



National Agenda



Early Years



Special Educational Needs



Innovation

# Inspection Report 2015-2016

**GEMS Modern Academy**

Curriculum: Indian

Overall rating: Outstanding

[Read more about the school](#)



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“The race for excellence has no finish line”



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

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## School information

<p><b>General information</b></p> 	<p><b>Location</b></p> <p><b>Type of school</b></p> <p><b>Opening year of school</b></p> <p><b>Website</b></p> <p><b>Telephone</b></p> <p><b>Address</b></p> <p><b>Principal</b></p> <p><b>Language of instruction</b></p> <p><b>Inspection dates</b></p>	<p>Nad Al Sheba</p> <p>Private</p> <p>1986</p> <p><a href="http://www.gemsmodernacademy-dubai.com">www.gemsmodernacademy-dubai.com</a></p> <p>04-326-3339</p> <p>PO Box 53663, Dubai</p> <p>Mrs. Nargish Khambatta</p> <p>English</p> <p>19 to 22 October 2015</p>
<p><b>Students</b></p> 	<p><b>Gender of students</b></p> <p><b>Age range</b></p> <p><b>Grades or year groups</b></p> <p><b>Number of students on roll</b></p> <p><b>Number of children in pre-kindergarten</b></p> <p><b>Number of Emirati students</b></p> <p><b>Number of students with SEND</b></p> <p><b>Largest nationality group of students</b></p>	<p>Boys and girls</p> <p>4-18</p> <p>Kindergarten to Grade 12</p> <p>3,741</p> <p>0</p> <p>0</p> <p>307</p> <p>Indian</p>
<p><b>Teachers / Support staff</b></p> 	<p><b>Number of teachers</b></p> <p><b>Largest nationality group of teachers</b></p> <p><b>Number of teaching assistants</b></p> <p><b>Teacher-student ratio</b></p> <p><b>Number of guidance counsellors</b></p> <p><b>Teacher turnover</b></p>	<p>228</p> <p>Indian</p> <p>68</p> <p>1:17</p> <p>2</p> <p>11%</p>
<p><b>Curriculum</b></p> 	<p><b>Educational permit / Licence</b></p> <p><b>Main curriculum</b></p> <p><b>External tests and examinations</b></p> <p><b>Accreditation</b></p> <p><b>National Agenda benchmark tests</b></p>	<p>Indian</p> <p>Indian / Indian, CISCE</p> <p>IBDP; ICSE; IBT</p> <p>CISCE; IBO</p> <p>ASSET, IBT</p>



## Summary for parents and the community

**GEMS Modern Academy** was inspected by DSIB from 19 to 22 October 2015. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **outstanding**.

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

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





### How well did the school perform overall?

Overall, GEMS Modern Academy provided an **outstanding** quality of education for its students.

- Students' attainment and progress in Islamic education were good. Attainment in Arabic as an additional language remained good. Progress in Arabic, while good in primary, was acceptable in the middle and secondary phases. In English, mathematics and science attainment and progress were outstanding.
- Students were genuinely interested in their studies. They derived great pleasure from tackling the intellectual challenges presented to them. They had enquiring minds and were exceptionally able at making links between what they learned. As a result, they had a coherent, widely extended learning experience. At all stages, their oral presentational skills were very mature for their years and of very high quality.
- Almost all students were very well disposed to learning and very positive in their attitudes. Their appreciation and understanding of Islamic values and of the culture and history of the UAE were very highly developed. They showed tolerance and understanding. They appreciated their own rich cultural heritage and those of other societies and cultures.
- Teaching methods were generally very effective. Teachers of Arabic used too much English in the course of their lessons. Students therefore did not have enough exposure to Arabic as a language of oral communication. Assessment strategies were very well developed.
- The curriculum met all requirements. It was very successfully supplemented by a broad programme of activities. Almost all students were involved. The music, dance and performing arts activities led to stage performances of near professional standards.
- The school's procedures for ensuring students' health and safety were detailed and very secure. Throughout, relationships between students and adults were warm, respectful and very positive.
- The principal was driven by the philosophy that the child should be at the centre of everything that the school did. She insisted that the school should be inclusive, and that as far as possible everything should be available to all. In these pursuits, she was very ably supported by her senior colleagues. Leaders had not forgotten the pursuit of excellence, and were effectively assisted in that by departmental heads. Governors had an exceptionally detailed knowledge of the school. They were fully supportive of the principal's initiatives. Links with the community were extensive and imaginative, resulting in ambitious philanthropic and entrepreneurial activities.



