secondary and post-16 phases.
- The attention to ensuring students' health and safety, and the quality of support are outstanding
- Partnerships with parents and the wider community are outstanding.

Recommendations

- Raise achievement in Islamic education by ensuring that:
 - teachers set tasks that enable students to achieve the outcomes outlined in lesson plans
 - there is sufficient challenge in classwork to stretch the more-able students
 - assessment is closely aligned to curriculum expectations
- Raise achievement in Arabic by providing challenging activities to develop students' speaking, comprehension and independent writing skills.
- Further improve students' achievement in English, mathematics and science, particularly in the primary phase, by ensuring that:
 - teachers provide work at a suitable level of challenge for all students, including those who are more able
 - teachers support students with special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - lessons allow sufficient time for students to work independently
 - teachers' interactions and questioning provide more opportunities for students to think deeply and critically.

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 intention 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. In 2015, KHDA launched 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.

The following section focuses on the impact of the National Agenda Parameter in meeting their targets:

- Attainment as measured by the National Agenda Parameter tests in English, mathematics and science meets expectations.
- The school meets the registration requirements for the National Agenda Parameter.
- There is a thorough analysis of the data from the National Agenda Parameter. Using the data from IBT, the analysis is completed down to question level for each student. The analysis of CAT 4 is used to help students and teachers to recognise and understand learning preferences. As a consequence of this analysis the students develop targets, in consultation with teachers. These targets are shared with parents. Analysis of the benchmarking tests is used to identify curriculum gaps and then aligned with the curriculum so that teachers are planning against the mapped curriculum.
- A considerable amount of work is done by the school to ensure that the curriculum covers all aspects of the key subjects. Where gaps have been discovered these have been addressed, for example, earth sciences and geometry in science and mathematics. A further exercise is carried out to align the curriculum with the English National Curriculum programmes of study. Each component is translated into a 'Can do' statement which forms part of the continuous assessment process. The curriculum is mapped and aligned to meet the requirements of TIMSS and PISA.
- Approaches to teaching have been modified to enable teachers to address the expectations of the National Agenda. Planning is more focused on the student and the objective of each lesson. The sharing of objectives is a prominent feature and most teachers involve students in the explanation of what is expected by the end of the session. Planning includes 3 levels of task together with an emphasis on the composition of groups. There is an awareness of the value of assessment for learning including open questioning, which staff realise is beneficial to good learning. However, this is an area that is still developing across the school.
- Most students have a good understanding of their results which is seen in the targets that have been developed for students and with students. The students are appraised of what the outcome of the CAT 4 test is and what it means. Armed with this knowledge they are able with the help of the teacher to set personal goals related to their learning style. With the curriculum standards aligned to the programmes of study students develop personal subject specific targets. Opportunities are provided through, key subject projects and discrete weeks, to pursue individual research projects.

Overall, the school's improvements in its provision towards achieving its National Agenda targets meet expectations.

Innovation in Education

The UAE Vision 2021 sets the aspiration 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' and provides a basis for evaluating schools in order to deliver a world-class education for all children in the UAE.









Promoting a culture of innovation:

- Students demonstrate that they are reflective and independent in English and science, but less so in other subjects. They use learning technologies routinely during lessons. The curriculum provides increasing opportunities for students to develop innovation skills, for example, through the 'student innovation council'. However, teachers are inconsistent in their focus on developing students' critical thinking skills. Imaginative planning, in partnership with staff, parents and students, indicates that school leaders have a secure understanding of how to innovate and improve.

Overall school performance

Good

1 Students' achievement

		Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Islamic education 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not applicable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not applicable
Arabic as an additional language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Weak ↓	Weak ↓	Not applicable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable ↑	Acceptable	Not applicable
English 	Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Very good ↑	Good
	Progress	Good	Good	Very good ↑	Very good
Mathematics 	Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Very good ↑	Very good ↑
	Progress	Good	Good	Very good ↑	Very good ↑
Science 	Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Very good ↑	Good
	Progress	Good ↑	Good	Very good ↑	Good
		Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Learning skills		Good	Good	Good	Good

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

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

3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good	Good
Assessment	Good ↑	Good	Good	Good

