

# In Search of Good Education

Volume 2

The facts behind Emiratis in private schools in Dubai



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# In Search of Good Education

## Volume 2

The facts behind Emiratis in private schools in Dubai

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## About KHDA

The Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) is responsible for the growth, direction and quality of private education and learning in Dubai. We are a regulatory authority in the Government of Dubai which supports the improvement of schools, universities, training institutes and other human resource sectors.

We co-ordinate with many different partners; students, parents, teachers, the private sector and other Government bodies all play a role in Dubai's education community. KHDA's work is guided by the Government's strategy and carried out in a transparent manner to make sure everything we do benefits our highest priority – our students.

Most of Dubai's children attend private schools, and more Emirati children are in private education than attend Government schools. The number of Emiratis choosing private universities is also growing. KHDA is focusing on finding the reasons for this shift in behaviour to enhance policy decision-making for the future.

Our research ranges from early childhood to adult learning and our findings drive initiatives to ensure that Dubai has an educated and flexible workforce to meet the needs of our fast-changing and globalised world. Our publications, along with our detailed school inspection reports, provide evidence-based information for everyone involved in education.

**Please visit [www.khda.gov.ae](http://www.khda.gov.ae) for more details.**

## About CfBT Education Trust

CfBT Education Trust is a top 50 charity providing education services for public benefit in the UK and internationally. Established over 40 years ago, CfBT Education Trust now has an annual turnover exceeding £100 million and employs 2,300 staff worldwide who support educational reform, teach, advise, research and train.

Since we were founded, we have worked in more than 40 countries around the world. Our work involves teacher and leadership training, curriculum design and school improvement services. The majority of staff provide services direct to learners: in nurseries, schools and academies; through projects for excluded pupils; in young offender institutions; and in advice and guidance centres for young people.

We have worked successfully to implement reform programmes for governments throughout the world. Government clients in the UK include the Department for Education (DfE), the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted), and local authorities. Internationally, we work with education ministries in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Singapore among many others.

Surpluses generated by our operations are reinvested in educational research and development. Our research programme, Evidence for Education, aims to improve educational practice on the ground and widen access to research in the UK and overseas.

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## Dr Abdulla Al Karam

Chairman of the Board of Directors and Director General  
Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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We are pleased to present the second report on Emiratis in private education. Since the publication of our first *In Search of Good Education* report in 2011, we have gathered essential data on school enrolment patterns of Emirati students, their attainment and progress throughout their schooling, and the transition to higher education. This research is designed to inform education policy, as well as provide educators, academics and the wider community with insight into the development of the 56% of Emirati students in Dubai's private education sector.

We are grateful to CfBT Education Trust for their continued support in the compilation and analysis of data, and for transferring their knowledge and expertise to KHDA research staff. We hope this report will guide us towards more focused decision- and policy-making to continue building the prosperous future of Dubai.

## Tony McAleavy

Education Director  
CfBT Education Trust

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I am delighted to contribute to this important research report. In today's fast-changing climate, there is a great need for evidence-based policy making. Through its commitment to high quality research in essential areas such as Emiratis in private education, KHDA provides this evidence.

A study of Emirati participation in private education raises a number of significant issues for future policy both in Dubai and beyond, which this report addresses through evidence. Its findings are of international significance, as the move towards private provision, particularly marked in Dubai, is part of a global trend.

CfBT Education Trust is proud to have worked as a partner with KHDA on this report. This is the latest product of an extremely fruitful collaboration over many years. I fully recommend this report, which I am sure you will find methodologically impressive and stimulating in its analysis.

## Executive Summary

The objective of this report is to demonstrate how Dubai's private schools contribute to the achievement of the educational goals and objectives of Emirati students. It presents baseline data of Emirati students in private schools and builds a common understanding of how the Dubai private education system serves national and social strategies. It incorporates the research that was published in KHDA's first *In Search of Good Education* report that analysed why Emirati parents choose private schools for their children.

The report uses data from Dubai's private schools, higher education institutions, school inspections and international assessments to shed light on Emirati parents' school choices, the performance of schools in international assessments, the attainment and progress of Emiratis in key subjects and their transition to higher education.

With 56% of Emirati students enrolled in private schools in Dubai, gaining a full understanding of the background of these students and schools is essential. Such an evidence base is a pre-requisite for the development of policies which focus on improving the quality of education that Emirati children receive in private schools.

### The main findings of the report are:

- Emirati parents choose Dubai private schools in the belief that they deliver better education for their children. Around 77% of Emirati students are enrolled in just 24 of Dubai's 148 private schools because parents believe that those schools satisfy the educational and social needs of their children. The schools preferred by Emiratis are close to full capacity.
- Many of these 24 private schools only provide an education of acceptable quality. There are also very few Emirati teachers present at these schools, a fact which could impact the development of national identity.
- School choice is being influenced by Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) ratings and a significant proportion of Emirati students have moved to better quality schools.
- The performance of 15-year-old Emirati students in private schools was better in PISA 2009 than their peers in public schools and of citizens in nearby Arab countries. The scores of Emirati students were below both non-Emirati students in Dubai private schools and the OECD international average.
- Emirati students who are attending good or outstanding private schools are performing as well as their peers in the same schools. Emirati students' performance in Islamic education and Arabic language was broadly in line with expected levels. In English, mathematics and science their achievement was often lower than that of their non-Emirati peers, most notably when Emiratis attended lower performing schools.
- There is a noticeable gender difference between the performance of Emirati male and female students, with female students performing significantly better than male students in international assessments and in key school subjects.

- Male Emirati students' behaviour and attitudes are affecting their learning negatively in lower quality schools.
- A high percentage of Emirati students graduating from schools attend higher education institutions, either in Dubai or elsewhere. A large number of Emirati university students choose business or law as their main field of study.

