

St. Mary Catholic High Sc...



National Agenda



Early years



Special educational  
needs and disabilities



Innovation

## Inspection Report 2015-2016

St. Mary Catholic High School-Dubai

Curriculum: UK

Overall rating: Good

Read more about the school



www.khda.gov.ae

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



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

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## School information

### General information



Location	Umm Hurair
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	1968
Website	www.stmarysdubai.com
Telephone	04-337-0252
Address	Oud Metha P.O. Box: 52235
Principal	Paul Asir Joseph
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	7 to 10 March 2016

### Students



Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	5-18
Grades or year groups	Year 1 to Year 13
Number of students on roll	1,908
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	2
Number of students with SEND	50
Largest nationality group of students	Indian

### Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	129
Largest nationality group of teachers	Indian
Number of teaching assistants	5
Teacher-student ratio	14.7
Number of guidance counsellors	2
Teacher turnover	7%

### Curriculum



Educational permit / License	UK
Main curriculum	UK
External tests and examinations	GCSE/IGCSE/GCE/ISL
Accreditation	UK
National Agenda benchmark tests	IBT

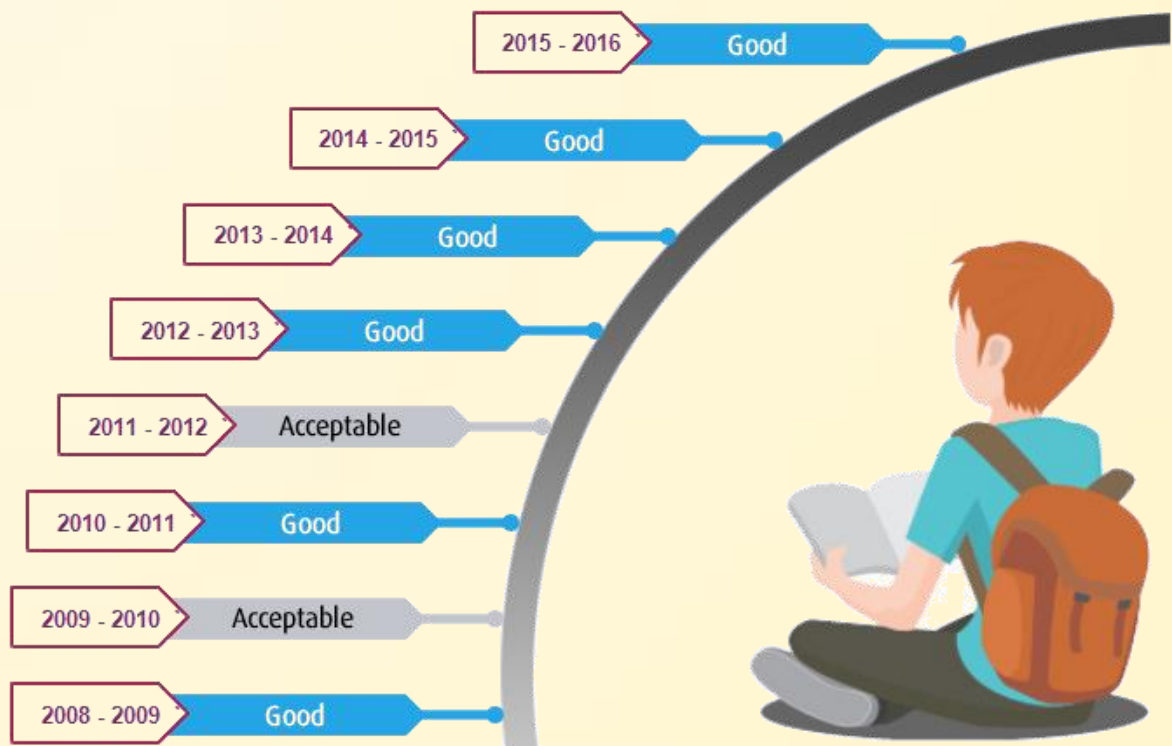


## Summary for parents and the community

**St. Mary Catholic High School-Dubai** was inspected by DSIB from 7 to 10 March 2016. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **good**.

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

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





### How well did the school perform overall?

Overall, St. Mary's Catholic High School provided a good quality of education for its students.