### What did the school do well?

- Very high levels of attention were given to each student in both the personal and academic fields.
- Performance on external examinations and outstanding academic achievement allowed students to pursue their personal aspirations and career goals.
- The commitment of students and their dedication and devotion to the school made significant contributions to the dynamic learning environment.
- The clarity of vision and drive of the principal, with the full support of the senior leadership team set appropriate targets to meet the current national development priorities.



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

- Clarify leadership roles and responsibilities in Arabic so that teachers receive direction on what they need to do to improve the quality of their teaching and thus outcomes for students.



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

- The school had a highly inclusive ethos. It admitted students with a wide range of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Meticulous and timely arrangements were in place for the accurate identification and on-going checking of students' progress and well-being.
- The curriculum and support provided in the recently developed inclusion unit were based on students' personal, social and academic needs.
- In the majority of lessons, students in need of extra support or challenge lessons made very good progress because the curriculum and teaching were very well adapted to meet their needs.
- Ongoing joint work between classroom teachers and the inclusion team was helping students to make more appropriate progress in class. Further work was needed in Arabic lessons.
- Parents were very appreciative of the formal and informal contact they had with the school. They valued the recently introduced parent groups. A few parents requested more information and guidance, especially about their children's progress and what they were learning. They sought better advice on how to help their children more effectively at home.

### National Agenda Parameter



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

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

#### Main points:

- The school had met the registration requirements of the National Agenda Parameter. Progress towards National Agenda targets was above expectations.
- The school had actively promoted awareness of the National Agenda throughout the community. Understanding of the National Agenda was outstanding by all but the parents.
- The curriculum had been significantly realigned to meet the requirements of the TIMSS and PISA tests.
- Teachers had developed very effective questioning techniques and had made some links to real-life situations. Group work by students in English, mathematics and especially science was well-developed. Teachers' skills as facilitators of learning were well developed and being extended further.
- Students used information and communication technology (ICT) and other resources to develop their skills of research and critical thinking.











Overall school performance

Outstanding

1. Students' achievement

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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
<b>Learning skills</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

## 3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Assessment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

## 4. Curriculum

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum design and implementation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Curriculum adaptation	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

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

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

## 6. Leadership and management

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



## Main inspection report

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

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



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

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

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

### 1. Students' achievement

#### KG

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

- Most children demonstrated literacy skills in English that were well above expected curriculum standards. They were able to read fluently books that were two grade levels above the KG curriculum learning outcomes. They were also able to write complete sentences independently. Children who were learners of English as a second language were able to communicate effectively their learning and ideas, using a rich vocabulary.
- In mathematics most children demonstrated numeracy skills that were well above expected curriculum standards. They were able to create picture graphs and analyse the data and to generate more questions and activities to investigate. Their mathematical operations were above the expected attainment levels. Children were able to use frames to complete addition problems using two digit numbers.
- Children's understanding and use of simple aspects of the scientific method were above the expected curriculum standards. During lessons they used investigative and discovery skills to research and explain real world problems and experiences at appropriate levels. They showed an understanding of the ecosystem by researching, developing and contributing to a compost area at the school.

#### Primary

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

- In Islamic education, in the absence of international measures, students' attainment against curriculum and national standards were slightly above expectations. The majority of students could recite short Surahs of the Holy Qur'an using Tajweed rules with very few errors. They could relate Islamic concepts to their real life, such as the meaning of the Holy Qur'an and Hadeeth. The progress made by different groups of students during lessons and over time was good and matched their levels of attainment

