



هيئة الشارقة للتعليم الخاص  
SHARJAH PRIVATE EDUCATION AUTHORITY

ITQAN Programme  
**School Performance Review (SPR)  
Report**

**AL NAJMA PRIVATE SCHOOL**

27 February – 2 March 2023

**Overall Effectiveness**

**ACCEPTABLE**



إتقان ITQAN





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## PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Sharjah Private Education Authority (SPEA) is grateful to Sharjah private schools and their stakeholders including students and their parents, teachers and staff, school leaders and governors for sharing their views of the school and engaging with our review teams during this School Performance Review (SPR). This report shares the findings of this four-day review. It identifies strengths and areas for improvement along with strategic recommendations intended to help the school bring about its own improvement.

### Purpose

The main purpose of this SPR is to assist schools in their continuous improvement journey through an external validation of their progress, quality and capacity to improve in the context of Sharjah Private Education Authority's (SPEA) vision to achieve *'Excellence in Education'* by 2024. SPEA has been a pioneer in supporting the private education sector in Sharjah, driven by its mission of *'Enabling the learner's community to grow and achieve aspiring outcomes through supportive and effective services'*. This new and innovative approach to school review is an important part of our strategy for achieving this vision because it supports continuous school improvement.

### Scope

This review is guided by Performance Standards 1 to 6 and seventeen related Performance Indicators taken from the 2015-16 UAE School Inspection Framework. These Performance Standards relate to Student's achievement, Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills, Teaching and assessment, Curriculum, The protection, care, guidance and support of students, and Leadership and management.

The findings relating to the six Standards and their associated Indicators will provide judgements based on the six-level scale in the UAE School Inspection Framework. These judgements will help schools understand the impact of their provision on students' academic and personal outcomes.

Where applicable, the SPR also gathered information about the provision for Arabic language, the school's use of international benchmarking data, and the provision for KG.



## THE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE REVIEW PROCESS

The SPR uses the six Performance Standards (PS) and seventeen Performance Indicators (PI) from the UAE School Inspection Framework issued in 2015, as follows:

**Performance Standard 1: Students' achievement**, comprising:

- PI 1.1 Attainment
- PI 1.2 Progress
- PI 1.3 Learning skills

**Performance Standard 2: Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills**, comprising:

- PI 2.1 Personal development
- PI 2.2 Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures
- PI 2.3 Social responsibility and innovation skills

**Performance Standard 3: Teaching and assessment**, comprising:

- PI 3.1 Teaching for effective learning
- PI 3.2 Assessment

**Performance Standard 4: Curriculum**, comprising:

- PI 4.1 Curriculum design and implementation
- PI 4.2 Curriculum adaptation

**Performance Standard 5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students**, comprising:

- PI 5.1 Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection/safeguarding
- PI 5.2 Care and support

**Performance Standard 6. Leadership and management**, comprising:

- PI 6.1 The effectiveness of leadership
- PI 6.2 Self-evaluation and improvement planning
- PI 6.3 Partnerships with parents and the community
- PI 6.4 Governance
- PI 6.5 Management, staffing, facilities and resources



## Judgements

The judgements stated in this report use the following six-level scale.




<b>Outstanding</b>	The quality of performance substantially exceeds the expectations of the UAE
<b>Very good</b>	The quality of performance exceeds the expectations of the UAE
<b>Good</b>	The quality of performance meets the expectations of the UAE
<b>Acceptable</b>	The quality of performance meets the minimum level required in the UAE
<b>Weak</b>	The quality of performance is below the expectation of the UAE
<b>Very weak</b>	The quality of performance is significantly below the expectation of the UAE

To gather the required information to inform these judgements, our team of reviewers carried out a wide range of activities during the four-day visit, including:

- visits to lessons in Arabic, Islamic education, UAE social studies, English, mathematics and science, and other subjects, including lessons reviewed jointly with senior leaders of the school;
- reviewing important documents such as, students' attainment data, school self-evaluation form, school policies and the school improvement plan;
- meeting the Governors, Principal, senior leaders, middle leaders, subject coordinators, teachers, parents, and students;
- reviewing teachers' lesson plans, samples of students' coursework and related information;
- attending school activities such as assemblies, arrivals, departures, and break times; and
- analysing the outcomes of the surveys returned by parents.