The above findings will inform the development of policies to improve the quality of education for Emirati students in private schools and provide them with the skills and knowledge required to lead active lives as citizens of the UAE.



## Introduction

The United Arab Emirates' leaders have envisioned a future where Emiratis take the lead in building the country, as outlined in the UAE Vision 2021 (UAE, 2010) and the Dubai Strategic Plan 2015 (Dubai Government, 2007). This future vision includes aspiring to give Emirati children access to, and provision of, first-rate education so that they can develop into active and contributing members of society (UAE, 2010; Dubai Government, 2007). Improving the qualifications and educational attainment levels of Emiratis will help to produce the human capital needed to lead the economy and support the social stability of the UAE. Government strategies at both federal and emirate levels have also identified the importance of completing schooling, of providing students with resources to fulfil their potential and of integrating students with special educational needs into the mainstream school system (UAE, 2010; Dubai Government, 2007).

From humble beginnings, Dubai is now a major player in the global business and tourism industries. It has witnessed phenomenal growth over the last 50 years with the construction of modern infrastructure and its new status as a major logistics and transport hub. Due to Dubai's attractiveness and business-friendly culture, many expatriate families have come to live in Dubai. Since the public school system was not designed to support the specific needs of non-Arab expatriate children, many private schools have been established in Dubai. Many of these schools offer the curriculum of the expatriate parents' home countries. The private school sector in Dubai now caters to about 88% of all students. With increasing disposable income and a desire for better education, an increasing proportion of Emirati parents are choosing private schools for their children. Now, well over half of Dubai's Emirati students attend private schools (KHDA, 2012a).

The level of education attained by Emiratis has a significant effect on their participation in the workforce and on their income levels. Data from the 2011 Labour Force Survey conducted by the Dubai Statistics Centre showed that Emirati male university graduates had the lowest rate of unemployment (2.9%) and the highest rate of labour force participation (90.8%) compared with non-graduates (Dubai Statistics Centre, 2012). For Emirati females, the picture is quite different with a higher unemployment rate for university graduates (14%) but similarly higher labour force participation rate (71%) than their less educated peers (30%) (Dubai Statistics Centre 2012). The Labour Force Survey 2011 data also show that employed Emiratis who have benefited from education beyond secondary level earn more than those with only a secondary school qualification (Dubai Statistics Center, 2012). This indicates that gaining a better standard of education in private schools could be linked to improved employment prospects for Emiratis and the development of local human capital to sustain growth in the Dubai economy.

The Government of Dubai's Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) has the role of regulating and working with private schools to improve the quality of education. Given the high proportion of Emirati children in private schools and the importance the government places on education for its Emirati youth, it is critical that initiatives to develop this sector are based on accurate data and well-executed research.

This report is composed of three sections. The first section presents general data concerning Dubai's private schools, with a focus on Emirati students. The second section examines the attainment and performance of Emirati students and the quality of teaching and learning they receive. The third section examines the patterns of transition of Emirati students from school to higher education.

The data used to compile this report have been taken from various sources. Our thanks to the Ministry of Education, the Dubai Statistics Center, NAPO, the National Bureau of Statistics and the KHDA statistics team for making their most recent data available. The list of published data is available in the references section.

## School enrolment patterns of Emirati students

This section explores the types of private schools in Dubai with a focus on the schools that Emirati students attend and some of the reasons for choosing private schools ascertained from surveys (DSIB, 2012) and focus groups (Kenaid, 2011). It covers the types of curriculum preferred by Emirati students, the quality of the schools as rated by the Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB), gender differences, growth trends over time, levels of tuition fees paid, commuting distances and the spare capacity in these schools. These data give a detailed understanding of the nature of Emirati private school enrolment in Dubai and provide an evidence base that can be used to assist in developing policies to improve the education of Emirati students.

### Key findings

Recent research and data presented in this section indicate that:

- 56% of Emirati students in Dubai are enrolled in private schools, with the highest proportion in Kindergarten and primary level grades;
- 65% of Emirati students in private schools are enrolled in US curriculum schools, followed by UK curriculum schools and Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum schools, each with 15% of the private school population. Just 5% of Emirati students attend schools with other curricula;
- 77% of Emirati students in private schools attend just 24 of Dubai's 148 private schools;
- 37% of Emirati students in 2011 are enrolled in outstanding or good private schools, while only 4% are enrolled in unsatisfactory private schools;
- 52% of Emirati parents are paying from AED 10,000 to 20,000 in school fees;
- Most Emiratis attend schools in their own communities;
- In Dubai's private schools, there are 31 female Emirati teachers and no male Emirati teachers;
- According to Emirati parents, the main reason for choosing a private school is better quality of teaching and learning (50%).