- In learning Arabic as an additional language, international and national benchmarks were not available. Attainment was measured against curriculum levels where standards were good. The majority of students had a wide range of simple vocabulary. They were able to read and understand appropriately selected texts with support. When speaking, they demonstrated good progress but had some errors in pronunciation. The writing and 'listening for understanding' skills of a minority of students were limited but for most groups of students discernable progress was being made.
- In English, national and international benchmarks indicated that attainment and progress were well above average. Almost all students demonstrated speaking and listening skills that were well above expectations. They were able to follow instructions and listen carefully to their teachers and other students. They answered questions and made presentations in classes with confidence. Their reading skills were well above the curriculum expectations. Written work was grammatically accurate with ideas that were well organised. Progress being made in lessons and over time was consistent across the different groups of students including those with SEND.
- In mathematics as in other subjects using national and international benchmarks, standards of attainment were well above average. Students could use number operations effectively and measure and record lengths choosing appropriate measuring instruments and units. They could factorise numbers and knew the sum of the internal angles of a triangle. Their knowledge and skills were well above the curriculum expectations. Progress was consistent both over time and within lessons for the different groups of students.
- Students' investigating and predicting abilities in science were most effective in developing their critical thinking. As in English and mathematics attainment was well above average. Students held knowledge and could use scientific skills that were well above curriculum expectations. They used ICT, books, and articles very effectively to develop their research and enquiry skills. Progress of the different groups of students was outstanding because of the consistent advances in their learning in lessons and over time.

### Middle

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

- In the absence of international benchmarks, attainment and progress in Islamic education were measured against national and curriculum levels. Attainment was slightly above those expectations. The majority of students could recite long Surahs of the Holy Qur'an using Tajweed rules. They had memorised and understood one of the Prophet's (PBUH) Hadeeth. They could apply Islamic manners with regard to the name of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). Rates of progress reflected students' good levels of attainment. The achievement of most groups of students was good in lessons and over time, including those with SEND.

- In Arabic as an additional language, national and international benchmarks were not available to gauge the attainment and progress of students. Judging by curriculum expectations, attainment was better than the rates of progress of the different groups of students. The majority of students could write long sentences containing new words. They could read short familiar sentences containing few new words. A significant proportion of students struggled in reading for understanding. Most students could decode Arabic script and match printed text to sounds when reading aloud. Generally, different groups of students made similarly acceptable progress in lessons and over time. Given the students' skills and levels of attainment, progress was not as quick as it should be.
- International benchmarks indicated high performance in English. Well-developed listening and speaking skills in English enabled students to explore issues creatively. Well-developed comprehension skills enabled almost all to infer meanings beyond the literal. Accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar enabled students to use an appropriate range of sentence structures and varied vocabularies. Most were able to write effectively for an intended audience and purpose. Creative writing showed that most students were able to develop ideas in interesting and engaging ways. Non-fiction writing showed that most were able to compare and contrast different points of view systematically. Higher ability students were able to develop logical arguments and to cite evidence to support a point of view. Those with SEND were making very good progress.
- In mathematics, as in English, international benchmarks indicated successful rates of progress which led to high levels of attainment. Students could understand area and perimeter and could calculate both for complicated right-angled shapes. Their knowledge and skills were well above the curriculum expectations. They could also plot points in all four quadrants on a graph. They were developing very good techniques for solving complex problems. Most groups of students were making outstanding progress. Students with SEND were making good progress.
- As in English and mathematics, students in science were attaining at very high levels. They had well developed enquiry and investigation skills. They used these skills well in practical investigations, where they were able to predict and to carry out investigations to test their predictions. They were able to express their ideas and understanding clearly using age-appropriate scientific language. Their knowledge and skills were well above the curriculum expectations. Rapid rates of progress supported this high attainment. Different groups of students achieved consistently well at outstanding levels, including the students with SEND whose progress was very good or better.