4. Curriculum

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

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

Main inspection report



1. Students' achievement

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

- In English, children progress at a good pace from their starting points. Progress in speaking and listening for second language learners is strong. Progress with reading and writing is slower. Children ask questions and respond positively to others. Older children are beginning to recognise the sounds of letters and, when encouraged to do so, attempt to read simple words. Younger children can identify and write the initial letters of their names. Children handle books appropriately and are aware that print has meaning. They know that books contain information they might find interesting.
- Progress in mathematical understanding is good and children's skills, from low starting points, are acceptable. Children understand the concept of number, count accurately and can sequence numbers in ascending and descending patterns. They can count small groups of objects but they do not always explore larger quantities in creative and investigative ways. They create simple patterns using colour and shape but do not extend this, for example, by combining different attributes to create more complex patterns. They can name of two- and three-dimensional shapes, and older children enjoy discovering whether these will slide, build or roll.
- Children are developing an understanding of their environment and its features. They appreciate that there are living and non-living things and they explore a variety of natural and manmade objects. When given the opportunities, they are curious, ask questions, and can explain why things happen. This is very effective in free flow activities, when the older children in particular have full autonomy for their learning. These opportunities have a beneficial effect on children's language skills and extending their vocabulary related to science topics.

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

- In Islamic education, most students are working at the expected level. They understand key Islamic concepts and principles, the basic values of Islam, and key events in Seerah. They appreciate the values of honesty and obedience to the Prophet (PBUH). In lessons and in their most recent work, most students make expected progress. They are developing an understanding of the lives and messages of various messengers.
- Attainment and progress are acceptable for the small number of students taking Arabic as a first language. Most students attain standards broadly in line with curriculum expectations. Listening skills are strong across the phase. Year 6 students read well and understand short paragraphs. However, their evaluations of different evidence supporting their views are less secure. Students make slower progress in developing their independent writing skills and they are not fluent enough when speaking in classical Arabic.
- In Arabic as an additional language, attainment is weak, although progress is acceptable. Too many students are not reaching expected curriculum standards considering their prior years of study. Students have limited listening and speaking skills. Too many students, especially in the lower year groups, do not respond adequately to their teachers' simple instructions in Arabic. Most students are improving their reading, handwriting and vocabulary, particularly in upper year groups. However, their independent writing skills are less developed.
- In English, the majority of students attain levels in line with curriculum standards, and they make better than expected progress. In Year 6 external examinations, most students reach the expected attainment levels. In lessons and in their written work, attainment is currently improving and progress is good by the end of the phase. Progress is better in lessons where teachers set work that matches the ability levels of the students and meets their needs. Levels of attainment, over time, are consistent and most groups make similar progress.
- In mathematics, most students perform at a level above curriculum expectations and international standards, especially in higher year levels. For example, Year 3 students are confident in using number rules when working with money, and Year 6 students use several methods to justify the internal angles in a quadrilateral. Progress across the phase improves as students move through the years, and by Year 6, their progress is better than expected. In lessons, the majority grasp concepts readily. All groups of students improve and progress at a similar rate.
- Students demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts. They consistently draw conclusions based on information they collect from hands-on activities. In Year 5, for example, students investigate the effect of upward force on the weight of an object in water. External assessment data support this good level of attainment, while the school's internal data show higher levels. Over time, the majority of students make better than the expected progress. In lessons, students often build on their prior knowledge to develop their understanding of new scientific concepts.

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

- In Islamic education, most students demonstrate knowledge, skills and understanding in line with curriculum expectations. Most students know about the lives and messages of the prophets. They also understand the characteristics of hypocrites. In lessons and in their most recent work, most students make expected progress. They are developing their understanding of the difference between Iman and Ihsan. However, their interpretation skills of the Qur'an are less developed.
- Attainment and progress are acceptable for the small number of students taking Arabic as a first language. Most students attain standards broadly in line with curriculum expectations. Listening skills are strong across the phase. Year 11 students understand the main theme of a short text but they cannot compare and contrast between two novels. Students make acceptable progress in developing their independent writing skills, although their writing is mainly factual and does not include different styles and metaphors. There are too many basic spelling and punctuation errors.
- In Arabic as an additional language, attainment is weak and progress is acceptable. Many students are not reaching expected curriculum standards in the majority of their language skills. Teachers are not modelling classical Arabic, students have very limited speaking skills and are not able to engage in simple conversations. Most students are improving their reading, handwriting and gaining a range of vocabulary. However, their comprehension skills are not improving at the same rates due to insufficient opportunities, and independent writing is not well developed.
- In English, attainment and progress for the large majority of students are above curriculum expectations, and students in Year 11 achieve above expectations in their IGCSE examinations. A strong feature throughout the phase is the use of drama and debate to develop speaking and thinking skills. Progress in lessons is mainly very good, particularly when students are challenged to think for themselves and are clear as to the purpose of their tasks. Over time, attainment is consistent with international standards. There are no significant differences in performance between different groups of students.
- In mathematics, students attain above curriculum standards and above expected levels in international examinations. For example, Year 9 students work competently and confidently on the topic of Pythagoras, and Year 11 students show a high level of proficiency working on transformations. On entering the phase, students' progress at a better than expected pace and, by the end of the phase, their progress is well above expectations. All groups of students show high levels of mathematical ability and progress equally well.
- Students' attainment and progress are very good in the sciences. Students demonstrate strong understanding of complex scientific concepts, such as heat of combustion. These levels of attainment are supported by external assessment data, especially by the IGCSE results that have been maintained at a high level over the past few years. Students' external assessment data also show strong progress over time. In lessons, students draw conclusions based on practical work to develop their understanding of new concepts in biology, chemistry, and physics.