- Students achieved well in most subjects and phases due to good teaching and assessment of learning.
- Students' good learning skills were underpinned by their consistent enthusiasm. Students behaved extremely well and had very secure understanding of Islamic values and a strong sense of environmental responsibility.
- The curriculum was closely aligned to the English National Curriculum and students' learning moved smoothly from one phase to another. Some links between subjects were made, but opportunities were missed to encourage students to make such connections. The adaptation of the curriculum to provide challenging work for the more able, and support for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) was limited.
- Students were very well cared for, but not enough attention was paid to ensure that potential risks to their health and safety were identified promptly.
- Senior leaders, under the direction of the principal, reviewed the school's work effectively and successfully led improvements. There were productive partnerships with parents. Governors provided good support and guidance and held the senior leaders to account.



### What did the school do well?

- Students made good or better progress and attained well in most subjects.
- They had positive attitudes and were enthusiastic learners.
- Students had very secure understanding of Islamic values and a strong sense of environmental responsibility.
- The quality of teaching and students' learning skills were good, and particularly effective in the Post-16 phase.
- The leadership team was successful in making improvements in the school, which benefitted students.
- There were productive partnerships with parents and the local community.





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

- Accelerate students' progress, particularly in Arabic, by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what students should achieve in lessons, and the level of challenge provided
  - providing a range of tasks in lessons that match students' varied abilities
  - ensuring a good balance across all four language skills during Arabic lessons.
- Improve the provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) by:
  - appointing a senior leader of the SEND team
  - updating the SEND policy to reflect the ethos of an English curriculum school within the UAE
  - making accurate use of the KHDA's categories for SEND
  - ensuring that all students with SEND have appropriate individual education plans and personal targets that include input from parents and, when appropriate, external agencies.
- Establish systematic risk assessment procedures so that fire-escape routes, the storage of chemicals and other potential hazards are routinely checked.



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

- Students with special educational needs or disabilities generally made acceptable progress against their individual starting points. However, their progress against age-appropriate curriculum expectations was inconsistent.
- All parents received termly reports from teachers on their children's levels of attainment against the curriculum standards. Parents of a smaller number of children with individual education programmes or individual behaviour plans were informed by either the special educators or counsellors of their children's progress against their individual targets.
- The student support services team consistently made efforts to communicate with parents via email, phone calls, face-to-face meetings or written comments. Likewise, parents contacted the team to celebrate individual achievements or raise concerns.
- Parents were encouraged to participate in their children's education and personal development at the school. They generally supported their children at home, but were less likely to engage in on-site activities and discussions.
- Parents were extremely grateful for the support and guidance that the school provided for their children. However, parents of children who were not making sufficient academic progress did not receive enough additional support and guidance to address their children's development.

### National Agenda Parameter



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

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

#### Main points:

- The school did not fully meet the registration requirements of the National Agenda Parameter. The attainment data was not sufficient to make a full judgement on the progress towards meeting the National Agenda targets.
- The school had produced information to promote greater awareness about the National Agenda and the National Agenda targets to most of its stakeholders. Parents had received information relating to the importance and the requirements of international assessments.
- Leaders had provided updates for teachers. As a result, teachers in English, mathematics and science understood the skills that students must have in order to achieve success on international tests. Students articulated their awareness of the National Agenda. However, their knowledge and responses about what was expected of them on international assessments was limited.
- The curriculum had been enhanced to reflect the requirements for TIMSS and PISA tests, but was limited to practicing questions typical of those international assessments. Some students were beginning to demonstrate the skills and abilities that were tested by international assessments.
- The teaching did not effectively promote the development of students' critical thinking as outlined in the National Agenda. Teachers did not routinely incorporate this as part of their planning.
- There were too few opportunities provided for students to gather information from different sources including information and communication technology (ICT). In lessons, students rarely had the opportunity for extended enquiry and investigations, except in science lessons, when these were found to be regular features of learning.

## 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 leaders had started to consider the UAE's innovation agenda and were working with a consortium of schools to develop a vision for innovation. Teachers were introduced to the concept of innovation by the school's governor with responsibility for teaching and learning. A few teachers designed curriculum opportunities for older students that promoted innovation. School leaders were aware that innovative use of the school building and resources was needed to develop a culture of innovation.