## Secondary

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

- In Islamic education, attainment and progress were good when measured against national and curriculum expectations. The majority of students could relate the Hadeeth to real life, for example in the prohibition of recreational drugs. This was exemplified in that they could relate verses of the Holy Qur'an to the dangerous and harmful effects of drugs and alcohol to a person's health and mental condition. Progress in lessons and over time was good, which in turn led to attainment levels secured. The achievement of different groups of students was broadly similar.
- In the absence of national and international benchmark tests, attainment was judged as good and progress as acceptable against curriculum expectations. Older students were able to understand teachers' instructions in Arabic. They could read new words, although with some pronunciation errors. The majority could write with some errors, though mostly it was copy writing which hindered better progress being made. Progress was also slowed by the teachers' excessive use of English. Students were not progressing as well as they should because they were not accustomed to communicating in the target language in their lessons. Nevertheless, achievement by most groups was good and evident progress was being made.
- External measures and international benchmarks indicated high performance in English across the school and culminating in this phase. Students could share their thoughts and ideas in sophisticated discussions. They showed that they were able to make mature connections with real life events. In their written work, students evaluated how authors achieved their effects through the use of linguistic, structural and presentational devices. Their writing was reasoned and persuasive, often creatively conveying complex perspectives appropriately and with sensitivity when dealing with controversial issues. Boys and girls performed similarly and continued to make outstanding progress. Students with SEND were making very good progress.
- In mathematics, by Grade 12, examination results and external benchmarking data indicated outstanding attainment. Students could understand a wide range of mathematical concepts include many that were relevant to everyday life, for example annuities and compound interest. They could use normal probability distributions. Their problem-solving skills were enhanced by their knowledge and use of advanced calculus. Their knowledge and skills were well above the curriculum expectations. Boys and girls achieved similarly. High levels of performance were maintained in lessons and over time because the different groups of students made consistent progress. For most groups progress was outstanding. Students with SEND were making very good progress.
- As in English and mathematics, standards and rates of progress in science were high when measured against external examination results and international benchmarks. Students in science had developed effective enquiry and investigation skills. They were able to hypothesise and then develop investigations to test their hypotheses based on their knowledge and understanding. Their knowledge and skills were well above the curriculum expectations. Overall progress was outstanding; that of students with SEND was very good or better.

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Learning skills	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- In all phases, students were highly motivated, enthusiastic and eager to learn. They took responsibility for their own learning and evaluated it in order to improve. In a few lessons, groups of students independently prepared and delivered the instructional content to their fellow students, who then asked challenging questions.
- Students collaborated effectively when working in pairs or small groups. They capably exchanged views, made meaningful contributions and worked together towards common goals. They were able to effectively communicate their learning through dialogue with their teachers and fellow students.
- Without assistance, students were able to make connections between their learning and their own life experiences. This ability served to consolidate their understanding. For example, one group of students created a graph to show the results of an outdoor competition. This data in picture form was then analysed to determine new groups for relay races.
- Almost all students demonstrated proficient and independent investigative skills, competence and confidence in the use of resources including ICT. For example, one student helped another who had a visual impairment to use a tablet to magnify her worksheet. A large proportion of lessons involved hands-on learning which required that students be creative and innovative. Students demonstrated critical skills in their ability to think clearly and rationally, especially when challenged by their teachers or fellow students.

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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- All students were enthusiastic about their learning. They welcomed feedback from other students and teachers and invariably used it well in order to improve.
- Students' behaviour was exemplary throughout the school. The students were models for one another and resolved differences in mature ways.
- Respectful and considerate relationships between students and with the staff were evident throughout the school. Mentoring programmes between the grades promoted sensitivity towards and empathy for those with SEND.
- All students understood the importance of sensible eating and a healthy lifestyle. The school provided appropriate choices at lunch and there were ample opportunities to engage in physical education and exercise during and after school.
- Clear procedures ensured that all students valued attendance and punctuality, which were both excellent.



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

- Students showed excellent understanding of the importance of the mosque to Muslims. They could describe how Islamic values influenced modern life in UAE society with its wide diversity of people. Students attended Iftar meals in Ramadan and participated in Eid celebrations.
- Most students could name the main geographical features of the UAE. They could explain the traditions and costumes of Emirati men and women. They were involved in the UAE National Day celebrations in addition to celebrating the UAE at their daily assemblies.
- Most students demonstrated excellent understanding of their Indian heritage. They participated in the different celebrations that the school performed, such as Diwali. They were aware of and understood world cultures through their visits. Outside school they mixed with many different backgrounds.

