

Inspection Report



The English College - Dubai 2014-2015



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School information



General information

Location	Al Safa
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	1992
Website	www.englishcollege.ac.ae
Telephone	04-3943465
Address	P O Box 11812 Dubai, UAE
Principal	Ian Paul Jones
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	17 th -20 th November 2014



Students

Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age range	11 - 18
Grades or year groups	Year7 - Year13
Number of students on roll	593
Number of children in Pre-K	0
Number of Emirati students	3
Number of students with SEN	120
Largest nationality group of students	UK



Teachers / Support staff

Number of teachers	63
Largest nationality group of teachers	UK
Number of teacher assistants	0
Teacher-student ratio	1:9
Number of guidance counsellors	0
Teacher turnover	31%



Curriculum

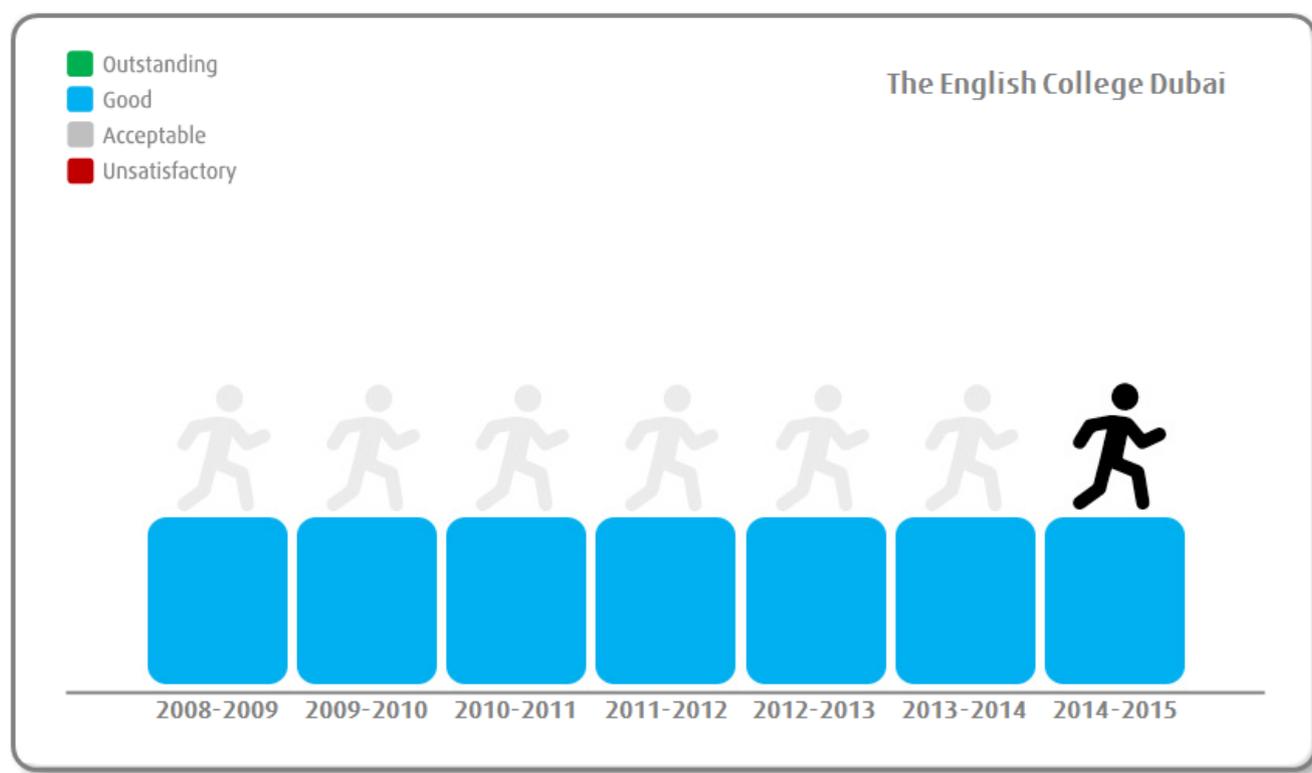
Educational Permit	MoE
Main Curriculum / Other	UK
Standardised tests / board exams	GCSE AS A2
Accreditation	EdExcel AQA WJEC



Dear Parents,

The English College Dubai was inspected by DSIB from 17th – 20th November 2014, and 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 aspects of the school's performance and standards. Inspectors looked at children's attainment and progress in five key subjects, their learning skills as well as their personal and social development. They judged how effective teaching was across the school. Inspectors considered how well the school's curriculum, including activities inside and outside the classroom, 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 a range of evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observing children learning in lessons, looking at their work, talking with children, meetings with staff, parents and governors, and reviewing the parents' and teachers' surveys.