## SCHOOL INFORMATION

School	School ID	172
	School location	Al Azra, Sharjah
	Establishment date	2003
	Language of instruction	English
	School curriculum	British National Curriculum
	Accreditation body	Cambridge
	Examination Board	N/A
	National Agenda Benchmark Tests/ International assessment	CAT4, TIMSS, PIRLS, GL, PTs
	Fee range	AED 6,100 to 9,400
Staff	Principal	Ms. Samira Nabil
	Chair of Board of Governors	Mr. Jesus Lal
	Total number of teachers	64
	Total number of teaching assistants	4
	Turnover rate	9%
	Main nationality of teachers	Indian
	Students	Teacher: student ratio
	Total number of students	1175
	Number of Emirati students	8
	FS: number and gender	Total 99: Boys 58, Girls 41
	Primary: number and gender	Total 776: Boys 395, Girls 381
	Middle: number and gender	Total 300: Boys 151, Girls 149
	High: number and gender	N/A
	Nationality groups	1. Pakistani 2. Egyptian
Total number of students with special educational needs	8	

## PROGRESS JOURNEY

Previous Inspection (2018):	Current Review:
<b>ACCEPTABLE</b>	<b>ACCEPTABLE</b>



## SUMMARY OF REVIEW FINDINGS

These findings draw from our team of 6 reviewers' 175 lesson observations, 35 of which were carried out jointly with school leaders.

### **SUMMARY OF THE OVERALL PERFORMANCE OF THE SCHOOL:**

The school's overall effectiveness is acceptable. This is the same as the previous inspection in 2018. Students' achievement has remained the same across all subjects, except for Arabic as a First language which has improved to good throughout the school. Students' personal development and their understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures are good. Students' community involvement, volunteering and social contribution are now very good. The quality of teaching has remained acceptable overall. However, the use of assessment is now good. The health and safety of students are good overall, with the safeguarding and child protection of students and the quality of maintenance and record keeping now very good. Leaders have strengthened the care and support for students, including in the identification of students who have special educational needs (SEN) and those who are gifted and talented (G&T). However, there is room for improvement in the support provided for these students. The school environment and resources are of adequate quality and make a positive contribution to students' learning. Leadership overall remains acceptable, with the contribution of partnerships with parents, and the impact of governance now good. The senior and middle leaders demonstrate capacity to continue to improve the school.

### **KEY AREAS OF STRENGTH:**

- Leadership stability, especially at senior leadership level, leading to an in-depth knowledge of the school and where improvements are needed.
- Relationships at all levels of the school.
- Improvements in achievement in Arabic as First language across the school.
- The involvement of, and challenge provided by, governors to support the school.
- Protection of students and quality of care, guidance, and support across all phases of the school.

### **KEY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:**

- Raise achievement in all subjects to good.
- Improve the quality of teaching in all phases to be consistently good.
- Enhance support in lessons for students who have special educational needs and those who are G&T.
- Develop students' skills in critical thinking, innovation and independent learning.



## MAIN REVIEW REPORT

### PERFORMANCE STANDARD 1: STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT

**Students' achievement overall is Acceptable.**

Indicators:		FS	Primary	Middle	High
Islamic Education	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	N/A
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	N/A
Arabic (as a First Language)	Attainment	Good	Good	Good	N/A
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	N/A
Arabic (as a Second Language)	Attainment	N/A	Acceptable	Acceptable	N/A
	Progress	N/A	Acceptable	Acceptable	N/A
Social Studies	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	NA
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	NA
English	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	N/A
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	N/A
Mathematics	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	N/A
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	N/A
Science	Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	N/A
	Progress	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	N/A
Other subjects (Art, Music, PE)	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	N/A
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	N/A
Learning Skills		Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	N/A





<b>Islamic Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students' achievement in Islamic Education is acceptable overall. The school's internal data shows that students make very good progress in Primary and good in Middle. This does not match with that seen in lessons and in students' work, where most of the students make the expected progress.</li><li>• The school's internal data shows that attainment is outstanding in Foundation Stage (FS), Primary and Middle. This does not match with that seen in lessons and in students' work, which shows that most students reach levels of attainment that are in line with curriculum standards. There is no external data for Islamic Education.</li><li>• In FS, children develop an understanding of Islamic etiquette in hygiene. Children understand the general meaning of short Surah. However, children's accuracy when reading the short Surah is less well developed. In Primary, students develop an understanding of the life of the Prophet (PBUH). They understand tolerance in Islam, and they develop adequate knowledge of the UAE's role in caring for less fortunate people inside and outside the country. Students develop a secure understanding of the general meaning of the Noble Hadeeth. However, students' accuracy when reading the Noble Hadeeth is less well developed. In Middle, most students understand the Seerah are at a level appropriate for their age. Students understand the Prophet's speech, but their memorisation of the Noble Hadeeth is less well developed.</li><li>• Most groups of students make expected progress overall.</li></ul>	
	<b>Areas of Strength</b>	<b>Areas for Improvement</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children's understanding of Islamic etiquette in hygiene in FS.</li><li>• Students' understanding of the Seerah in Primary and Middle.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children's accuracy when reading short Surah in FS.</li><li>• Students' memorisation of the Noble Hadeeth in Primary and Middle.</li></ul>