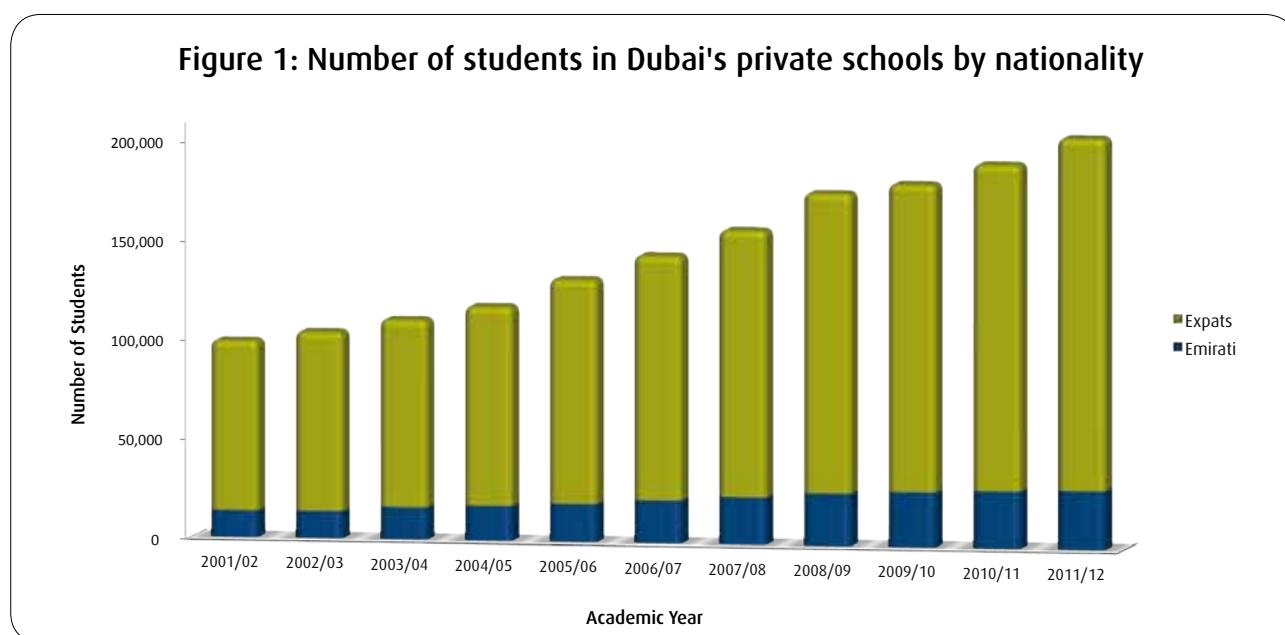
## Dubai's private schools

Dubai's school sector consists of a range of public and private schools. In the 2011/12 academic year, Dubai had a total of 227 schools, comprised of 79 public and 148 private schools. In total, there were 235,269 students in Dubai schools with 207,118 students, or 88% of the student population, in private schools. There are 13 different curricula in Dubai's private schools (KHDA, 2012a). These curricula are UK, US, Indian, UAE Ministry of Education (MoE), International Baccalaureate (IB), French, Iranian, Pakistani, Philippine, German, Japanese, Russian and the Institute of Applied Technology curriculum.

Public schools are funded through the UAE Government's MoE and cater mainly for Emirati students. All private schools, apart from a very small proportion, are funded by individuals through the receipt of tuition fees paid by parents or their employers. Dubai's education sector is unique with a very high proportion of students attending private schools. It should also be noted that private schools receive no financial contributions or subsidies from the government.

Only 6 of the 148 private schools do not charge tuition fees. Two - Rashid School for Boys and Latifa School for Girls - are funded by the Government of Dubai. One of the Institute of Applied Technology's high schools is located in Dubai. The two Dubai Police Children's Kindergarten schools are operated by Dubai Police. The Private Religious Institute is funded philanthropically. The first three of these schools are not included in the inspection data detailed later in this report.

Figure 1 illustrates that the student population across Dubai's private schools has more than doubled over the last ten years, with the number of private school students increasing each year during this period (KHDA, 2012a).

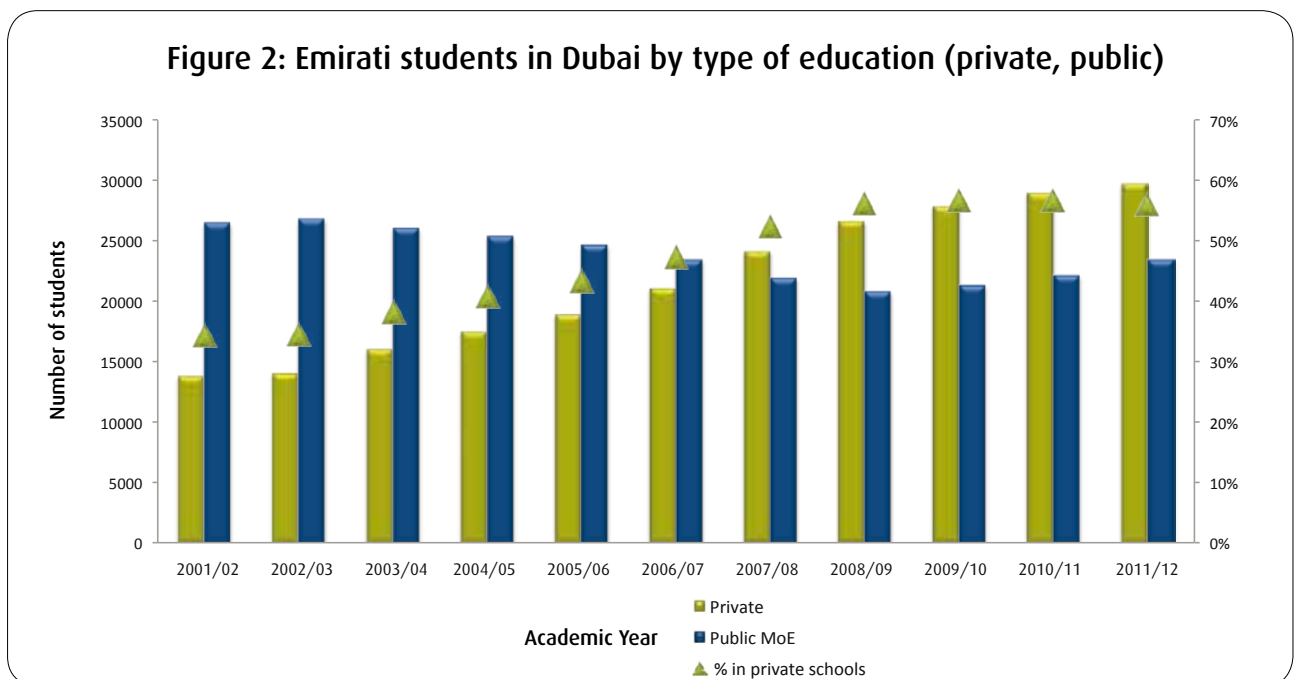


Source: KHDA School Census, Dubai Statistics Centre



## Emiratis in private schools

The increase in numbers of Emirati students in private schools over the last ten years has stemmed from a general increase in the population of school-age Emirati children, as well as a growing trend for Emiratis to choose private schools over public schools (Kenaid, 2011). In 2011/12 there were 29,752 Emirati students enrolled in private schools, a 2.7% increase from 2010/11 (KHDA, 2012a). More than half of Emirati students currently attend private schools, as shown in Figure 2. Over the last ten years, the proportion of Emirati students in private schools has grown from 34% to 56%. The trend towards private school preference has stabilised in the last four years, during which the proportion of Emirati students in private schools has consistently been between 56% and 57% (KHDA, 2012a).