The key strengths and areas for improvement to be made by the school leaders, governors and owners are:

Strengths

- Students were happy in school, worked well together and with their teachers.
- The quality of teaching in the school was still good despite the changes in staffing.
- Students enjoyed their life at school.
- The new Principal and leadership team had maintained the good standards of education through the transition phase.

Areas for improvement

- Improve students' progress in Islamic Education and Arabic by ensuring lessons meet students' learning needs more effectively.
- Enable students to reflect more upon their learning, both independently and with their peers.
- Ensure the most able students experience a greater degree of challenge in lessons.
- In the secondary phase, raise students' awareness of Islamic values, their local culture and allow them to take a leading role in community and environmental activities.
- Ensure that governance provides sufficient resources to enable teachers to enhance students' personal and academic skills.

We warmly encourage you to read the full school inspection report.

The school is required to submit to DSIB an action plan identifying the steps they will take to address the areas for improvement. We have advised your school leaders to share this with you.

We trust that the information provided will help you understand, and encourages you to support, your child's school.

Yours sincerely,

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau
Knowledge and Human Development Authority

A closer look at The English College Dubai



How well does the school perform overall?

The English College Dubai provided a 'Good' quality of education for its students.

- The school had maintained its stability since the last inspection despite some significant changes. The overall performance remained good, including the overall attainment and progress of students. In Arabic as an additional language, students' attainment was unsatisfactory at the secondary phase. Students were motivated and enjoyed their learning. In secondary, they were less active as members of the school and local community.
- Students in post-16 had an outstanding understanding of Islamic values and UAE culture and its impact on Dubai society. In secondary, students had a more basic understanding of Dubai traditions and heritage. They showed less initiative to support sustainability and conservation of the environment.
- Teaching was very effective in meeting the needs of most students through the provision of interesting and well planned lessons. Assessment procedures were designed to help teachers support students in making better progress.
- The strong curriculum provided students with interest and challenge across the wide range of interesting and stimulating subjects. High quality planning ensured that students settled well into the school and were given excellent guidance on the next stages of their lives. Opportunities for developing the skills of enquiry and critical thinking were limited and constrained the level of independent learning.
- Strong processes and care ensured children were safe and happy in school. Students benefitted from an outstanding level of support as a result of strong pastoral care systems within the school, which ensured that all students, whatever their need were given appropriate advice and guidance.
- The new leader and his team had preserved a common vision in school following the recent changes. The school leaders had a clear understanding of the main challenges in school. However, parents and the community believed the school had limited communication channels to keep them up-to-date regarding ongoing changes. Governors did not fully represent the parents and the community. They did not provide enough modern resources to teachers to allow them to enhance students' learning.

How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?



- There was an established programme of support for students with SEN which included publication of guidance for teachers and focused individual support which promoted their good progress. However, students would make better progress in some lessons if teachers used individual learning targets in their lesson plans which could then be carefully monitored for success.
- A well-qualified Head of Enhanced Studies had ensured that there were effective arrangements in place to identify students with special educational needs.
- Students with special educational needs were given a good level of individual support to enhance their personal and academic development. The school's relationships with parents were effective and lines of communication were good with regard to reporting progress and providing specialist support.

1. How good are the students' attainment, progress and learning?

		Secondary	Post-16
 Islamic Education	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Good ↑	Acceptable
 Arabic as a First Language	Attainment	Acceptable	Not Applicable
	Progress	Acceptable	Not Applicable
 Arabic as an Additional Language	Attainment	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
	Progress	Acceptable ↑	Not Applicable
 English	Attainment	Good	Good
	Progress	Outstanding ↑	Good
 Mathematics	Attainment	Outstanding	Good
	Progress	Outstanding	Good
 Science	Attainment	Good	Good
	Progress	Good	Good ↑
		Secondary	Post-16
Learning skills		Good	Good

↑ Improved from last inspection

↓ Declined from last inspection

2. How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Secondary	Post-16
Personal responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good ↓	Outstanding
Community and environmental responsibility	Good ↓	Outstanding

3. How good are teaching and assessment?

	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good
Assessment	Good	Good

4. How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?

	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Outstanding
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Good	Good

5. How well does the school protect and support students?

	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of support	Outstanding	Outstanding

6. How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

Overall school judgement

Good

Key strengths

- Students demonstrated a positive attitude to learning, and a strong working relationship with their teachers and with one-another.
- The good standards in teaching had been maintained as a result of the dedication demonstrated by all staff despite the recent staffing changes.
- The consistently high quality of care and support for all the students in the school.
- The new Principal had established effective strategies for securing reliable self-evaluation processes to achieve on-going stability throughout the leadership transition phase.