Overall school performance

Good

1. Students' achievement

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

	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Learning skills</b>	Good	Good	Very good ↑

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

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

## 3. Teaching and assessment

	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Very good
Assessment	Good	Good	Good

## 4. Curriculum

	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Good	Good
Curriculum adaptation	Acceptable	Good	Not applicable

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

	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Care and support	Good	Good	Good

## 6. Leadership and management

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



## Main inspection report

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

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



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

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

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

## 1. Students' achievement

### Primary

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

- In Islamic education, the levels of students' attainment were above the national curriculum expectations. The school used internal exams and the level of challenge in those exams was just acceptable. The majority of students in Year 4 knew, understood and explained the causes of the Battle of Bader. Most of them could recite surah Al-Insheqah using Tajweed rules. In Year 6 students memorized Surah Al Mulk and recited it. They could explain the story of Prophet Moussa and the Magicians. Trends over three years showed good attainment. Most students made the expected progress from their starting points. They made acceptable progress in learning new vocabulary words in lessons. The school data did not show any differences in the progress of boys and girls.
- In Arabic as a first language, a majority of the students attained levels that were above the national curriculum expectations. The school used internal examinations with an acceptable level of challenge. Most of the students' listening skills were good, with the majority of students using quite long sentences using standard language. They read with correct pronunciation, but with a few errors, and their writing skills were less well developed. The majority of students were making good progress with regard to their starting points. The school data did not show any difference between boys and girls.
- In Arabic as an additional language, in the absence of externally benchmarked standards, most students acquired language skills in line with general expectations. Their progress in lessons and over time was similar. In lessons, most students were able to follow their teachers' instructions and respond to their questions. Students used new vocabulary in sentences of their own and their handwriting was legible. They could read aloud and pronounce Arabic text correctly, although some did not recognize the meanings of all words. Students made progress writing sentences on relevant themes and could present their writings to class. Although students could introduce themselves fluently and promptly; they found it difficult to converse in Arabic about familiar topics.
- Students' achievements in English were above the curriculum expectations and above average in international assessments. Good standards had been attained over recent years. Students spoke fluently, mostly using the correct grammar and expression. They listened with concentration and comprehension. The reading skills of most students were very good and enabled them to comprehend age-appropriate texts, as well as recall and summarise key points in a story. Students' written work was generally good, with neat handwriting and careful attention to punctuation, spelling and grammar. Progress in lessons and over time was generally good.
- In mathematics, students' achievements were very good in relation to their progress from their starting points. A majority of students attained levels that were above both national and international curriculum expectations. Students' work in books revealed that they gained skills and abilities in an appropriate and varied range of mathematics concepts. Students knew how to identify right angles and could find the angles in irregular shapes. Students had opportunities to focus upon core number facts. However, there were too few opportunities for students to explore their mathematical understanding in making sense of the world around them because learning tasks did not always apply mathematics to a real life contexts. Learning tasks did not routinely meet the needs of students with SEND.

- Attainment data in science showed that all groups of students made better than expected progress in all areas of science in relation to their starting points. Their attainment was above both national and international standards. This was particularly evident among the older students in the primary phase and was further reflected in lessons and in students' workbooks. Good progress in investigative science was evident throughout the primary classes, with clear progression in their understanding of important scientific process skills. Students made good progress in developing independent research skills, with older students skilled in using electronic tablet computers. Students in all years demonstrated very good progress in many areas, particularly in the physical and life sciences.