Post-16		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language	Not applicable	Not applicable
Arabic as an additional language	Not applicable	Not applicable
English	Good	Very good
Mathematics	Very good ↑	Very good ↑
Science	Good	Good

- In Islamic education, most students demonstrate knowledge, skills and understanding in line with curriculum expectations. They have an acceptable understanding of key concepts such as death and fate. In lessons and in their most recent work, they make acceptable progress. Their skills of interpreting the Qur'an are developing in line with expectations.
- The first group of students took the English 'A' level examination in 2015. In this relatively small group, students' attainment was above curriculum expectations. The current group of students demonstrate high levels of competence and understanding, and they express their ideas with clarity. They use their well-developed speaking, innovative and technology skills to research and present issues during debates. Students are prepared well for external examinations and, as the result of consistently high-quality teaching, they progress well in all aspects of English. Different groups of students perform at similar levels.
- Students' attainment in mathematics is above age-related expectations when measured against curriculum and international standards. Year 12 and 13 students are developing mathematical skills very confidently, including the use of mathematics in the context of real-life situations and in other subjects. They enter the phase with good mathematical capability and progress quickly from their starting points. All groups of students make very good progress.
- Students demonstrate good attainment and progress in the sciences. They consistently apply their secure knowledge and understanding in new situations. In Year 12, for example, students use their understanding of the centre of gravity to explain how the Burj Khalifa was built as a stable structure. External assessment data, especially the 'A' level data over the past few years, show good levels of attainment. The majority of students exceed curriculum expectations in developing their understanding of scientific concepts in lessons and over time.

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

- Students show positive attitudes towards learning and are actively involved in most lessons. They take increasing responsibility for their own learning as they move through the school. In the higher year levels, students show strong independence in learning and in using technologies. In the Foundation Stage, the free flow provision, especially at the end of the phase, works well in encouraging children to take responsibility and offers them a wide range of choices.

- Students understand that working in groups is beneficial to them, especially in the secondary and post-16 phases. When given opportunities, they collaborate well and communicate confidently with their teachers and peers. In some lessons, groups are too large and this hinders the development of students' learning skills. In the Foundation Stage, children cooperate and collaborate well in role-play and adhere to the expectations for working together and taking turns.
- In most subjects, students make good connections between current and prior learning, and between learning in the classroom and the world outside school. However, applying ideas across the subjects is not an evident feature of students' learning skills except where it is explicitly initiated and promoted by the teachers.
- Students research independently using learning technologies inside and outside the classroom. In the upper phases, students use online resources to solve problems of varying complexity in mathematics and the sciences. For example, students use a virtual laboratory in biology to determine the effect of limiting factors on the rate of photosynthesis. In many English lessons, students are challenged to develop their critical thinking.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Personal development	Very good ↑	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Across the school, students enjoy their learning and have positive attitudes towards others. They are independent, confident and respond well to opportunities to take responsibility, particularly in the secondary and post-16 phases
- Students are consistently self-disciplined. Behaviour is excellent around the school. However, a minority of students in lower primary year groups are more passive in lessons when teaching is not engaging enough.
- Students consistently demonstrate the highest levels of respect and courtesy toward each other and adults across the school. They interact positively in class and are eager to respond to their teachers' questions and when working with others during group activities.
- There is a strong commitment to following a healthy lifestyle, as seen in students' participation in different programmes that focus on physical fitness and healthy food.
- Attendance is good. Students attend school enthusiastically and are punctual to school and their classes. This has positive impact on their attainment and progress.