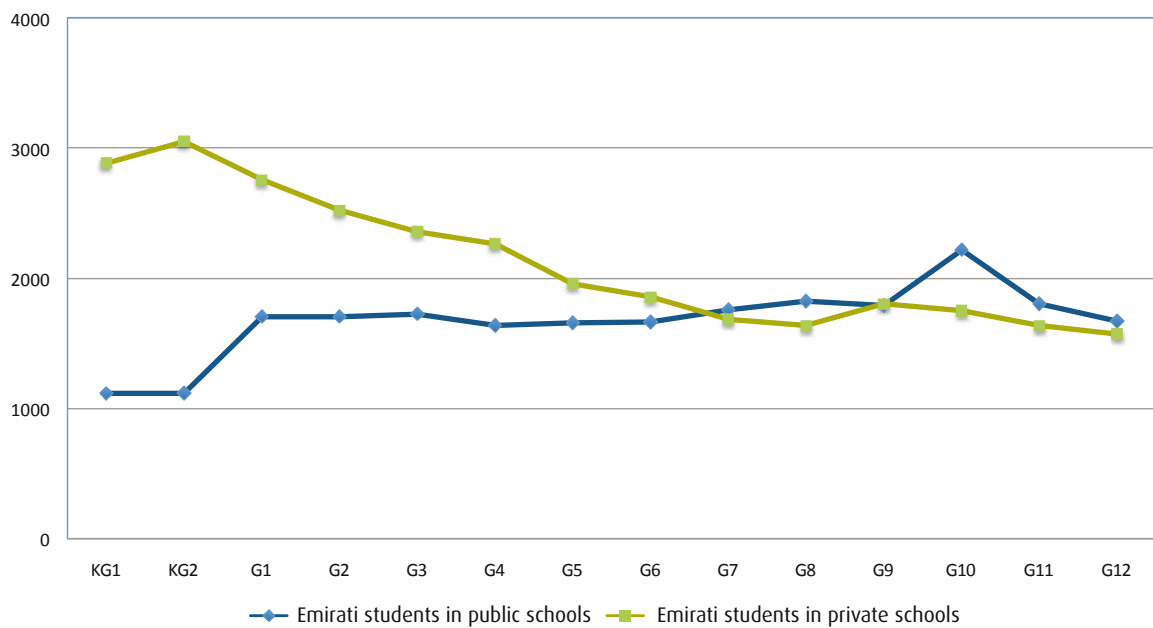
Source: KHDA 2012a



### Emirati students by grade level

The proportion of Emirati students in private schools is highest at the Kindergarten level, due to the lack of availability of Kindergarten places in the public school system. As shown in Figure 3 (KHDA, 2012a), the number of pupils in private schools declines until Grade 7, when there are approximately equal numbers of students in the private and public systems. In comparison, the number of students at public schools is relatively consistent between the grades. This shows that the recent growth in the student population at the lower grades is tending to favour private schools.

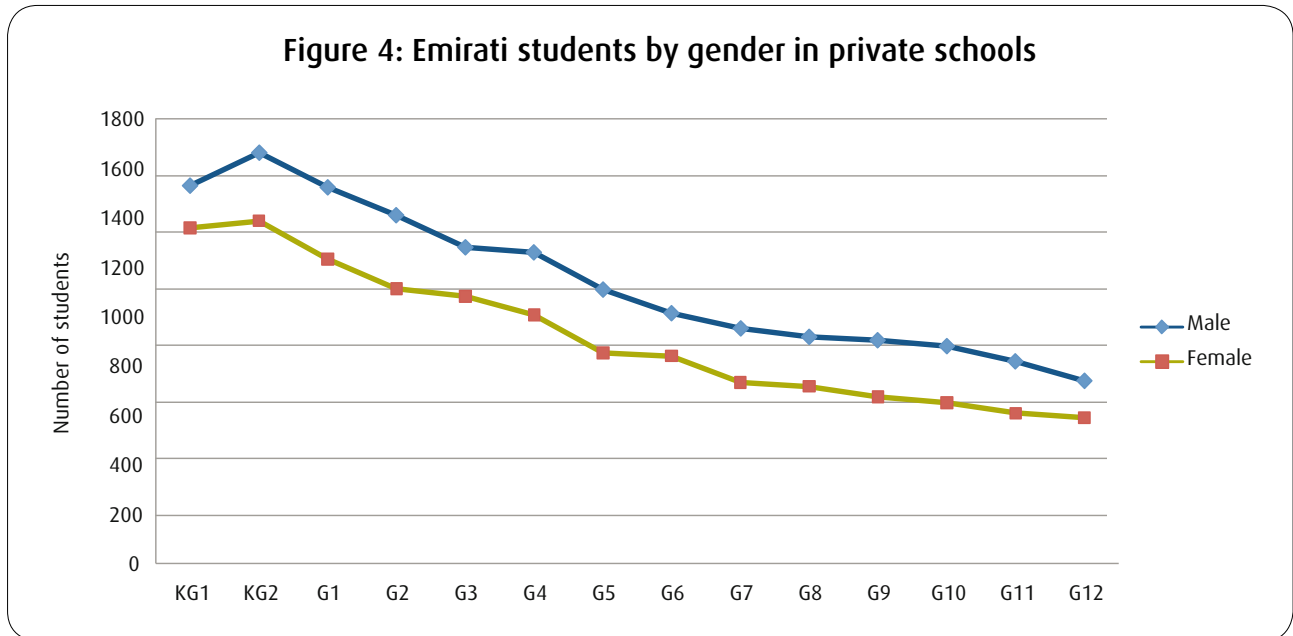
Figure 3: Emirati students by grade level (public and private schools)