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

- In Islamic education, the majority of students exceeded the national curriculum standards and attained well. The school used internal examinations, but the level of challenge in these tests was not appropriate. The majority of students in Year 7 understood the story of Ummu Salmah, and the woman's Edda period after the death of the husband. In Year 10, the majority of students explained the importance of the Al Hudaybiyah Treaty for Muslims. Over three years, students' attainment had been sustained at a good level. The majority of students were making better than expected progress and was similar by the different groups of students. Very good progress in explaining the Ayah meanings was observed.
- In Arabic as a first language, most of the students attained levels that were in line with the national curriculum expectations. The school used internal examinations with a level of challenge that was appropriate to the curriculum expectations. Most of the students' listening skills were very good. Their speaking skills were acceptable using the standard language, often participating in dialogue to defend their viewpoints. Their reading skills were appropriate. While their writing skills were extending to longer paragraphs, these were with less structured than required and with spelling errors. Most students made acceptable progress from their starting points in lessons and students' progress in learning poems and explaining their meanings was evident. The school did not provide any information to differentiate progress between boys and girls, or that by different groups of students.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students demonstrated adequate listening and reading skills. They were able to understand their teachers' instructions and questions. They could read out loud Arabic text, but sometimes mispronounced certain sounds. Students' writing was legible and meaningful, but required further development to extend it with adequate coherence. Students could present their work in Arabic well, but their conversation skills were less developed.
- Students made very good progress in English. All students attained above the expected levels on the IGCSE examinations in 2015. Almost all had done so in the two previous years. Students made very good progress during lessons. Their speaking and listening skills developed rapidly. They were increasingly adept at analysing texts, identifying the writers' purpose, and comparing one style with another. Most students wrote fluently by the end of the phase, with many showing great flair in their use of literary devices, such as alliteration and metaphor. Students confidently communicated when in research groups, preparing reports and making presentations to their classmates.



- In mathematics, all students completed the external examination in Year 11 aligned to the UK curriculum. As a result of consistently good progress across the secondary phase, the overall results were above the UK expected curriculum standards by most students. Students could apply their knowledge of circle geometry to solve problems and could calculate probability values. However, students did not always have enough opportunities to apply their skills and abilities in mathematics to make sense of the world around them in meaningful ways.
- Most students successfully planned and conducted investigations in science. They knew what constituted fair testing and could make sensible conclusions about their findings according to their predictions. They had many opportunities to reflect on their learning in order to determine their next steps. Students made good progress in their development of investigative skills and scientific vocabulary. Most were developing a deep understanding of scientific concepts.

### Post-16

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

- In Islamic Education, the attainment by most students was in line with expectations. The school used internal exams but the levels of challenge did not meet the curriculum expectations. Most students recited Surah Al Noor using Tajweed rules and they knew the importance of the mosque in a Muslim's life. Trends over time in students' attainment showed generally acceptable levels. Most of the students made acceptable progress from their starting points. They made acceptable progress in linking their learning to real life.
- In Arabic as a first language, most of the students' attainment was in line with the curriculum expectations. The school used internal examinations with an appropriate level of challenge. Most students' listening skills were very good; they spoke using standard language but some lacked confidence. Their reading skills were secure, while their writing skills were not as well developed. The school's information did not show any trends of students' attainment over the past three years. Most students made acceptable progress from their starting points and most progressed adequately in learning new concepts and applying them to real life.
- The most able mathematicians at the school studied mathematics in Year 12. At the AS and A levels, students made very good progress. Analysis of results over time revealed improving outcomes in mathematics at both the AS and A levels. Students were able to use their skills and knowledge relating to geometric sequences to derive formula and calculate compound interest over time. They could solve complex differential equations. All groups of students of mathematics in this phase were highly motivated. They were articulate, confident mathematicians who were extremely well prepared for their board examinations.
- Across the three sciences, students made good progress and attained well, generally achieving good results in external examinations and in their classwork. Their skills of planning and evaluating the outcomes of investigative work were well developed. They were skilled in predicting outcomes of experiments and were able to talk knowledgeably about their findings. Their attainment was not as high as in mathematics, as the different groups of students made good but less rapid progress.

	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Learning skills</b>	Good	Good	Very good ↑

- Except in Arabic, students were highly motivated and eager to learn. They responded positively to their teachers' questioning. When given the opportunity, they evaluated their own and others' work. They knew their strengths and weaknesses and took steps to refine their learning in order to improve.
- Students listened to one another and contributed their ideas in a productive manner. Most were able to talk about their learning with clarity and accuracy. In Arabic lessons, students' interactions and contributions were hindered by their limited communication skills.
- Students made clear connections between different areas of learning when given the opportunity. They could relate these to their understanding of the world. Whilst most teachers planned to show links between different subjects and real life situations, they were not routinely successful in achieving this.
- When given the opportunity, students, especially in the Post-16 years, were skilled in carrying out research to support their learning. Whilst access to computers in classrooms had improved, there was scope for further improvement. Problem solving and critical thinking skills were evident and were particularly effective in science classes in the secondary and Post-16 phases. Overall, their innovation and enterprise skills were still developing.