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

- Students have a clear appreciation and understanding of Islamic values. Students in the secondary and post-16 phases relate those values to their own lives, demonstrating an excellent understanding of how these values have an impact on contemporary UAE society. Students across the school are knowledgeable about the different aspects of Emirati heritage, culture and history. They enthusiastically sing the National Anthem during school assemblies and take active roles in Emirati national celebrations. Secondary and post-16 students conduct workshops on UAE history and culture for the support staff.
- Students are proud of their own cultures and they demonstrate a clear awareness of and appreciation for other cultures around them, through participation in a variety of cultural events. Students in secondary and post-16 phases gain wider and deeper world cultural perspectives through regular world cultural assemblies.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Very good ↑	Very good ↑	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students of all ages participate willingly in activities that have a positive impact on the school and the wider community. They raise awareness about cyberbullying and volunteer at centers for students with special educational needs, such as Al Noor Training Center for Children with Special Needs.
- Students show very positive work ethics. They are innovative and creative. They successfully initiate and manage their own projects, such as the Diyafah News Radio Channel and the Eye magazine. They chart their own progress in their target sheets. Older students are highly resourceful and enterprising. During Business Week, they trade shares and sell products of their mock companies.
- Students care for their school and take steps to improve its environment. The Eco Envoys lead monthly clean-up campaigns. Students take care of the school garden. Senior students contribute very effectively to promoting sustainability and eco-friendly lifestyles by making and selling their own organic skin-care products.

3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and learning pedagogy in most subjects. Most teachers across the school adapt their teaching styles to enable most students to make good or better progress. They act as facilitators to enable students to learn actively and to reach their own conclusions. However, teachers' subject knowledge in Islamic education is not secure, and in Arabic, teachers do not model correct classical Arabic in speaking.
- Lesson plans contain basic information such as learning objectives, success criteria, and differentiation. Some of the learning objectives only describe what students will do in the lessons rather than what they are meant to learn. Teachers' use of the available resources and teaching time varies across the school, and is better in the upper phases. In most lessons, teachers create a purposeful learning environment.
- Teachers often involve students in dialogue, especially at the beginning of each lesson. They ask a range of questions, many of which are challenging and allow students to think critically, especially in the secondary and post-16 phases. In the primary phase, interactions tend to be more teacher initiated and controlled, and questions are not always open-ended enough to promote students' deeper thinking.
- Teachers are aware of students' different learning needs and plan lessons that include three levels of success criteria. However, this differentiation is more focused on outcomes than on tasks that meet students' different learning needs. In most lessons, teachers provide adequate challenge that allows students to make progress towards the set learning objectives. In the Foundation Stage, most activities are well-differentiated, particularly for literacy and mathematical development.
- Teachers provide students with sufficient opportunities for problem-solving and independent research, which enables students to gain confidence and responsibility for their own learning. This is common across the school but is most evident in the secondary and post-16 phases. In the Foundation Stage, independent learning skills are developing very well, but practical work for the younger children is not being offered very regularly.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Assessment	Good ↑	Good	Good	Good

- Comprehensive systems are in place across the school. Internal assessments provide data that are linked closely to the curriculum in most subjects. The information produced is mostly reliable and valid. There is frequent assessment of students through baseline testing, formative and summative processes. Data gathered provide the school with a clear view of each student's development.

- The school has fully embraced the use of international benchmarking through IBT and Cambridge Checkpoints. In addition, at the end of the upper phases, they have internationally recognised examinations to enable comparison with students internationally. The data gained from the external testing are comprehensively analysed, which enables external comparisons, and also internal comparisons between subjects.
- Data from internal sources and from benchmark and cognitive testing are analysed. The analysis is used to inform teachers about trends and gaps in the curriculum. Information is shared and individual student targets are produced. In the post-16 phase, individual learning plans are produced in negotiation with the students. All the outcomes from assessments are shared with students and parents to ensure that all understand their meaning.
- Senior leaders and teachers make effective use of assessment information. From the outcomes of the analysed data, modifications are made to the curriculum and lesson plans. These changes directly benefit all students so that their learning needs are addressed. Students are made aware of their preferential learning styles and targets are developed to meet their needs. However, use of the assessment information is not used as effectively in Islamic education and Arabic.
- Almost all teachers know their students' strengths and weaknesses. Assessment is used to support learning across all phases, and most teachers provide written feedback in students' books. However, the comments are not always sufficiently focused on what the students need to do to improve. Self and peer assessments are used effectively.