Arabic

- Students' achievement in Arabic as First Language (AFL) is good in Foundation Stage (FS), Primary, and Middle. Students' achievement in Arabic as Second Language (ASL) is acceptable in Primary and Middle. Progress in lessons and in students' notebooks is good in AFL and acceptable in ASL. This matches the school's internal assessments in AFL which say that progress is good but does not match with the school's assessment of ASL which says progress is good.
- There are no externally benchmarked assessments in AFL and ASL. Internal assessment data for AFL shows that attainment is outstanding for children in AFL for FS and students in Primary and that attainment is very good in Middle. This does not match what was seen in lessons and in students' work, where attainment is good. Internal assessments data for ASL indicates that attainment is outstanding in Primary and Middle. This does not match the acceptable attainment seen in lessons and in students' notebooks.
- In AFL, the majority of students make better than expected progress, and in ASL most students make expected progress in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in FS, Primary, and Middle. In AFL, FS children distinguish between the short and long sounds in given letters, but their accuracy in reading short sentences is less well developed. In Primary AFL, students make good progress using new words when speaking and writing complete sentences and in extracting verbs, nouns, and letters. They make good progress in identifying the main ideas in texts and use new terms when reading and writing short paragraphs. Students make good progress in understanding grammar and identifying verbs, nouns, and letters. Writing, using their own words, and their reading of short texts are less well developed.
- Students' handwriting is underdeveloped. In Middle AFL, students make good progress in identifying story elements, explaining the meaning of the new words, and identifying the main ideas of the text and the story. Students' written summaries of stories using their own words is less well developed. In classroom discussions, in AFL and ASL, students use standard Arabic consistently when speaking. In ASL, in Primary, students develop acceptable speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. They read and write words and sentences, but they find the reading and writing of complete texts more difficult. In Middle, students understand grammar and can identify past and present, using new vocabulary, but their accuracy of reading text is less developed.
- Overall, the majority of groups of students make better-than-expected progress in AFL and make expected progress in ASL.

**Areas of Strength**

- Children read and write letters and simple words accurately in FS in AFL.
- Progress in identifying the main events of a story in the Primary and Middle in AFL.

**Areas for Improvement**

- Progress in handwriting in Primary AFL and ASL.
- Students' progress in reading texts in Middle AFL and ASL.



Social Studies

- Students' achievement in social studies is acceptable overall. The school's internal data show that their progress is outstanding in Primary and good in Middle. However, this does not match with that seen in lessons, where most students make progress aligned with curriculum expectations and few make better than expected progress.
- The school's internal data show that attainment is outstanding in Primary and very good in Middle. This does not match with that seen in lessons, and in students' work, which shows that most students reach levels of attainment which are in line with curriculum standards. There is no external data for social studies.
- In FS, children have a basic knowledge of the UAE, such as being able to name the seven Emirates and their leaders together and to talk about community helpers. In Primary, students make acceptable gains in learning and are able to discuss social responsibility. In Primary, students learn about how His Highness Sheikh Zayed (RIP) founded the UAE and how knowledge of the past is important. Students can connect the values and culture of the UAE, and how people who have migrated here have contributed to its development. In both Primary and Middle, students do basic research about the Iron Age and make connections to understanding modern times in the UAE. Students in Middle demonstrate knowledge of British and Roman Empires and the relationship between trade and transportation. In Middle, students' analysis of data and information to explain South America's depleting rainforest and its impact on climate needs improvement.
- Most groups of students make progress aligned with the expected curriculum. Some students who have special educational needs do not make sufficient progress.

**Areas of Strength**

- Students' understanding of key concepts, such as the formation of the UAE in FS, Primary and Middle.
- Making connections with what they learn to real life across FS, Primary and Middle.

**Areas for Improvement**

- Students' ability to make links between different concepts and their relevance for the modern UAE in Primary and Middle.
- Critical thinking and reflections on their learning in social studies in FS, Primary and Middle.



English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students' achievement in English is acceptable overall. In FS, Primary and Middle, most students make expected progress. This does not match the school's internal data which shows that students make very good progress across the school.</li><li>• Students' attainment is acceptable in FS, Primary and Middle. Internal assessment data shows outstanding attainment while external data shows that attainment is weak in the Progress Tests taken by students from Year 4 to Year 9. In lessons and in students' work, most students attain in line with curriculum standards.</li><li>• Most children make progress in FS, and students in Primary and Middle in line with curriculum standards. In FS, children listen and speak confidently. They are beginning to identify and form words. In lower Primary they can differentiate between fact and opinion as they identify fiction and non-fiction books and can talk about them. In upper Primary, students can identify and use literary devices and can differentiate between the use of similes, metaphors and personifications. In Middle, they understand diary and newspaper writing, and they understand the finer nuances of persuasive writing and the impact of advertisements. In reading and writing, in Primary and Middle, students are less fluent, as they make errors in spellings and punctuation.</li><li>• Most groups of students make expected progress. The progress of students of determination is inconsistent.</li></ul>	
	<b>Areas of Strength</b>	<b>Areas for Improvement</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students' ability to listen and speak fluently across the school.</li><li>• Students' understanding of persuasive writing and reporting for newspapers in Middle.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Writing skills in Primary and Middle.</li><li>• Students' ability to read fluently in Primary and Middle.</li></ul>