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

	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Personal development</b>	Very good ↑	Outstanding	Outstanding ↑

- Students had very positive attitudes to their school life and their learning. This was especially evident in the secondary and Post-16 phases. They showed appreciation, integrity, independence and respect for the school community. They were enthusiastic to share ideas and experiences and curious to learn from others.
- Students were extremely well behaved across the school. They were courteous, self-disciplined and responded to adults' instructions. Bullying was rare. Students were well supervised by adults, although they also behaved well when not under direct supervision.
- Students demonstrated a strong sense of belonging to the school community. Students were active and supportive of each other and were sensitive to others' needs. They communicated and cooperated well. Students contributed willingly to assemblies. They took pride in their roles as prefects. Older students ran activities to promote students' awareness of issues such as bullying and healthy living.
- Students demonstrated a secure understanding of healthy living. The school promoted internal and external sporting activities. This encouraged most students to be aware of adopting a healthy lifestyle and making wise choices about their own health and fitness.
- Attendance rates were good and students routinely arrived to lessons on time.

	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures</b>	Good	Very good ↑	Outstanding

- Students had clear understanding of the role of the mosque and Islamic values in Emirati society. Secondary students elaborated on what Muslims do when they hear 'Athar' (the call to prayer) and the sanctity of the mosque. The older students showed excellent knowledge of the pivotal social and educational role of mosques in Dubai.
- Students were knowledgeable and appreciative of the role of the UAE's leaders in founding the union and the enormous developments that have taken place since its foundation. Students, especially those in the secondary phase, showed great knowledge and respect of the multicultural life in the UAE and participated in National Day celebrations. The older students understood how the UAE transitioned into a modern country.
- Students demonstrated secure understanding of their own cultures and other world cultures. In the secondary phase, students demonstrated a particularly deep understanding of various cultures and could name cultural events of different ethnic groups. Students in Years 12 and 13 described different cultures as sincere, supportive and caring.

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

- Students in the primary phase demonstrated broad understanding of their social responsibilities through donating stationary to Syrian refugees and raising money to fight breast cancer. Secondary students were involved in helping primary students and teachers. In the Post-16 years, students led initiatives, such as volunteering for the UAE Red Crescent and helping children with SEND.
- Primary students showed a positive work ethic. They participated enthusiastically in the production of a musical play at the school. Secondary students were involved in scientific research on static electricity using the school laboratories. The oldest students showed creativity through working with the Green Hope organisation to provide lights to 100 homes in Kerala, India.
- Students had good understanding of environmental issues and how to care for the environment. They were able to describe some strategies to address global warming. In the secondary phase, students were involved in cleaning up the school, recycling and planting trees. In the Post-16 phase, students initiated the Environment Club, through which they were actively involved in maintaining a litter-free campus.

### 3. Teaching and assessment

	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Very good ↑

- Teachers demonstrated secure subject knowledge. When this subject knowledge was combined with an understanding of how students learned, then most students made good or better progress in lessons.
- Lesson planning included clear learning objectives and stressed the need for different tasks to meet the needs of all students. However, the lack of effective delivery meant that the needs of some students, both the most able and those with additional learning needs, were not routinely met. Some teachers of Arabic had poor pronunciation skills and this hindered their students' ability to speak Arabic correctly.
- Teacher and student interactions were very positive. This was especially true in the Post-16 phase. Questioning by teachers in most classes encouraged students to engage in meaningful discussions and enabled them to share their thinking. In some Arabic lessons teachers tended to ask 'closed' questions which restricted students' ability to express themselves. In science lessons particularly, teachers promoted higher level thinking and critical responses.
- Most teachers used a range of strategies to engage students and to make sure their needs were being met, but the level of challenge was not consistently high enough to enable students to make progress in all lessons. In mathematics, there were too few opportunities for students to apply their learning to the real world. In Arabic and Islamic education lessons, the level of challenge was often too low and work was not sufficiently different for different students.
- There were opportunities for students to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills. Lessons in secondary and Post-16 science and mathematics provided examples of critical thinking and problem solving opportunities. However, these developments were in their early stages and were not embedded in teaching across the different subjects and year groups. Lessons did not provide students with sufficient access to ICT to support their learning.