4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Good	Very good ↑	Outstanding

- The curriculum is well planned, relevant and age appropriate. It fulfils all the requirements of the National Curriculum in England and the UAE Ministry of Education. The curriculum is effective in developing knowledge, skills and understanding across all subjects. It includes a wide range of academic, creative, physical and practical experiences for students.
- The curriculum is structured to ensure progressive learning from year to year and builds consistently on previous knowledge and skills. The Foundation Stage curriculum provides a range of opportunities for children to learn across subject areas and provides good breadth and balance. Older students are prepared very well for further education and the world of work.
- The curriculum has a wide range of provision in class and after-school that matches and responds to a range of interests and needs. Students in the secondary and post-16 phases have an excellent choice of subjects, which successfully encourages the development of their talents and aspirations.
- Cross-curricular links are meaningfully planned for in most lessons, which supports students' wider understanding and learning across subjects. Good opportunities are provided for students, particularly in the older classes, to learn independently and develop the necessary skills of research and critical thinking.

- The school conducts regular curriculum reviews, which include all stakeholders. These ensure high quality provision that meets the academic and personal needs of most students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities.
- The social studies curriculum is well planned and organised. A range of resources and displays across the school support the teaching of social studies well. In lessons, good links are made to other areas of the curriculum. This supports students' greater appreciation of the heritage of the UAE and comparisons with other cultures and ideologies. Students are enthusiastic about their social studies lessons and they enjoy learning about life in the past. Well-planned topics enable them to gain knowledge and a greater understanding as they move through the school. Regular checks are made on students' progress through teacher assessments in lessons and through formal exams.

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

- The curriculum is modified well to meet the needs of all students. Curriculum modifications have enabled ease of transition from Foundation Stage to Year 1. The introduction of the 'Skills and Attitudes for Life' programme is commendable. The school continues to develop its support further for students who are gifted and talented, and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The use of themes for each month of the year, such as leadership, languages and science, integrates and enhances a range of subjects. The school has engaged in several projects related to business and to the stock market. Projects in science consistently develop innovation and enterprise skills.
- Links with Emirati culture and UAE society are embedded across all phases, through all aspects of the school's curriculum, and are an integral part of many lessons. Assemblies and projects celebrate Emirati culture and life in the UAE. The social studies programme provides further rich opportunities to learn about the UAE.

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 provides a very caring environment for students, with strong, formal procedures for their safeguarding. Parents have recently been issued with security cards. The school provides training on child protection for all staff and keeps students informed. Formal training for parents is not provided.

- There are very effective policies and procedures to ensure that students are safe. Bus transport arrangements are appropriate. The school conducts regular evacuation drills and lockdown procedures have been recently introduced.
- The school maintains the buildings and equipment well and the maintenance coordinator responds very well to maintenance requests. Detailed records of any incidents are kept.
- Overall, the facility and premises provide a very good learning environment for all students and staff members.
- The full-time doctor and nurses provide good first aid services. They also provide a range of lectures to raise students' awareness of healthy lifestyles, including personal hygiene and fitness programmes. Students develop an awareness of safe and healthy life choices, for example, through sports.

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

- Staff-student relationships are very strong. Students are very respectful towards all school personnel and they respond very well to instruction and correction if needed. Clear and effective behaviour management systems are in use in all classrooms. Students are encouraged to self-assess their behaviour in order to further improve.
- The promotion and management of attendance and punctuality is of a very high standard. Successful systems encourage very good attendance. Parents are made very aware of the necessity of ensuring that students arrive punctually in the mornings. Students move between classes quickly and in an orderly fashion.
- The school uses a wide range of suitable tests and procedures to identify students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Outside agencies are also used where necessary. There are procedures for the identification of students who are gifted and talented and these are consistently reviewed and refined to ensure their accuracy.
- Support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. Teachers are aware of the strategies required to enable the students make good progress, but their implementation of such strategies during lessons is inconsistent. Planned learning goals are relevant but, at times, they are too general to ensure that the very best progress is made. Students who are gifted and talented are challenged to reach even higher levels of achievement.
- The provision of care and support to meet the needs of all students is a high priority and achieved through thorough care arrangements. Career advice and guidance are of a very high standard.