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

- Students in all phases of the school were involved in a wide range of initiatives and outreach projects. They had a thorough understanding of the impact that they could have on their school and the wider community. Students were aware of their places in the world and were keen to make positive social contributions.
- They showed enterprise and a strong work ethic by, for example, collaborating to prepare and deliver presentations such as a history of the United Nations at an assembly. Students were very aware that success in school and life is due to hard work and commitment. They showed a significant capacity to take on leadership roles in organisations and clubs.
- Almost all students had well-developed awareness of the environment, heightened through their participation in a wide range of projects from recycling to planting. Active participation in environmental projects and conservation demonstrated that students had a strong sense of responsibility and welcomed the role which they could play. They were aware of current environmental issues and the impact they have on the UAE and the world.

### 3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
<b>Teaching for effective learning</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- In almost all subjects, teachers made highly effective use of their strong subject knowledge to plan work that motivated and engaged students' interest. Teachers in the kindergarten had secure knowledge of child development and how young children learn. The skillful development of early reading, writing and number skills provided a strong base for future learning.
- Most teachers used assessment information particularly well to plan work that was closely matched to students' abilities. They created environments in which learning proceeded at a challenging pace and enabled all groups of students to experience success.
- Very effective class management, based on excellent relationships between teachers and students, was a feature of almost all lessons. Students were expected to take responsibility for their learning and to be effective independent learners. Most teachers skillfully used questions to probe and assess students' developing knowledge and understanding.
- An appropriate mix of individual, small group and whole class work provided students with variety in their learning. They were able to share ideas and learn from one other, as well as from their teachers. Regular checks of progress in lessons enabled difficulties and misunderstandings to be identified and additional support to be provided. However, strategies for the teaching of Arabic as a second language were not as secure.
- In most lessons in all phases, teachers provided many opportunities for the promotion of critical thinking skills. In English and science, the application of research and reasoning skills were built into many learning activities. The development of these skills contributed strongly to the high standards attained.
- The teaching of Arabic as an additional language was not as effective in raising standards and increasing the rates of students' progress as it was in other subjects.

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
<b>Assessment</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- There was a sophisticated and rigorous assessment system across all stages. It was strongest in English, mathematics and science. Teachers were expected to assess progress in every lesson. There was a judicious balance of short tests at the end of every unit and longer examinations several times per year as students moved up the school.
- The school was meticulous and precise in benchmarking the attainment of standards. Performance was carefully mapped against international levels. Teachers made extensive use of a wide range of external attainment measures.
- Computer software to track students' progress and to analyse the data was used to enable teachers to determine the strengths and weaknesses in performance. Students were sometimes involved in assessing their own learning.
- Assessment data was used to inform lesson planning in the kindergarten in ways that supported and challenged all groups of children in order to optimise their daily progress.

- Classwork and homework in students' books was usually ticked or initialed by teachers. Spelling and grammatical errors were identified or corrected in English. Occasionally, a word of praise was given for good quality work. In some subjects, teachers' written feedback did not tell students how to improve.

#### 4. Curriculum

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
<b>Curriculum design and implementation</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The curriculum had a clear rationale, breadth and balance across all subjects and at all stages. The learning outcomes, together with the philosophical approaches, reinforced a relevant and comprehensive curriculum that was effective in developing a balance of knowledge, skills and understanding. The curriculum in the kindergarten was based upon elements of 'Montessori' and 'Reggio Emilia' schemes.
- Senior leaders and teachers planned the curriculum very carefully to ensure structured progression, which gave students opportunities to pursue their interests, talents and individual goals.
- Meaningful cross-curricular links were well planned and managed. As a result, students were able to incorporate literacy skills with mathematics and science skills using their reading and writing knowledge as well as their abilities to hypothesise, predict and conduct research projects.
- Teachers reviewed the curriculum annually to ensure that students' needs continued to be met appropriately. They planned the curriculum with reference to the Indian ICSE standards and to international standards.
- The school was promoting UAE social studies effectively as a part of its continuous review. There was a significant number of subjects to study, especially for older students.

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
<b>Curriculum adaptation</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The curriculum content, design and implementation were all effectively modified to provide stimulating, engaging and challenging learning experiences for all groups of students.
- The school offered an excellent range of curricular and cross-curricular provision. Extended time was allocated after school, permitting a wide range of activities which enriched students' learning and gave opportunities for enterprise, innovation, creativity and the development of a social conscience.
- Imaginative activities within the curriculum extended students' appreciation of the rich Arabic culture and heritage and their place in UAE society.