Source: KHDA School Census 2011-12

## Emirati students by gender

More Emirati boys than girls are enrolled in private schools, as shown in Figure 4. Overall, 57% of Emirati students in private schools are boys. This indicates a slight preference for Emirati parents to choose private schools for their sons and public schools for their daughters (KHDA, 2012a).



Source: KHDA School Census 2011-12

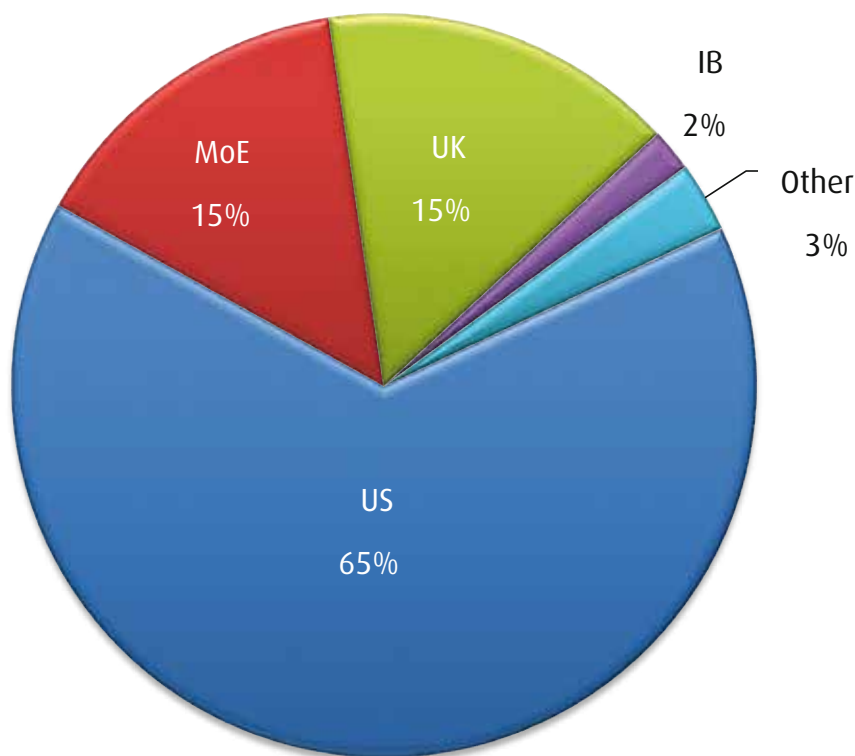
It should also be noted that many boys from Grade 9 onwards leave the public school system to attend schools run by the Institute of Applied Technology (IAT).



## Emirati student enrolment by curriculum

The distribution of Emirati students across private schools is not even. Figure 5 shows that data from the private schools census indicate that 65% of Emirati students attend US curriculum schools, with 15% attending UK curriculum schools and another 15% attending schools following the MoE curriculum.

Figure 5: Emirati students in private schools by curriculum

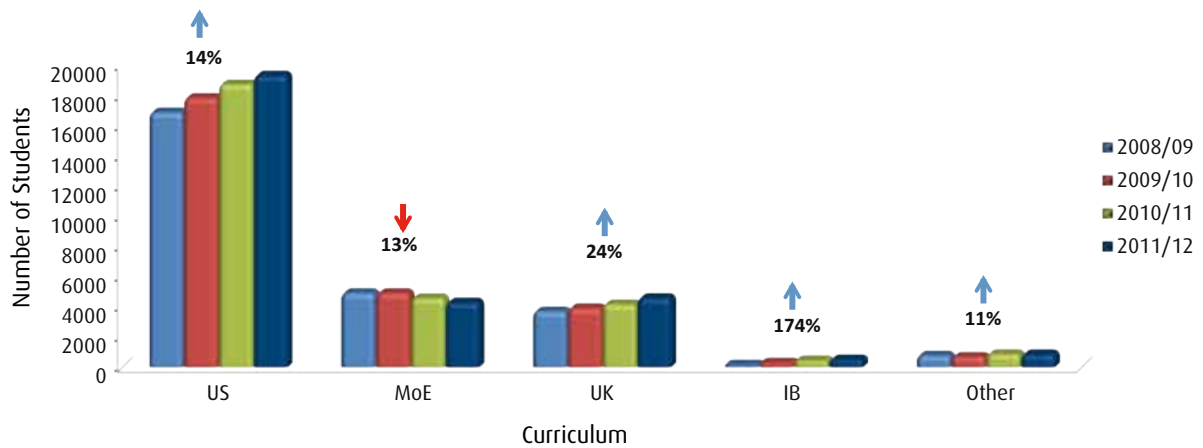


Source: KHDA School Census 2011-12

Figure 6 shows that over the last 4 years, most of the main private school curricula have witnessed an increase in Emirati enrolments. US curriculum schools attract most of the Emirati students and their enrolments increased 14% between 2008/09 and 2011/12. More Emirati students at private schools now attend a UK curriculum school than a private MoE school. Enrolments at UK curriculum schools have increased 24% from 2008/09, while there is a decrease of 13% from 2008/09 in the number of Emirati students attending MoE curriculum schools (KHDA, 2012a).