Changes since the last inspection

- The improvement in students' progress in Islamic Education and English in secondary, and Science in the post-16.
- The decline in students' understanding of Islamic values, Emirati and world culture as well as their involvement in the community and the school's environmental initiatives in the secondary phase.
- The increasingly limited access to first class facilities and resources.

Recommendations

- Continue to raise attainment and progress in Islamic and Arabic by increasing the range of teaching strategies to provide greater challenge.
- Give students access to information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance their progress and regular opportunities to reflect and improve their learning by promoting enquiry, research and critical thinking.
- Ensure challenge for all high achievers in lessons enables them to reach their full potential
- Ensure that secondary students develop a stronger understanding of Islamic values and local culture as well as taking a more active role in community and environmental responsibility.
- Ensure the best quality resources such as ICT, new facilities and key staff, are available to address the weaknesses in the school.

 Improved from last inspection

 Declined from last inspection

1. How good are the students' attainment, progress and learning?

Secondary		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic Education	Acceptable	Good 
Arabic as a First Language	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as an Additional Language	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable 
English	Good	Outstanding 
Mathematics	Outstanding	Outstanding
Science	Good	Good

- In Islamic education, most students demonstrated age-appropriate knowledge of Islamic concepts and history of Islam. They identified the roles of prophets and messengers and the differences between Holy Books. Holy Qur'an recitation skills were weak.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students attained levels that were in line with curriculum standards, and this was demonstrated in internal school tests. Students made the expected progress against the curriculum, although there were some disproportionate levels between them.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students demonstrated an unsatisfactory level of skills and understanding in listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, the effective use of resources and some good teaching, had resulted in students making progress in their learning.
- In mathematics, students made outstanding progress with grades well above international benchmarks. They were able to use formal mathematical knowledge to interpret problems and seek solutions.
- In English, the attainment of the majority of students was good, with strengths in reading and comprehension of text. Progress was outstanding in both literature and language.
- In Science, students made outstanding progress with grades well above international benchmarks. Students were able to use formal mathematical knowledge to interpret problems and seek solutions. Students were developing stronger practical and enquiry skills and could communicate their knowledge using accurate scientific language.

Post-16		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic Education	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a First Language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as an Additional Language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
English	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science	Good	Good 

- In Islamic education, most students' understanding of Islamic teaching was in line with expectations. They were able to define patience and how it was applied to a Muslim's daily life. The majority of students made acceptable progress through achieving lesson objectives.

- In English, attainment across the post-16 phase was good, with strengths in textual analysis and spoken language. Most students, particularly in the study of English language, made good progress.
- In Mathematics, students were able to work with confidence and enjoy the challenges that mathematics provided. Examination results were above international benchmarks and illustrated the good progress students made throughout their course.
- In Science, students communicated an understanding of complex and abstract scientific concepts in a variety of ways, demonstrating confidence in the use of accurate scientific language.

	Secondary	Post-16
Learning skills	Good	Good

- Students were motivated and engaged in their learning. Most were able to recognise their learning strengths and weaknesses and they could take steps to improve progress.
- Students supported each other well and shared knowledge and skills in the collaborative group work which occurred in most subjects.
- The majority of students were able to relate their learning to real life situations and contexts. They were also able to make links across their subjects and discuss the connections with confidence.
- Information technology was not well integrated into student learning. Critical thinking skills were developed more strongly in science and English than in the other core subjects.

2. How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Secondary	Post-16
Personal responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Almost all of the students had very positive and responsible attitudes. As they progressed through the school, students developed a strong sense of personal responsibility.
- Students resolved difficulties in mature ways and their behavior was of a high order.
- Students enjoyed excellent relationships with staff and reported that they felt safe and valued. They showed tolerance and empathy for others within their community.
- Students demonstrated a strong understanding of healthy living. They made good choices about their own health and fitness.
- Attendance was excellent. Students arrived at school and to lessons on time.