<b>Mathematics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students' achievement in mathematics is acceptable overall. In lessons and in students' work, most students attain levels that are in line with curriculum standards. This does not match with the school's internal assessment data which show outstanding attainment in FS and Primary and good in Middle.</li><li>• External benchmarking examination data is limited. The external Progress Test taken by students from Year 4 to Year 9 shows attainment below expectations. In other external benchmark tests, students performed well. However, these were based on small cohorts. The school does not benchmark academic outcomes in FS against national and international standards.</li><li>• Students make expected progress in their lessons in FS, Primary and Middle. Most children in FS can identify whether different groups of items contain fewer or more members than another and apply this to their real lives. In Primary, most students understand that an acute angle is less than <math>90^\circ</math>, a right angle is <math>90^\circ</math> and that an obtuse angle is greater than <math>90^\circ</math>. In Middle, most students can calculate the volume of different types of prism although they can't consistently interpret and apply reasoning to findings through the development of discussion. Mathematical thinking for boys in Primary and Middle is under-developed.</li><li>• Most groups of students make broadly expected progress overall.</li></ul>	
	<b>Areas of Strength</b>	<b>Areas for Improvement</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students present their work and speak confidently when asked questions about it across the school.</li><li>• Children's real-life connections through mathematical understanding in FS.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improve skills in interpreting and applying reasoning to findings through the development of discussion across the school.</li><li>• Improve mathematical thinking for boys in Primary and Middle.</li></ul>



<b>Science</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students' achievement in science is acceptable overall. In lessons and in students' work, most students in Primary and Middle make progress in line with curriculum expectations, while the majority of children in FS make progress above curriculum expectations. This does not match with the school's internal data which shows outstanding progress across the school.</li><li>• Internal assessment data shows outstanding attainment overall in FS, Primary and Middle. However, this was not evident in lessons seen and in students' books, where most students in Primary and Middle attain in line with curriculum standards and the majority of children in FS attain above curriculum standards. Overall, external data shows acceptable attainment. Progress Tests indicate that students show weak attainment, whereas other external data, such as TIMSS 2019, show good attainment overall.</li><li>• Most students make acceptable progress. In FS most of the children exceed curriculum expectations, they make good connections to scientific knowledge and their own lives. In Primary and Middle, most students demonstrate appropriate knowledge and understanding of topics, such as forces and electricity and carried out a dissection of the heart to examine the different structures within. They acquire, and recall, factual scientific knowledge. However, their practical and laboratory skills, including independent investigation skills, are underdeveloped. In Middle, most students demonstrate appropriate knowledge of scientific facts and theory in physical sciences. For example, students analysed the unique patterns in their fingerprints and gained an insight into the genetic basis of these traits. This helped students understand inheritance patterns and human diversity. They make accurate observations and predictions. However, their report-writing skills and ability to devise hypotheses and draw conclusions, including laboratory techniques, are less well developed.</li><li>• Most groups of students make the expected progress overall. Although, higher-attaining students do not progress as well as they could, particularly in Middle.</li></ul>	
	<b>Areas of Strength</b>	<b>Areas for Improvement</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Links to real life and connections in FS</li><li>• Understanding of how genetics leads to diversity in humans in Middle.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Familiarity with laboratory techniques and equipment in Primary and Middle.</li><li>• Report writing skills and ability to develop hypotheses in Middle.</li></ul>



<b>Other subjects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students' achievement in other subjects is acceptable overall. Most students make progress in line with curriculum standards. This is in line with the school's internal data.</li><li>• Attainment in other subjects is acceptable overall. There is no internal data from the school. However, in lessons and in their work, most students attain in line with curriculum standards in ICT and PE but less than three quarters attain in line with curriculum standards in Art. In French, a majority exceed expected standards.</li><li>• Most students make acceptable progress in developing their knowledge and skills. In volleyball in PE, students collaborate well and can demonstrate techniques of using an underarm serve and passing the ball. However, they do not always translate this well to working collaboratively in teams. In French, students quickly learn to use new vocabulary effectively though a good structure of practice using all four language skills. This was seen in the Year 4 lesson where students learnt new vocabulary related to family and were then able to talk about families with this new vocabulary. In ICT, in Primary, students develop their skills in using a range of computer programs to record data and display it in different forms. in Middle, they learn how to use this data. In Art, students across all three phases are not able to express themselves appropriately using different media and are restricted to basic craft techniques.</li><li>• Most groups of students make progress in line with expectations, but some higher-attaining students do not always get the challenge they need.</li></ul>	
	<b>Areas of Strengths</b>	<b>Areas for Improvement</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students' ability to use new vocabulary effectively in French lessons in Year 4.</li><li>• Students' development of basic individual techniques and skills in team games across the school.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collaborative participation in team games across the school.</li><li>• Students' development of artistic skills in all phases.</li></ul>