IB and other curriculum schools show low overall numbers of Emirati student enrolments, but IB schools have shown strong growth in Emirati enrolments, which have increased by 174% since 2008/09 (KHDA, 2012a).

Figure 6: Changes in Emirati student enrolments in private schools by curriculum



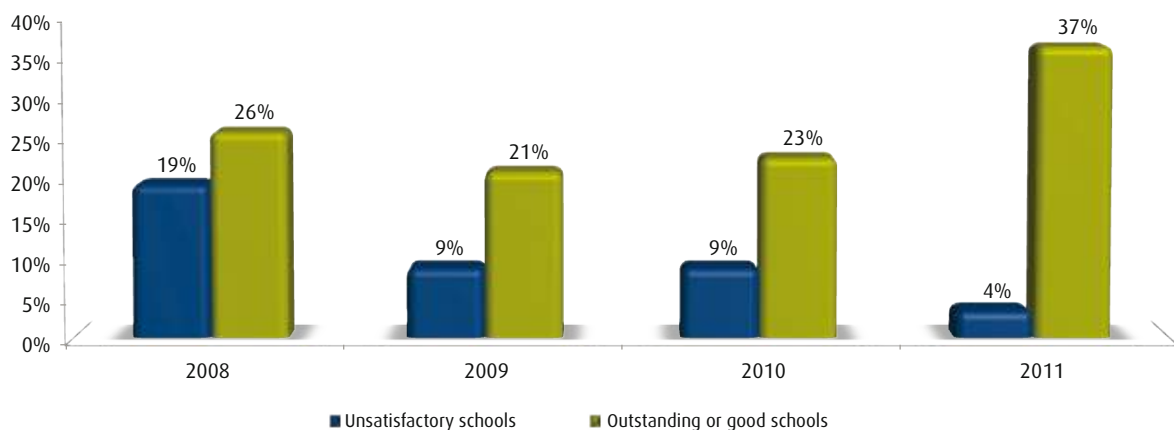
Source: KHDA School Census

The majority of Emirati students (77%) attend just 24 of the 148 private schools. Of these 24 schools, 75% of Emirati students are in US curriculum schools, 13% are in MoE curriculum schools and 9% are in UK curriculum schools (KHDA, 2012a).

### Quality of schools attended by Emirati students

There is a noticeable change in the patterns of Emirati parents' private school choices from 2008 to 2011. Compared to previous years, more Emirati students now attend a private school that has been rated outstanding or good. Figure 7 shows that 37% of Emirati students now attend a good or outstanding school while just 4% of Emirati students are enrolled in a school rated unsatisfactory.