	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Assessment	Good	Good	Good

- Assessment procedures were systematically aligned to the English National Curriculum. In the primary phase, they had been revised so that internal assessments were closely aligned to age-related expectations, including the learning of Arabic. In the secondary and Post-16 phases, students' expected levels of achievement at the end of each year were recorded. Subject leaders tracked students' progress effectively.
- Students' levels of attainment were measured in most subjects by external examinations aligned to the curriculum standards in Years 11 and 12. Some, but not all students' academic achievements in English, mathematics and science were benchmarked against international expectations in Years 5 and 9. In Arabic, only internal examinations were used and these were not always challenging enough.
- Subject teachers had accurate and reliable information about how well their students were achieving over time. However, leaders were too reliant upon teachers to pass information to them rather than have direct access to the school's central management system. This meant that there were some delays in equipping subject and phase leaders with the information they needed.



- Assessment information was not used routinely to inform teachers' planning in order to meet the needs of different groups of students. As a result, different learning activities were not always planned in English and mathematics, although they were more common in science. The analysis of data to ensure that the needs of students with SEND were taken into account when planning lessons was inconsistent.
- Most teachers had secure knowledge of the achievements of individual students as a result of their own assessments and observations. The information was strengthened by analysis of students' results at the four key assessment points during the year. This ensured that teachers had reliable information about students' knowledge and understanding in a range of subjects. Consequently, feedback to students was personalised and constructive.

#### 4. Curriculum

	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Good ↑	Good

- The curriculum had a clear rationale, was broad-based, balanced and age-appropriate. It closely followed the requirements of the school's licensed and authorised curriculum. The curriculum prepared students for college and work. Its programmes, courses and activities provided a variety of choices and challenges to maintain the interest of students.
- The curriculum was effectively planned to ensure that students moved smoothly and progressively through a carefully designed sequence of increasingly challenging learning activities. Planning across the phases ensured that students made successful transitions from one year to the next and from one subject to another.
- Links across the curriculum allowed opportunities for students to make connections from one subject to another. For example, teachers used the science topic of global warming in an English class to discuss the aspects of writing a newspaper article. However, the extent to which teachers made these links in lessons was inconsistent.
- The curriculum was reviewed each year, taking into consideration students' achievements. Effective use was made of internal and external test results to spot any gaps in students' knowledge, understanding and skills. Subsequently, elements of the curriculum were given greater emphasis to help ensure that such gaps were closed.

	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum adaptation	Acceptable ↓	Good ↑	Not applicable

- Some account was taken of the range of learning abilities, from the most able students to the low attaining students, but this was inconsistent. Teachers were aware of students in their classes who had been identified as having SEND. Some consideration was given within lessons to address their needs, but not with sufficient consistency. The curriculum was planned appropriately to meet the learning needs of most students.



- The curriculum allowed for a range of interests and experiences. It was enriched with a variety of activities within and outside the school community. These included Ethnic Day celebrations, expressive art competitions, and a business simulation competition. However, opportunities for enterprise and innovation were limited.
- Although there were a small number of Arabic students in the school, they brought with them a sense of pride and identity in their culture and beliefs. The curriculum provided interesting and relevant programmes through its Islamic, Arabic, and social studies classes, which developed students' appreciation of the heritage of the UAE. Extra-curricular activities enabled students to develop broad understanding of Emirati traditions, culture, and the values which influence UAE society.

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

	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓

- Procedures for safeguarding students were managed effectively by the school's leaders. Teachers and students were aware of the child protection procedures. The school protected students from potential hazards when using the internet and social media by restricting access to inappropriate material.
- The school had well-established policies and procedures with regard to child protection and safety. It conducted regular safety checks for its teachers and staff. The supervision of students during break times and during their arrivals and departures was appropriate. The school conducted periodical fire drills.
- The school lacked a detailed risk assessment procedure. During the inspection, safety hazards were quickly addressed, but should have emerged during regular checks. A medical team effectively checked students' health.
- The premises and facilities were suitable and provided a safe environment. Although the first floor did not have an appropriate access for students with physical needs, when necessary, classes were relocated to the ground floor. Bus transport was well organised, with daily checks on the wearing of seat belts.
- Most of the students' meals and snacks were healthy. There were sufficient opportunities for students to participate in sports and other physical activities.