	Secondary	Post-16
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good ↓	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In post-16, students had a strong understanding of Islamic values and their impact on Dubai society. In secondary, students demonstrated basic understanding of Islamic values and traditions. In post-16, students had a robust understanding of local tradition and the heritage of Dubai society. They gave plenty of examples of how Dubai had developed over time. In secondary, students' understanding of the traditions and heritage of Dubai needed to be developed. Students across the school had a robust understanding and appreciation of the multi-cultural nature of Dubai. They were aware of the importance of other cultures in Dubai society and around the world. 		

	Secondary	Post-16
Community and environmental responsibility	Good ↓	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students in post-16 were active and responsible members of the school and local community. The student voice had a significant impact on the school's development. In secondary, students were over-reliant on being told what to do rather than instigating projects related to the community. Students in post-16, had a good work ethic. They took the initiative and made reasoned decisions. They were creative and successful in developing their own projects. Students took care of their school to improve the environment. Those involved with good initiatives and projects related to the environment did not share their knowledge with others across the school. 		

3. How good are teaching and assessment?

	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almost all teachers had good subject knowledge and they knew how students learned. They used interesting contexts and planned lessons well to include a range of activities, skillful questioning and a variety of teaching strategies. Most teachers planned lessons to include independent, collaborative and whole class activities. The majority of teachers planned lessons where students were actively engaged in their own learning through discussion, enquiry and planning. Reflection and critical thinking were not present within many lessons, although in English and science these aspects were well integrated. The better lessons always included teachers asking searching questions and opportunities for student discussion, reflection and enquiry. Islamic Studies and Arabic did not always conduct lessons with a broad enough range of teaching strategies. Lesson planning did not always differentiate well enough to cater for the needs of all students and the more able were not always fully challenged. Teaching in Arabic had improved. There was good interaction between teacher and students but teacher questioning lacked opportunities to extend students' thinking. 		

	Secondary	Post-16
Assessment	Good	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal assessments were aligned with the National Curriculum for England curriculum standards. Teachers had good knowledge of the students' strengths and weaknesses. The small class sizes enabled teachers to use assessment data to provide challenge, support, feedback and follow-up. GCSE, AS and A2 results, in addition to international benchmarking, were analysed carefully to inform teaching and future curriculum development. A wide range of assessment strategies were in use across the school. Diagnostic, summative and formative assessments assisted teachers to address the individual learning needs of students. Self- and peer-assessments built into lessons allowed students to identify their next steps in learning. 		

4. How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?

	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The curriculum had a clear rationale that reflected the values of the school. There was breadth and balance across all subjects. In most subjects the development of knowledge and skills was a high priority. In Islamic Education, skills development required further attention Excellent planning took account of prior learning when students entered the school and ensured senior students were well prepared for the transition to work or higher education. For example, the 'Extended Project' gave added breadth when students made applications to universities. The diversity and creativity in the curriculum motivated and inspired students to achieve their full potential, an example of which was Year 9 'fast track French'. Most subjects made links to other subjects. This helped students to recognise their transferable skills, but there were insufficient planned opportunities for enquiry, independent learning and critical thinking across most year groups. The curriculum was seen as dynamic, reviewed regularly and most subjects had made modifications in light of new developments, for example the changes in the National Curriculum for England. The quality of the curriculum in Arabic as a first language was acceptable, but the limited enrichment activities had an impact on students' academic development. 		

	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Good	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The curriculum was well planned with good opportunities to enhance the learning needs of most groups of students. Where modifications were made to support students these were rarely targeted at the most able. There was a broad range of optional subjects across both phases of the school. Students were able to make choices to study subjects that were of interest to them. However in both phases the options were exclusively academic with no choices allowing students to follow a vocational path. 		

- Extra-curricular activities were extensive and wide-ranging. All teachers and most students actively participated in clubs and many sports. The impact could be seen in the well-rounded, mature young people around the school.

5. How well does the school protect and support students?

	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Child protection arrangements were clearly defined and understood by all students, staff and parent. Students felt safe at school.
- Effective policy and procedure were in place and ensured that all students were safe at all times.
- Healthy living was systematically built into the curriculum in school and successfully promoted in all aspects of school life.
- The quality of the school premises, facilities and equipment was excellent and suited to the educational needs of most students.
- Regular emergency evacuation drills, and medical care on site ensured students' health and safety were monitored closely at all times.