<b>Learning Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students' learning skills are acceptable overall. In Arabic as First Language, Arabic as Second Language and Islamic Education, learning skills are good, but acceptable in innovation and research.</li> <li>Students have a good attitude towards learning. They are keen and enjoy learning and undertake tasks required of them by the teacher.</li> <li>Students interact with each other and work in groups. They communicate their learning sufficiently. In Primary and Middle, students answer questions eagerly and positively, but do not take their communication skills further by presenting ideas at greater length in class discussions to help develop their thinking and understanding.</li> <li>Students make limited connections between areas of learning and relate these to their awareness of the world. However, they do not consistently expand their work and understanding or apply their skills to make connections between areas of learning successfully, in some subjects and activities this is evident.</li> <li>Students have developed the skills of enquiry at a basic level. However, the use of learning technologies in lessons to support their learning is under-developed. Students' ability to think critically is not apparent in their work across all phases.</li> </ul>	
	<b>Areas of Strengths</b>	<b>Areas for Improvement</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students' good attitudes towards learning and undertaking tasks required of them by the teacher.</li> <li>Students' work in groups and their communication of their learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and provide opportunities for students across all phases to enhance their critical thinking.</li> <li>Use of technology in lessons to research and deepen their learning.</li> </ul>

## PERFORMANCE STANDARD 2: STUDENTS' PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THEIR INNOVATION SKILLS

Indicators:	FS	Primary	Middle	High
<b>Personal development</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students' personal and social development and their innovation skills is good overall. Students' understanding of Islamic values and Emirati culture is good. Their innovation skills are good.</li> <li>Students demonstrate positive behaviours and responsible attitudes. Workshops on anger management and mental health for students, help them handle their emotions well. While they are self-disciplined, and relationships are good, there is some inconsistency in Primary, especially during break times, in the boys' section.</li> </ul>				





- Students have an adequate understanding of healthy eating and active lifestyles. The school marks World Diabetes Day to raise awareness of healthy eating. Inter-house sports programmes highlight fitness for the students.
- A few students bring unhealthy snacks to school. Students' attendance is good at 94%. Almost all students attend school and lessons on time. Effective systems are in place to follow up with any late arriving students.

<b>Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>N/A</b>
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- Students demonstrate a good understanding of Islamic values and how these influence life in the UAE. In assembly and in class, students can demonstrate the required eating etiquette, explain ablutions, the importance of the steps for Hajj and the importance of food in the Holy Qur'an through the Voice of Islam club.
- Students are knowledgeable and respectful of the traditions and heritage of the UAE. They have undertaken a virtual tour of a mosque and participated in the Holy Qur'an recitation competition. The school also conducts an 'I love Arabic Day' and students learn about the family tree of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).
- Students are knowledgeable and respectful of their own and other cultures. They participate in a range of events and celebrations to deepen their understanding of other cultures, including participation in a World Culture Day and Global Day. 'Around the world in a day' was an activity organised to promote understanding of other cultures where every class represented one country, showcasing its culture, food and traditions to deepen students' understanding of other cultures.

<b>Social responsibility and innovation skills</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>N/A</b>
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- Students enjoy volunteering within the school and local community. They have participated in the 'Sustainable Trees' initiative, Ghaf, a mangroves trees event and organised a collection to help those less fortunate than themselves. Students prepare care packages for the service staff and Iftar boxes for distribution. Through an Eco drive, and plant sale, money is raised to support charities which provide aid to people affected by recent earthquakes.
- Students enjoy work, but sometimes lack self-motivation. They sometimes rely too much on teachers to direct them in their work. However, they enjoy lessons and sometimes take the initiative to organise activities themselves. Through work in the school garden and through the Eco club's sale of plants, students are starting to develop their enterprise skills. Their innovation skills are less well developed.
- Students care for their school and are proud and active in helping to improve the environment. They take part in many projects which support the conservation of natural habitats locally and further afield.



#### Areas of Strength:

- Students' appreciation of Islamic values and respect for UAE values and for their own and other cultures
- Students' strong sense of responsibility through volunteering and being involved in community and school events and projects.

#### Areas for Improvement:

- Innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurship in lessons.
- Students planning their own learning in lessons and reflective thinking, to become more self-reliant.

### PERFORMANCE STANDARD 3: TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

Indicators:	FS	Primary	Middle	High
<b>Teaching for effective learning</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The overall quality of teaching and assessment is acceptable. overall. It is acceptable in teaching and good in assessment.</li><li>• Most teachers have a secure understanding of their subjects and consistently apply their adequate knowledge of how students learn so they make acceptable progress.</li><li>• Lesson planning and time management are good in most lessons, particularly in Arabic, mathematics, and English. However, planning is sometimes not implemented fully. Textbooks with projectors and videos are the main resources used. When they are used well in activity-based lessons in Arabic and English, learning improves. However, this is not often seen in science, social studies, Islamic Education and Art.</li><li>• Interactions between students and teachers ensure the involvement of students. Questioning and dialogues engage students in meaningful ways but often does not sufficiently enhance creativity, critical thinking, and innovation in almost all subjects.</li></ul>				
<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Internal assessment processes are coherent and consistent, but the data provided by the school is inflated.</li><li>• External national and international benchmarking is appropriate, with the students undertaking CAT 4, Progress Tests and TIMSS as appropriate.</li></ul>				



- Assessment data is analysed in depth and progress is tracked from the diagnostic tests to term-end and end of year summative assessments.
- Information gathered from assessments is used but its impact is not yet consistent. As a result, the needs of students are met through lessons and curriculum planning.
- Individual students are provided with some challenges and support as teachers have reasonable knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses. In most subjects, high attainer are not challenged sufficiently. Students are involved in self and peer assessment. Written feedback provided to students is developing. It is sometimes diagnostic, with next steps for improvement, which leads to gains in students' learning.