	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Care and support	Good	Good	Good

- Teachers and students respected each other and enjoyed very positive relationships. Students were courteous, exceptionally well behaved and thrived in the school's harmonious community. Students responded positively to the high expectations and demonstrated a strong work ethic. They capably took on leadership roles and responsibilities.
- The school carefully monitored students' daily attendance and punctuality to lessons. As a result, their rates of attendance were good. Teachers regularly reminded students of the importance of punctuality and routinely praised or encouraged students to pay attention to this important aspect of school life.

- The school had effective systems to identify students with SEND. Staff members from the student support services kept accurate records of the identification of need and interventions. These records included advice from external professionals and individual programmes for those who required personalised support.
- In general, students benefitted from appropriate interventions to support their social and emotional or learning needs. The support services staff had clear roles in supporting students with advice and guidance related to their well-being or providing additional support with academic concepts and learning. However, the achievements of students identified as having special gifts or talents were not monitored closely enough in this process.
- Although teachers knew the strengths and areas for development of their students and generally supported the majority of students well, they did not routinely take responsibility for individual student's needs. Great care was taken to develop students' well-being. Counsellors offered confidential advice, including career guidance, to students or parents when necessary.

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

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

Acceptable

- The school was inclusive and students with moderate SEND were offered places in the school. The special educators and counsellors were responsible for addressing the specific needs of students with either learning or social and emotional needs.
- The school used assessment data from teachers to identify students with SEND. The student support services took account of concerns raised by teachers or parents. Staff members generally encouraged parents, when appropriate, to use external professionals to conduct additional assessments, identify specific needs and suggest intervention strategies.
- Parents were aware of their children's individual programmes and received information about their progress against their individual targets. They participated in formal meetings to review progress and had informal access to the support services team whenever necessary. A few parents had requested additional information about how to support their children at home.
- Special educators created detailed individual support documents for a limited number of students on the SEND register. Students were withdrawn from lessons to attend one-to-one sessions and enhance their skills, knowledge and understanding. Teachers were encouraged to use different strategies to support groups of students, but they were seldom specific enough to address the needs of students with SEND during lessons.
- The student support services team monitored students' progress against the targets on individual programmes. Overall, students with SEND made secure progress from their individual starting points, but not always against age-appropriate curriculum expectations. Class and subject teachers did not consistently take responsibility for the progress made by individual students.

## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Good

- Under the effective direction of the principal, senior leaders had worked hard in pursuit of the national priorities. Collectively, they promoted a common sense of purpose across the school community. There was a strong commitment to inclusion.
- Senior leaders were well aware of good professional practice and communicated this clearly to all staff members. Subject and year group teams worked together effectively. This was reflected, for example, in the increased rates of progress made by students in some phases and subjects. A positive learning culture had been established, evident in both the commitment of the staff and the ambitions of the students.
- Relationships across the school were highly professional. Staff members were mutually supportive and there was a strong team spirit, underpinned by a distinct management structure and well-established systems of communication. Lines of accountability were well established, with middle leaders clear about their roles in promoting students' academic achievement and personal development.
- The leaders had strong capacity to improve with the resources that were available. For example, leaders had introduced effective ways of assessing students' achievements in light of the changes to the English National Curriculum.
- The positive effects of the school leadership team was evident, for example, in the overall rising trends in students' attainments. Leaders ensured that the school was compliant with statutory and regulatory requirements.

### School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Good

- Significant progress had been made in establishing systems to review the school's effectiveness. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) played an effective part in this process. Information gathered from external tests and internal assessments was being used effectively to analyse students' attainment and progress. However, restricted access to assessment data constrained leaders' abilities to identify and respond to anomalies.
- Leaders regularly observed lessons and provided detailed feedback to all teachers. The results of monitoring were carefully analysed and used to identify generic areas for improvement and to organise additional training. For example, teachers had recently attended a conference about promoting critical thinking. Senior leaders took account of students' outcomes when evaluating their progress towards meeting the school's improvement goals.
- Improvement planning focused sharply on the recommendations of the previous inspection report and was combined with issues emerging from an internal review. Plans focused on raising students' achievements and improved teaching. However, some targets were vague or not measurable.
- The recommendations from the previous inspection report had been tackled with rigour, leading to several improvements, for example, students' achievements in mathematics and science. Due partly to increased access to ICT, students' learning skills had improved in the Post-16 phase.