Figure 7: Emirati students in private schools by DSIB rating over time

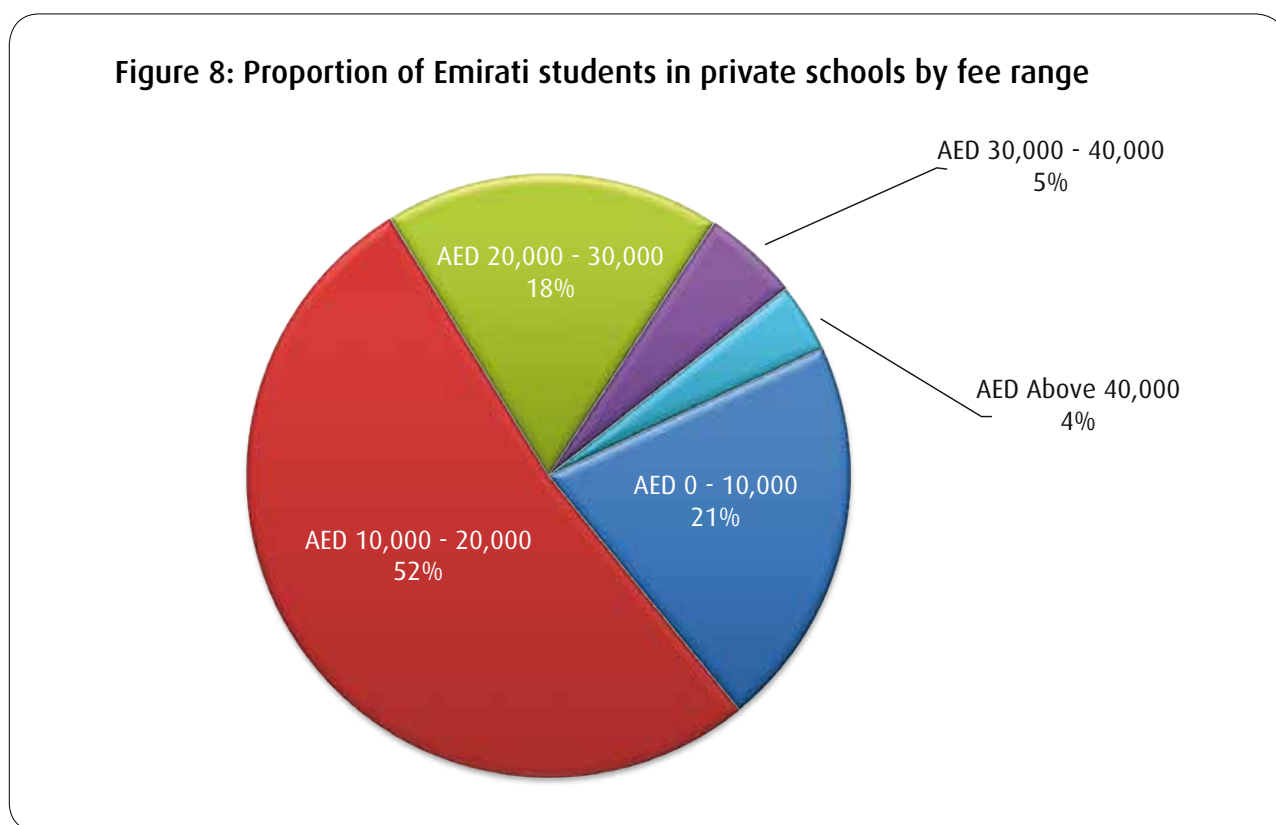


Source: DSIB school inspection ratings 2008-2011

Part of the reason for this increase is the improvement in the ratings from acceptable to good of some of the private schools where many Emiratis are enrolled. Examining the patterns of enrolment of Emirati students (KHDA, 2012a), it is clear that many Emirati students have either transferred to private schools with better DSIB ratings or preferred to commence their education at these schools. Out of all the Emirati students at good or outstanding schools, approximately one-sixth of them are enrolled there because of a conscious choice by parents who want their children to receive high quality education. A further 30% of Emirati students attend schools which have improved their DSIB rating.

### Level of fees paid by Emirati students

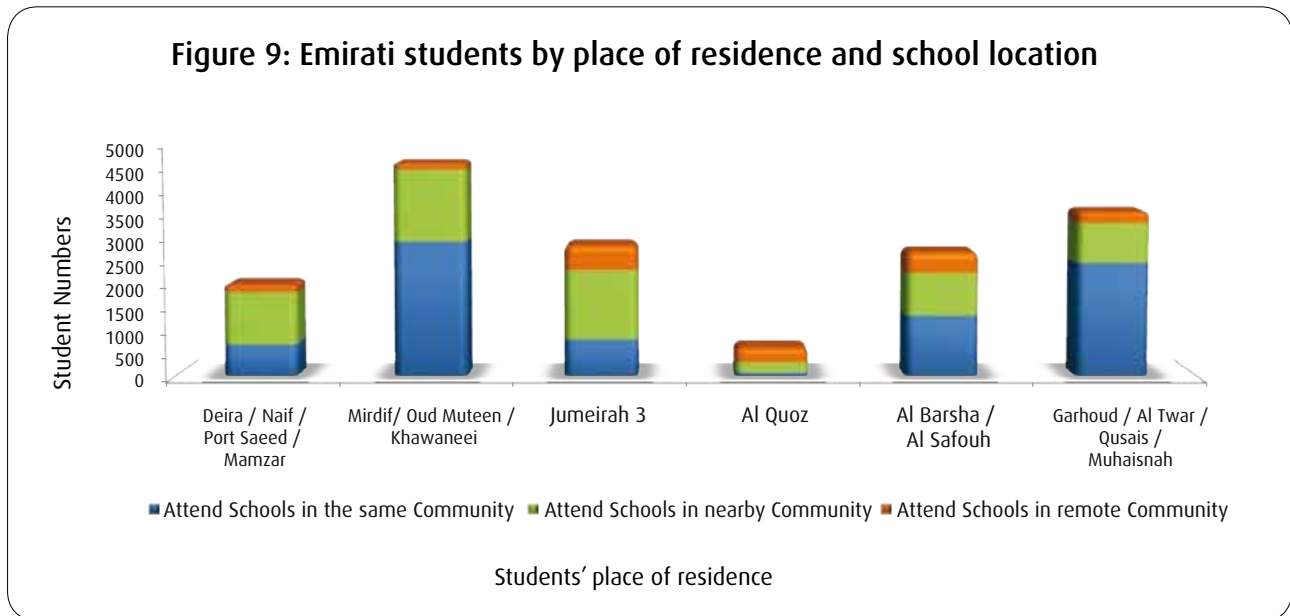
At private schools that charge tuition fees, the average tuition fee paid by an Emirati parent for the schooling of their child is AED18,007. Whilst this average is marginally higher than the average that expatriates pay, proportionately more expatriate students attend schools that charge either a very low fee or a very high fee. Emirati students tend to be concentrated in schools that charge a moderate level of fees, as illustrated in Figure 8. 70% of Emirati students pay tuition fees of between 10,000 and 30,000 dirhams per year, whereas the corresponding figure for all students in Dubai is just 33%.



Source: KHDA School Census 2011-12

## Geographical distribution of Emirati students and their schools

Most Emirati students live in particular communities alongside other Emiratis. The most populous communities where Emirati students live are Mirdif /Al Khawaneej area (28%) Al Muhaisnah/Al Garhoud (22%), Jumeirah (17%) and Al Barsha/Al Safouh (17%).



Source: DSIB Parents Survey 2011

Analysis of student travel patterns from home to school finds that most Emirati students have relatively short commuting distances to their respective schools, as seen in Figure 9. The fact that the majority attend schools either in the same community where they live or in a nearby community is evident from the chart above (over 80% in the same communities), with only a few choosing to attend schools a longer distance away. Unlike expatriate students, very few Emirati students attend a Dubai private school while living in another emirate.



## Capacity of schools with most Emirati students

Overall, Dubai's private school system has a capacity utilisation rate of 87.5%. This is calculated using the following formula:

The number of students enrolled in schools divided by the maximum number of students that could be enrolled in schools if each class was full.

Table 1: Capacity within the 24 schools preferred by Emiratis, by curriculum	
Curriculum	Weighted Capacity Utilisation Rate
MOE	88%
UK	96%
US	84%

Table 2: Capacity within the 24 schools preferred by Emirati students, by DSIB rating	
DSIB Rating	Weighted Capacity Utilisation Rate
Good	88%
Acceptable	84%
Unsatisfactory	78%

Table 3: Weighted capacity utilisation rate within the 24 schools preferred, by DSIB rating			
DSIB Rating	MOE	UK	US
Good	-	90%	87%
Acceptable	87%	-	78%
Unsatisfactory	-	-	78%

Source: KHDA School Census 2012

The above tables show that acceptable and good US and acceptable MoE curriculum schools have a similar capacity utilisation rate, with a moderate amount of space for additional students. The one good UK curriculum school is nearly full while the one unsatisfactory MoE curriculum school has some available capacity.