**Areas of Strength:**

- Clear and coherent Internal assessment processes.
- External, national and international benchmarking.

**Areas for Improvement:**

- Teaching to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, innovation and independent learning.
- Use of assessment information to meet the needs of all students.

## PERFORMANCE STANDARD 4: CURRICULUM

Indicators:	FS	Primary	Middle	High
<b>Curriculum design and implementation</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>N/A</b>

- The overall quality of the curriculum is acceptable.
- The school follows the UK curriculum, with the inclusion of the required MoE subjects and uses internal and external assessments to evaluate student performance. It meets national guidelines and is accredited by Cambridge.
- The curriculum is planned so that students' learning builds over time. Students' progress adequately from FS and Primary. Older students are well prepared for their next steps and future choices. The school provides opportunities for students to learn additional languages, such as French and Urdu according to their needs.
- Links to other subjects are not always evident. They are sometimes not planned and consistent across all subjects. However, In Arabic and social studies this aspect is improved.
- The school has implemented a curriculum development plan with clear targets and designated individuals to improve education quality and align with the school's goals and objectives. Regular reviews ensure adequate provision in most subjects and that they meet students' academic and personal development needs.



Curriculum adaptation	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The school makes adequate modifications to the curriculum to meet the needs of most groups of students.</li><li>The school uses progression tracking tools to provide valuable insights for teachers to make informed decisions regarding curriculum and teaching methodologies. While some teachers are effectively catering to specific student needs, others require support and training in utilising the tracking tools effectively.</li><li>The school's emphasis on rote learning and lack of creativity and critical thinking in some lessons, limits innovation and the development of entrepreneurial skills.</li><li>The school has successfully integrated Emirati culture and UAE society into its educational program</li></ul>				
<b>Areas of Strength:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The achievement and progress of students are monitored systematically using a structured format.</li><li>Links with Emirati culture and UAE society.</li></ul>				
<b>Areas for Improvement:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Implementing a structured system for monitoring student progress.</li><li>Modification of curriculum to meet the needs of all groups of students, including those with special educational needs and those who are G&amp;T.</li></ul>				

## PERFORMANCE STANDARD 5: THE PROTECTION, CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT OF STUDENTS

Indicators:	FS	Primary	Middle	High
<b>Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection /safeguarding</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The protection, care, guidance and support of students is good overall. This includes thorough systems of cameras in all public areas and at entry points. There are rigorous procedures in place to keep students safe.</li><li>The school provides a safe, hygienic and secure environment; safeguarding procedures are very effective, the child protection policy has been shared with all stakeholders. Safeguarding training</li></ul>				



is provided to staff, students, parents and governors at the start of the academic year to ensure reporting is fully understood by all.

- The school provides a very safe environment, and buildings and equipment are very well maintained. There are ramps on the ground floor to allow access for those with mobility issues. The school does not have a lift. The school maintains comprehensive and secure records, including records of incidents and subsequent actions. Arrangements at the beginning and end of the day are very well organised for buses and for parents collecting children.
- The school promotes healthy living adequately. Students' wellbeing is regularly monitored by the school nurses and doctor who maintain a close watch on any students at risk of obesity. The school discusses healthy diets with students, either through the physical education program or in class, linked to other work.
- Currently the canteen is still closed after Covid but is scheduled to reopen with an external company running the process. All relevant documentation is in place for opening. For example, Good Hygiene Practice (GHP) and a Non-objection Certificate (NOC) from Sharjah City Municipality.

**Care and support**

**Good**

**Good**

**Good**

**N/A**

- Systems for managing students' behavior support the strong relationships between students and staff. The school is committed to improving behavior, with the school counsellor carrying out regular reviews of behavior profiles and positive improvements being rewarded. Attendance is good across the phases. Most students arrive on time to school by bus. Punctuality to school, and to lessons, is good. Any instances of lateness are dealt with according to the school's behavior policy.
- Processes for the identification of students with special educational needs and those who are G&T are thorough and led by the school counsellor with links to relevant external bodies.
- The school provides adequate support for most students with SEN and those who are G&T, which enables the majority of students to make adequate personal and academic progress. The school counsellor supports students of determination through individual educational plans in partnership with teachers and parents. Parents are supported in how to improve their children's learning. G&T students are given preference for representing the school in both inter and intra-school activities. For example, one Year 9 boy plays cricket for 3 different local clubs.
- The personal wellbeing and development of students are routinely monitored. The school counsellor and vice principal provide effective guidance for students in Year 9 regarding their transition to their next school. Students say that they are confident about going to the school counsellor or vice principal if they have any questions regarding their future. Transition between the phases is smooth.