## Partnerships with parents and the community

Very good ↑

- Parents held the school in high regard. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) had a positive influence on home and school relationships. Parents took leading roles in fundraising and keenly supported school events, such as performances and the inauguration of prefects. Ideas suggested by the PTA were carefully considered by leaders and governors. This was facilitated by the chairperson's membership of the governing board.
- The warm tone of newsletters and individual communications illustrated the school's determination to engage parents in their children's learning and to keep them well informed. Letters about educational visits, curriculum choices and day-to-day issues were timely and detailed. The school's website included a wealth of information for parents, including the sequence of curriculum topics. The students' home and school booklets helped to keep their parents well informed.
- Parents valued the detailed termly reports, which were followed up by individual consultations. Parents were free to contact the school at any time by telephone and valued the 'open door' policy, which meant they could call in and talk to a member of the senior leadership team. Annual reports provided a comprehensive overview of students' achievements and, when appropriate, included comparisons with international standards.
- Links with other schools, local businesses and charities provided a valuable dimension to students' experience. They gained insights into industry and commerce through visits, such as those to the Dubai financial centres and participation in the Young Business Leaders' programme. Visits to exhibitions and participation in competitions broadened students' education. These included writing competitions and literary and expressive arts festivals.

## Governance

Good ↑




- The governing body included all stakeholders and several parents. The thriving PTA provided an effective conduit for communication. Members of the PTA were confident that their opinions were valued and acted upon.
- Governors kept a close eye on students' achievements and were well aware of their strengths and weaknesses. They had a clear view about the quality of teaching. The chairman of the board had considerable expertise in the evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning and made a significant contribution to these aspects of the school's work. Governors' oversight of health and safety was less secure.
- Governors were fully committed to the school's aim to ensure students did as well as they could in their studies and in their personal development. They had a positive influence upon the school's leadership and direction. As far as funds allowed, they sought to provide additional resources when shortages emerged. For example, access to ICT had been recently enhanced.

Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well-established routines and communication among school leaders, administrative, security and maintenance staff ensured that the school ran smoothly. Timetabling meant that full advantage was taken of the time available for learning. Communication amongst teachers and with students and parents was effective.</li> <li>The school had been successful in retaining teachers, reducing the turnover to seven per cent. Most teachers were suitably qualified and had a range of relevant experience. They took advantage of the opportunities for additional training. The staff was generally deployed appropriately, although the organisation of the support for students with SEND was not consistently effective.</li> <li>The school grounds, buildings and equipment were safe and reasonably well maintained. However, some outdoor areas were not conducive to quiet activities. The school shared the site with St. Mary's church. This provided good facilities for prayer and reflection. However, there was no prayer room for Muslim staff or students.</li> <li>Classroom furniture was adequate, although the noise from air conditioning units was sometimes distracting. There was a limited range of books in the libraries, particularly to support learning in Islamic education and Arabic, and many were rather old. The facilities for recreation and sport were adequate.</li> <li>Newly installed internet connections allowed increased access to online resources. All classrooms were equipped with data projectors and the computer suites had been refurbished and updated. Science equipment had been improved and laboratories were used widely. Resources were generally adequate, although there was little specialist equipment to support the learning by students with SEND.</li> </ul>	



## 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	472
	2014-2015	592
<b>Teachers</b> 	107	
<b>Students</b> 	381	

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

- Almost all parents who responded to their survey were positive about all aspects of the school, including the fact that their children were kept safe during the school day and when using the buses.
- Almost all teachers were entirely positive, although a quarter indicated that systems to regulate salaries lacked clarity.
- The majority of senior students were generally positive and felt they were safe at the school.
- A large minority of students expressed concerns about access to resources, extra-curricular activities and the school's response to bullying. A similar proportion stated that their views were not valued.
- A minority of students disagreed that the teaching was good, that the school dealt with bullying appropriately and that they were taught about internet safety.

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)