Inclusion

Provision and outcomes for students with SEND

Good

- The school's policy for special educational needs is comprehensive and clearly sets out the inclusion parameters of the school. The teachers in the learning support unit are well qualified. The newly appointed coordinator (SENDCO) is enthusiastically developing the provision in this department. The school is also providing suitable additional resources to meet the needs of these students.
- A range of appropriate assessment procedures is used to identify students with SEND. The process of identification usually starts on admission to the school. Identification in the classes is dependent on teacher observations, and a clear procedure is set out in the inclusion policy detailing the steps necessary for final diagnosis. Outside agencies are used to identify specific areas of need.
- The school keeps parents well informed of the plans and interventions proposed. Parents are involved in the production of individual education plans (IEPs) but this is somewhat limited. Parents receive some individual help and guidance on how to carry out the home tasks. Communication between the counsellor, teachers and parents is effective. Regular updates are provided to parents on the progress of their children.
- The school has created IEPs that have several very valuable information points and that give appropriate guidance to teachers. They include baseline assessments and current levels of functioning. However, targets set in the IEPs are very broad and the strategies require greater clarity for very accurate school and home based interventions.
- The monitoring of progress is mostly the responsibility of the SEND department. Class teachers are not sufficiently involved in monitoring the progress of students with SEND. Nevertheless, the majority of students make progress above expectations, especially in English.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Good

- The principal plays a pivotal role in sustaining a common vision and driving the strategic direction. She is ably supported by the senior leadership team. Parents, staff and governors took part in a review of the school's mission statement. This reinforced their collective determination to pursue the school's central aim to 'foster a learning community of motivated staff and students'.
- The principal and senior leaders have considerable expertise and experience, including a clear and well-informed idea of effective classroom practice, which enables them to guide and support colleagues. Senior leaders play a significant role in sustaining a learning culture. This is evident, for example, in the 'Teach Meet' and 'Teacher Learning Community' events, where ideas are shared and evaluated.

- Senior leaders communicate a sense of purpose and ambition very effectively. Everyone is aware of the continuous desire to ensure students do as well as they can. Each member of the senior leadership team has a clear responsibility and is held accountable through the management structure. Monitoring and review of their impact on students' academic and personal development are embedded in day-to-day routines.
- Leaders encourage colleagues at all levels to be innovative, and the promotion of innovation is embedded in all strategic planning. Subject leaders are aware of department strengths and what needs to be done to bring about improvement. However, the impact of their plans on students' progress in lessons is not monitored consistently. This contributes to the variation in the rates of progress across subjects.
- Several improvements have been made as a result of leaders' strategies. Notably, improvements in assessment are enabling school leaders to monitor closely the achievements of different groups in relation to students' potential. Leaders respond to external evaluation with a considered approach. They do not seek to change things without the conviction that change will lead to improvement.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Good 


- The systematic review of assessment information provides a secure baseline for improvement planning. The use of a wide range of external and internal data to inform planning is well established. Heads of department, for example, are generally quick to spot any anomalies between external and internal assessments and to address them.
- Systematic checks on the quality of teaching and learning provide leaders with a view of effective methods that can be shared, and of weaknesses that need to be addressed. The form for recording lessons observations, however, focuses mainly on what teachers do rather than on their impact on students' progress.
- School improvement plans include precise targets, how they are going to be implemented, and details of how progress towards them is to be monitored. Development plans include reference to the UAE's national priorities. For the most part, plans result in positive effects on students' achievements. All plans were reviewed and evaluated at the end of October 2016 and reflect a steady progress towards improvement over time in most key areas.
- There has been progress in addressing almost all the recommendations from the previous inspection report. The allocated time for Arabic has been adjusted to meet the UAE MoE requirements. Use of assessment criteria is improving consistency in measuring students' achievements in Islamic education and Arabic, although there remain weaknesses in the validity and reliability of tests used in these subjects. Refinements in self-evaluation have led to improvements, including the teaching in the Foundation Stage, and the tracking of progress of individuals and groups of students.