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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
<b>Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The school had a thorough and very carefully applied set of procedures to protect students and to shield them from potential abuse, both physical and mental.
- The whole school environment was safe and secure. Senior managers had established rigorous safety checks throughout the premises and on the school buses. The school had struck a fine balance between very effective supervision and freedom for students to pursue their own interests in non-class time.
- The quality of maintenance of the buildings and grounds was exemplary. The dedicated medical and welfare team kept detailed and secure records of incidents. They undertook regular medical checks of all students.
- The excellent premises and facilities assisted the school in its development of a healthy lifestyle and respect for the environment. Very good provision was made for students with SEND.
- Students had adopted safe and healthy living, and were encouraged to do so by many activities in the school that were related to both exercise and diet.

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
<b>Care and support</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- In this very inclusive school, staff to student relationships were marked by high levels of mutual respect. Behaviour management was outstanding. Students were encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and to make amends in positive ways, related to their misdemeanours. The school functioned as a harmonious community.
- Very robust processes were in place which successfully promoted high levels of punctuality at the start of and throughout the school day. Rigorous systems successfully promoted very good attendance.
- Extremely thorough and careful systems ensured that students' needs, gifts and talents were identified accurately and specifically in a timely manner.
- The majority of students who had SEND and those who were gifted and talented were supported very well. In a few lessons they made slower progress than in the majority, because teachers did not present them with high enough levels of support or challenge.
- The school promoted an ethos whereby students' well-being, personal development and academic progress were closely monitored. Trusting relationships and secure systems ensured that students received outstanding personal and academic support and guidance. Careers guidance took account of students' aspirations and abilities and provided a wealth of information about possible career paths.

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

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

Very good ↑

- The school admitted students with a wide range of special educational needs. The principal led the inclusion team, supported strongly by a highly skilled and qualified teachers. Staffing increases and recent changes to management structures had enabled them to use their wide range of skills to support students in coherent and integrated ways.
- Meticulous and timely arrangements were in place for the accurate identification and on-going monitoring of those students in need of increased levels of support or challenge. The establishment of an inclusion unit for students with profound difficulties had resulted in better provision and had enabled these students to make very good progress. In this particular case the curriculum closely reflected students' personal, social and academic needs, enabling them to make rapid gains in personal development and life skills.
- The inclusion team worked closely and successfully to accelerate progress for a few students with additional needs or talents in a small number of mainstream classes. Provision was improving in middle school mathematics and science, but further work remained to be done, especially in Arabic.
- The majority of students with SEND made outstanding progress in withdrawal groups. The curriculum and support provided were closely linked to their class work, and to the personal targets set out in each individual education plan (IEP). The curriculum promoted increased independence in learning.
- Parents were delighted with the high quality of personal support provided by the school on formal and informal bases. A number were appreciative of the recently formed parents groups, which they found interesting and supportive. A few parents required more information and guidance, especially in relation to their children's short-term progress, the curriculum and advice on how to extend or support their children more effectively at home.

## 6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Outstanding

- The principal's ambitious vision for a school which was fully inclusive and where opportunities would be given to everyone had become reality. She was supported by a highly committed senior management team that pursued excellence. Together they had extended and developed a very strong culture of personal development, pastoral support and academic success.
- At all levels, with very few exceptions, leaders were very well acquainted with current developments in teaching methods appropriate to their subject or phase. The head of kindergarten showed innovative ideas. For example, her well-considered plans to use assessment data to ensure that young children's development needs were better met.
- The principal had encouraged her colleagues to be adventurous and innovative. They were assured of her support, though she did not give her support uncritically. Throughout the school, morale was very high. The few areas of weakness were sympathetically and sensitively addressed.
- Leaders knew which areas needed to be developed. They were not content to maintain the status quo, but always sought improvement. They were particularly receptive to, and immediately acted on, any suggestions to ensure the advancement of the school, either pastorally or academically.

- Leaders presented a united and dedicated team. Their aim was always to ensure that the children remained at the centre of educational provision. They were very sensitive to meeting statutory requirements.