**Areas of Strength:**

- The school has effective procedures for safeguarding students, including child protection, with all staff, students and parents being aware of these.
- Staff have positive relationships with students.
- Systems and procedures for managing students' behavior are successful.



**Areas for Improvement:**

- Provide effective support for all students with special educational needs and those who are G&T.
- Streamline and strengthen the current arrangements for transitional guidance and counselling in the Middle Phase.

## PERFORMANCE STANDARD 6: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Indicators:**

<b>The effectiveness of leadership</b>	Acceptable
<b>Self-evaluation and improvement planning</b>	Acceptable
<b>Partnerships with parents and the community</b>	Good
<b>Governance</b>	Good
<b>Management, staffing, facilities and resources</b>	Acceptable

- The overall quality of leadership and management is acceptable.
- Leaders promote a vision which is firmly embedded in the ethos of the school and is committed to improve education for all students. Due to the stability of leadership roles and their in-depth knowledge of the school, they have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and where improvements are needed.
- There is a positive culture throughout the school, which is reflected in the professional relationships among staff. Leaders' capacity to improve is evident from the recent developments in some areas of the school's work. They have sufficient capacity to make further required improvements. However, more focus is needed on improving teaching, within the context of the regular changes in staffing.
- Senior and middle leaders demonstrate secure understanding of good practices in teaching. However, due to the high number of new teachers, this is not having the required impact on improving the overall quality of teaching over time. Regular professional development sessions make an important contribution to ensuring that individual teachers make improvements in their practice.
- There are clear lines of communication at all levels of the school. Senior leaders delegate responsibility to subject leaders effectively and they are held accountable for improvements in the quality of teaching and students' outcomes in their subjects. However, leaders have not yet had enough impact on ensuring teaching consistently meets the needs of all groups of students.



- Improvement planning is having an impact on school development, and there is a clear understanding of the school's improvement priorities.
- Adequate progress has been made in improving the quality and impact of self-evaluation. Internal assessment data is thoroughly analysed, to identify strengths and weaknesses. The data is used adequately to inform planning to meet the needs of students. External assessment information, along with benchmarking data, is used to identify where students can improve.
- The evaluation of teaching is systematic but due to the high number of new teachers does not show sufficient progress in improvements in teaching. However, due to the leaders' knowledge of the school, the resulting school improvement plans are relevant and appropriately focused on the school's main priorities. There is evidence of improvement over time in some areas of the school's work.
- Parents are supportive of the school and their views are usually taken into account to inform school planning. Communication and reporting systems are regular and effective, and parents are well-informed about students' academic progress and personal development. The school has links with other schools in the area, and internationally, and the school participates in regular events with other schools.
- Governance represents a variety of stakeholders and includes parental and staff involvement. They are very knowledgeable about the school, meet regularly and fully support school leaders. They often visit the school and receive regular feedback on the developments within the school. Their influence and impact are positive. They hold leaders accountable for performance and ensure that staffing and recruitment meets the needs of the school.
- School routines and procedures are adequately organised, and the school runs smoothly. Staffing meets the needs of the school adequately, and teachers benefit from regular training and professional development. Across the school, the premises, facilities and resources are of adequate quality and are suitably matched to meet the needs of the curriculum.

#### Areas of Strength:

- Leadership stability, especially at senior leadership level, leading to an in-depth knowledge of the school and where improvements are needed.
- The partnership with parents, alongside the involvement of, and challenge provided by, governors to support the improvements in the school.

#### Areas for Improvement:

- The leadership focus on raising achievement in all subjects to good.
- Improve the quality of teaching in all phases to be consistently good.

## SPEA ADDITIONAL FOCUS AREAS

### Provision for Arabic Language

School Performance Review of Al Najma Private School  
27 February – 2 March 2023



- The Arabic department has 11 teachers across the school. The ratio of teachers to students is 1:105, which includes teachers of Arabic as First Language and Arabic as Second Language. 55% of students in the school are of Arabic origin.
- The school has one library which contains 460 Arabic books. One-quarter of these are fiction and the rest are non-fiction titles. Students visit the library on a timetabled schedule.
- There are no Arabic books in the classrooms but there are digital resources available to promote Arabic reading and help improve students' comprehension skills, through resources such as videos, articles and stories accessed via the Madrasa e-learning platform.
- Students are involved in a range of activities and competitions to help promote their reading skills in Arabic. These include the Arab Reading Challenge, calligraphy, and handwriting competitions and the "I Love Arabic" activities for younger students.