Partnerships with parents and the community

Outstanding

- Parents are highly supportive and they take advantage of the numerous opportunities to offer their ideas. The Parent Council provides an extremely useful conduit for information. Parents' views are sought through surveys and coffee mornings, which routinely include updates from the principal and senior leaders. Parents regard themselves as partners in their children's education. They help younger children develop early reading skills, at home and as volunteers in school. Older students benefit from parental support for project work.
- The school has a wide range of options for two-way communication. Parents value the information they are given at the beginning of the year about what their children will be learning. Using, for example, SMS, the online communicator and the 'open door' policy, parents have many opportunities to keep well informed and to raise any concerns they have. School staff are typically proactive and contact parents immediately if they have any concerns.
- Parents of Foundation Stage children are very well informed about their children's personal development and academic achievement. Teachers enter information, including photographs, into an electronic record that parents can access on line and add their own comments. Across the school, parents benefit from ongoing feedback and are confident that they will be informed if their children are falling behind. However, end of year reports focus on attainment but do not refer to progress or how students can improve.
- The social contribution made to local, national and international communities is a major strength. Students lead, and are involved in, many initiatives, and the whole school community is frequently involved in supporting those less fortunate. Examples include an annual drive to encourage blood donations for a local hospital, an annual 'diabetes walk', the donation of old uniforms for schools in Africa, stationery collections for Syrian refugees, and volunteering at a local centre for people with special educational needs. .

Governance

Very good 

- Parents play a significant part in the school's strategic planning. The elected chair of the Parent Council is a member of the governing body. In addition, governors seek parents' views through questionnaires and, informally, by attending consultation evenings and social functions. For example, parents raised the issue of congestion outside school, and governors allocated substantial funds to address this. Parental comments also contributed to the complete revision of provision for children in the Foundation Stage.
- A major strength in governance is the rigour of well-informed self-evaluation. Governors seek assurance that there is compelling evidence to support judgements. For example, governors ask insightful questions about assessment data and how leaders check on the quality of teaching. There is considerable expertise within the board of governors, including skills in education, finance and human resources. This enables governors to provide astute support for leaders and act as perceptive critical friends.

- Governors are a considerable force for improvement. They are far-sighted and strategic. They are steadfast in their aim to create a highly conducive learning environment for students and they exhibit great care for staff well-being. This is evident from the recent review of the roles of middle leaders which led to the appointment of additional staff, and more equitable and manageable distributed leadership responsibilities.

Management, staffing, facilities and resources




Good

- The school operates efficiently and is managed very well. The programme of lessons is very well planned to ensure that students' experiences are positive. There are very smooth transitions between activities, and staff set very good examples of punctuality.
- The school is well-staffed with suitably qualified teachers, supported by assistants, particularly in the Foundation Stage. There are specialists for subjects such as science, music and physical education, and to support students with SEND. Most staff have good expertise in the subjects they teach, but this is less so in those subjects taught in Arabic. All staff benefit from very regular professional development to help enhance their skills.
- The building is a very safe, secure and effective learning environment, with a good range of facilities, including science labs, designated areas for creative work, and a new sixth-form area. The Foundation Stage has a stimulating and interesting learning environment. Classrooms for Years 1 to 3 have been refurbished and there are plans to extend this programme across the school. Overall, the premises are used well to support effective teaching and learning.
- Resources are chosen carefully to meet the needs of students and to support learning across subjects. The increased use of online and electronic resources by students and staff is highly successful. The governing body is supportive of suggestions to improve resources. There is a very clear view of what has been achieved and what still needs to be considered to maintain the momentum of improvement, for example, the addition of a library facility for Year 1.

The views of parents, teachers and senior students

The views of parents, teachers and senior students

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

Responses to the surveys		
Responses received	Number	
 Parents*	2016-17	394
	2015-16	528
 Teachers	120	
 Students	227	

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

- Almost all parents who responded to the survey are satisfied with the overall quality of education and feel their children enjoy school. Most are positive about the progress their children make and how the school helps them to become good citizens and care for others. A large minority feels that the school does not deal well with bullying. A few parents have concerns about the amount of homework given each day.
- Students are generally positive. The main areas of concern, indicated by around half of the students, relate to extending the range of extra-curricular activities, and increasing the opportunities to be involved in decisions and to develop leadership skills.
- Almost all teachers were entirely positive about all aspects of the school.

What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the inspection report. This should address:

- recommendations from DSIB
- areas identified by the school as requiring improvement
- other external reports or sources of information that comment on the work of the school
- priorities arising from the school's unique characteristics.

The next school inspection will report on changes made by the school.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau
Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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