### School self-evaluation and improvement planning

Outstanding

- The school had developed a very thorough system of self-analysis. Department leaders carefully scrutinised internal data and that provided by external examinations. Some departments had set very ambitious targets based on international comparisons. The principal was aware of strengths and areas for improvement, not only in departmental terms, but in respect of individual teachers.
- The regular, detailed monitoring system permitted high quality evaluation of classroom processes in almost all cases. The school had developed imaginative schemes for staff development, based on a weekly, voluntary drop-in support system, which was very well attended.
- There was scope for a more focused approach to planning. In some departments, improvement planning lacked attainable targets.
- Both recommendations made in the previous report had been addressed, and were still a development priority in the school. They would need more time for full implementation. In Arabic, progress had been hindered by staff changes and by a management structure in which responsibilities were too divided. There was continuing work to raise the quality of support in lessons for students with SEND.

### Partnerships with parents and the community

Outstanding




- Almost all parents felt that they were fully involved in the life and work of the school. There was a very effective system for consulting them, and for acting promptly on their suggestions.
- Communication between the school and parents was highly effective. Parents were very aware of all of the developments which the school was undertaking.
- Reports were informative and contained helpful advice on how parents could advance their children's development. They indicated that this advice was more detailed at the primary phase.
- Parents were very pleased with the school's rich outreach programme of visits locally, nationally and internationally. The school had successfully encouraged extensive links with the community, some of which were imaginatively philanthropic. The poetry reading and writing sessions and the book club were open to students, parents and the community. The school's annual musical production ensured that it maintained a high profile in the city.

Governance	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governors ensured that there was appropriate representation of the GEMS organisation and parents so that all voices could be heard.</li> <li>• The GEMS organisation had very effective and efficient measures in place to ensure that issues raised by parents were quickly addressed. A parent council met every month. It comprised representatives from every grade or phase in the school. Minutes of the meetings were circulated to all parents.</li> <li>• There was a very strong collaborative approach to monitoring the work of the school. Governors analysed the school's self-evaluation documents thoroughly. A careful data analysis ensured that they were fully acquainted with the school's performance. The governing body was fully involved in all aspects of the life and work of the school. Their high quality support enabled the school to consolidate almost all aspects of its performance.</li> </ul>	

Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The daily operation of the school was very efficient. The principal and the timetabling team dealt very efficiently, effectively and rapidly with a miscalculation of time allowance identified during the inspection.</li> <li>• Staffing was entirely appropriate in all sectors. All staff members were well qualified. There was a very good mix of experienced and newly appointed teachers. Staff deployment was highly effective.</li> <li>• The premises were of extremely high quality and exceptionally well maintained. Staff members had made imaginative use of teaching areas in art and music to provide stimulating working environments that promoted creativity. The ancillary and cleaning staff ensured that the whole building was always immaculate and the grounds well-tended.</li> <li>• Accommodation and resources for the kindergarten were of the highest quality. The school had provided very well resourced outside areas to stimulate play and adventure.</li> <li>• Throughout the school resources for learning were very good, and in some departments exceptionally good. Students' needs were very well met. They had appropriate material to consolidate and extend their learning.</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	984
	2014-2015	1111
<b>Teachers</b> 	252	
<b>Students</b> 	682	

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

- Almost all parents were very satisfied with all aspects of the school and the quality of educational and social experiences which their children had there.
- There were some concerns about students' progress in learning Arabic as an additional language, although over 80 per cent indicated that their children were making good progress.
- Parents overwhelmingly believed that their children were making good progress in English.
- In mathematics and science, the response was also very positive regarding students' progress.
- Almost all parents believed that their children enjoyed being at school.
- Parents were highly appreciative of the school's efforts to ensure that their children were aware of and appreciated other cultures.
- Only a very few parents expressed any concern about safety in the school or on the buses. Roughly one in ten believed that the school did not deal robustly enough with bullying.
- Senior students were very positive about the life and work of the school. A few expressed concerns about the pressure of school work and the stress it induced.
- Teachers had innovative ideas on how to make the school, and other schools in Dubai, more environmentally friendly. They indicated that there was scope for greater inter-school contact.

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)