### **The school's use of external benchmarking data**

- The school meets UAE National Agenda and SPEA requirements for setting international tests.
- This year, a total of 350 students in Years 4, 6 and 8 have taken the CAT4 test. Students have taken the most recent TIMSS and PIRLS tests with another round of TIMSS to be taken imminently. Currently, the school has a focus on preparing students for these international benchmarking assessments, by providing awareness sessions, practices and mock tests. Parents have been made aware of these tests and their understanding of the importance of them is rising as a result. The analysis of results will be shared with teachers, students, and parents. The school pays the costs of the CAT4 and Progress Tests.
- The school also uses the Progress Tests in mathematics, English and science taken formally from Year 4 through to Year 9. Along with the CAT4 test, the school uses these tests to monitor expected and actual progress for all students in these subjects in these year groups.
- Teachers are provided with an analysis of the results to inform their planning and the school tracks individual students over time using these tests. Parents are informed of the outcomes of these tests, and they also have orientation sessions where they are provided with coaching in how to understand what the tests mean for their children. Students learn how to use the outcomes of the tests to set their own targets for improvement.

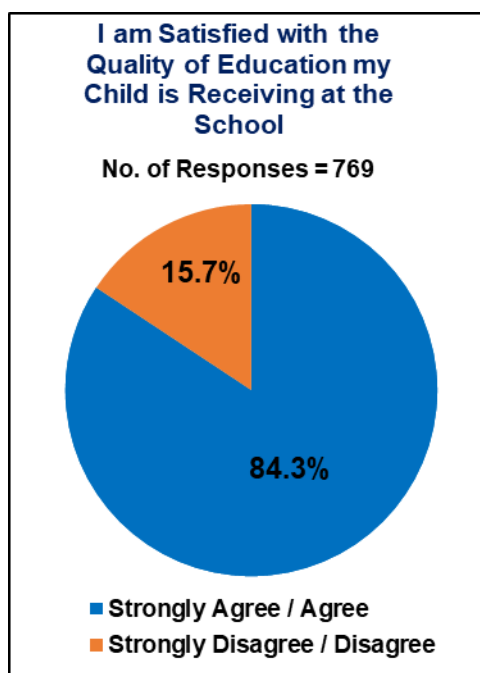
### **Provision for KG**

- There are 99 children in FS2, supported by six teachers. This provides a teacher to student ratio of 1:16. There are also 4 classroom assistants.
- The indoor environment and resources provide for children's needs adequately. The classrooms are quite small and are adequately resourced. In addition to the classrooms, there are additional learning areas including an activity room, some free flow areas, a multi-purpose hall and a maker space.
- Outside, there is also an outdoor playground and rumpus area to help develop children's physical skills.
- Parents are invited in for orientation and induction of new children and to support transition to the next class. The information provided includes school routines, classroom visits and 'meet the teacher.' Promotion sheets are passed from the FS2 teacher to the Year 1 teacher to ensure a smooth transition from FS in to Primary. There are also regular parent-teacher meetings to help smooth the induction into the school, which parents appreciate.





## VIEWS OF PARENTS



## STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS

- Raise achievement in all subjects to good, by:
  - Ensuring that lessons are more student focused and that there is less teacher talk in lessons.
  - Developing the accuracy of students' written work in English.
  - Developing students' scientific thinking, enquiry, and practical investigation skills across the school.
  - Improving the fluency of reading skills across subjects.
  - Ensuring that the assessment data generated by the school is well-understood and used by all teachers.
- Improve the quality of teaching in all phases to be consistently good, by:
  - Developing teachers' skills in effectively delivering the lessons they have planned.
  - Ensuring that questioning and dialogues engage students and enhance creativity, critical thinking, and innovation.



- Developing cross-curricular links further so that students can better apply their learning to different contexts.
- Enhance support in lessons for students who have special educational needs and those who are G&T, by:
  - Continuing to develop strong systems to identify students with specific needs.
  - Provide well-focused training for staff on how to meet the needs of students.
  - Monitor the impact of the training on improving the quality of teaching to raise levels of attainment for this cohort of students.
- Develop students' skills in critical thinking, innovation and independent learning, by:
  - Ensuring that training results in all staff having a clear understanding of the importance of developing these skills.
  - Providing all staff with professional development on how to promote students' skills in these areas, through a range of strategies such as questioning.
  - Supporting innovation and giftedness through more focussed teaching practices.
  - Providing individualised attention to students and groups of students.

In addition to considering the full content of this report and identifying actions required to bring about improvement, the school should build the strategic recommendations into its improvement planning process.

In consultation with the assigned School Improvement Advisor, the school should send its revised improvement plan, including specific actions, timescales, and success measures, to SPEA within two months of the publication of this report. Four months later, the school should submit a detailed report on progress to SPEA.

SPEA's next school review will validate the progress report and include a review of further progress made by the school in implementing the recommendations from this SPR report.

If you have a concern or wish to comment on any aspect of this report, please contact SPEA on [schools.review@spea.shj.ae](mailto:schools.review@spea.shj.ae) within three weeks of receiving this report.