	Secondary	Post-16
Quality of support	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The relationships between staff and students were excellent. Student behaviour throughout the phases was exemplary with older students being excellent role models.
- The school had very effective systems in place to record attendance and punctuality. The strong work ethic and school ethos helped to promote good attendance and punctuality.
- The school was fully inclusive and there were robust systems in place to ensure accurate identification of students with special educational needs.
- There was an established programme of support for students with special educational needs which included publication of guidance for teachers and focused individual support which promoted their good progress.
- The personal support given by key teams of staff in each phase was highly effective. Appropriate careers advice and guidance were offered by a teacher who led the programme for older students which fully supported their career choices.

How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?

	Overall
The overall effectiveness of provision for students with special educational needs	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership at all levels ensured that the school presented a strong inclusive approach within its provision. A well-qualified Head of Enhanced Studies had ensured that there were effective arrangements in place to identify students with special educational needs. Students with special educational needs were given a good level of individual support to support their personal and academic development. There was an established programme of support for students with SEN which included publication of guidance for teachers and focused individual support which promoted their good progress. The relationship with parents was effective and lines of communication were good with regard to reporting progress and providing specialist support. Modifications within the curriculum could be further improved with the development of more detailed, focused learning targets in lesson planning which specify learning progress over a given timescale. 	

6. How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	Overall
The effectiveness of leadership	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school had discontinued their kindergarten and primary provision and had appointed a new Principal to lead within the revised structure. The new structure had resulted in a new distribution of leadership roles. Middle managers supported senior leaders well. All leaders shared a clear direction and commitment to the values of the school. Leaders had focused on the previous inspection recommendations in order to achieve the best outcomes for students. Strategic planning was sometimes inconsistent and hindered leaders' capacity to improve some aspects of the school performance. 	

	Overall
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Principal and his team had an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. • Self-evaluation documents and action plans were in place, included detailed targets for improvement which were specific, measurable and to be achieved within agreed timescales. • The evaluation of teaching and learning was accurate and had enabled the school to identify best practice. However, the dissemination of those strengths was insufficiently effective, as the school leaders did not measure the impact on outcomes for students. • Performance management practices were in place but did not systematically link teachers' development targets to the DSIB previous inspection recommendations. 	

	Overall
Parents and the community	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key leaders in school were approachable and the open door policy was well received by the parents. Communication with parents was sometimes inconsistent due to the limitations of the computer program through which parents were able to access important information remotely. Parents were not always clear about how the school planned for improvement. • Progress reports were clear and included information on how students could improve their work. • Partnerships with the community and associated schools were beneficial. For example, the school ensured good transition between primary and secondary through regular meetings, activities and open evenings. • Parents' voice was not effective as they had limited opportunities to contribute to the school life. 	

	Overall
Governance	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governing body was still not fully representative of the school and the local community. As a result, the lack of consideration given to parents' and other stakeholders' views hindered some aspects of the school's performance. • Governance lacked expertise and effective communication but held the school leaders to account through the appointment of a link officer. • Governors did not ensure a full range of resources were available to address the weaknesses of the school. 	

	Overall
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The management of the school’s procedures and routines were adequate and ensured the effective operation of the school. • Staffs were suitably qualified and deployed appropriately. The school had suitable arrangements to recruit teachers and they were suitably qualified and deployed appropriately. There were no teaching assistants to support the teachers. • Premises were adequate but specialist facilities were limited and the absence of a sixth form area did not allow post 16 students to have access to a bespoke studying area. • The school resources were sufficient to support students’ learning and development. However, there was limited Wi-Fi in the building. • Although the school was equipped with a sufficient number of computers, there were limited opportunities for students to enhance their learning experience using a full range of learning technologies. 	

What are the views of the Principal, parents, teachers and students?

Before the inspection, the views of the Principal, 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		Percentage
 Parents*	This year	127	24%
	Last year	199	30%
 Teachers	27		43%
 Students	158		58%

- A minority of parents and teachers responded to the questionnaires. The majority of students responded.
- Of those who responded to the survey, almost all parents were satisfied with the quality of education the school provided and the quality of teaching.
- Almost all said that their children enjoy attending the school and were safe there and well looked after. Almost all parents support the school and thought it was well led, and that it provided a very supportive environment for learning.
- Parents thought that the school provided a wide range of subjects.
- Parents and students thought that school work was interesting and challenging enough, and that teachers gave students helpful guidance.
- Almost all students and teachers thought that students' behaviour was good.
- Almost all parents thought that their child made good progress in all main subjects.
- Most parents thought their children understood well the importance of Islamic values and culture in Dubai.

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

What happens next?

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

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

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



Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

How to contact us

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