## Emirati teachers in private schools

Emirati students comprise about 14% of the total student population in private schools but Emirati teachers are only 0.2% of the total teacher workforce in the 148 Dubai private schools. In Dubai private schools there are only 31 female Emirati teachers and no male Emirati teachers, whilst there are 1,144 female and 44 male Emirati teachers in public schools.

In the 24 private schools where most Emirati students are enrolled, there are 13 Emirati teachers out of the 2,500 teaching staff, comprising 0.5% of all teachers. Table 4 shows a similar proportion of Emirati teachers in these schools across the school phases. In comparison, more than half of the teachers in public schools in Dubai are Emirati and more than two-thirds of the female teachers are Emirati.

Table 4: Breakdown of teachers by nationality in 24 schools preferred by nationals				
	Emiratis	Expatriates	Total	% of Emiratis
KG	3	412	415	0.7%
Cycle1 (Grade 1-5)	5	885	890	0.6%
Cycle 2 (Grade 6-9)	3	648	651	0.5%
Secondary (Grade 10-13)	2	594	596	0.3%

Source: KHDA School Census 2012

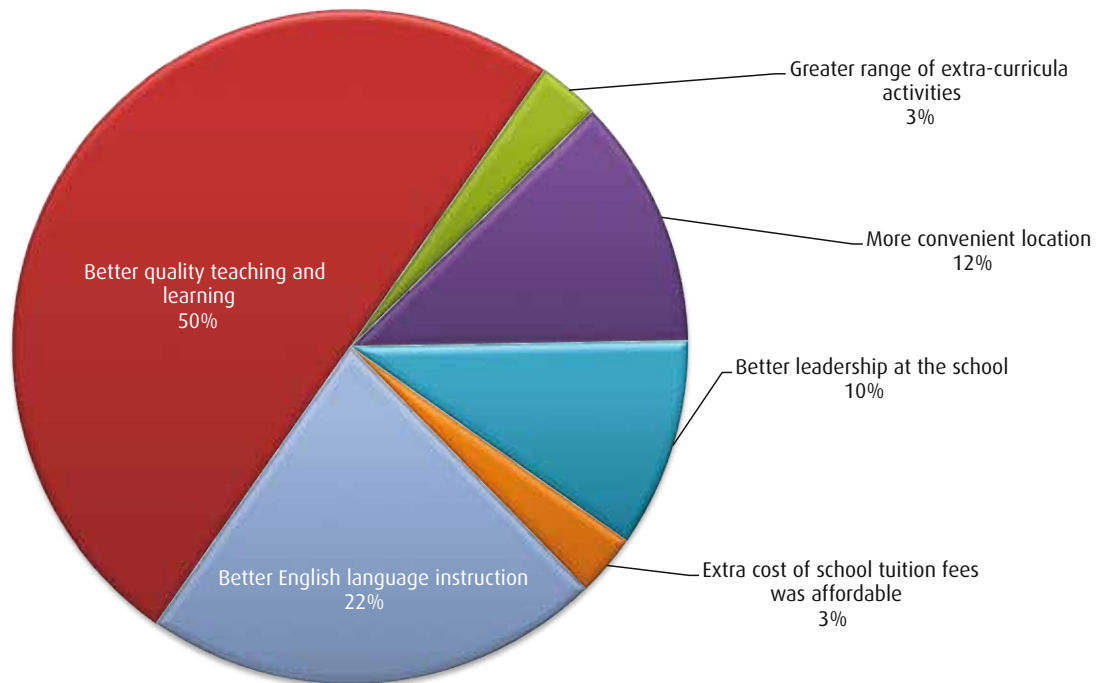


## Why Emirati parents prefer private schools

Emirati parents have different reasons and motivations for choosing private schools. For the last three years, the Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) has surveyed Emirati parents on their opinions and reasons for choosing the school that their children attend. The results of the most recent survey, as shown in Figure 10, indicate that Emirati parents base their preference for a private school principally on their perception that the school will provide their children with better learning and teaching (50%), better English language instruction (22%) and a better location of the school (12%); and, to a lesser degree, on better school leadership (10%), the affordability of fees (3%) and extracurricular activities (3%).



Figure 10: Why Emiratis send their children to private schools



Source: DSIB Parents Survey 2011

During face-to-face interviews with Emirati parents and Emirati senior school students, DSIB inspectors asked questions about the choice of schools and the reasons behind the selection of certain types of schools in order to gain a deeper understanding of parent choice. The main factors affecting the choice of schools for parents and students included:

- prominence given by the school to Arabic language and Islamic education;
- opportunities for students to improve their English skills through instruction in the medium of English;
- emphasis placed by the school upon Emirati culture and heritage;
- recommendations from other parents and recent DSIB inspection reports.

Emirati parents indicated that one of the main reasons for choosing a private school is that it helps their child gain a smoother entry to federally run universities.

## Attainment and progress of Emirati students

The previous section outlined the types of schools that Emirati students attend and how that has changed over time. The objective of this section is to discuss the learning environment in private schools and how this affects the performance and attainment of Emirati students. Two main approaches are used. The first is KHDA's use of international assessments to compare the performance of students within Dubai and with their peers in other countries. The second is the work of the Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau and the data that they have derived from inspecting private schools and viewing the improvements that have occurred in the quality of private schools in Dubai over the last four years.

### International assessments

#### Overview of international assessments given in Dubai

KHDA's decision to undertake international assessments was driven by its aim to benchmark the performance of its students to international standards. Dubai students participated in international assessments for the first time in 2007 with the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) that assesses Grade 4 and Grade 8 students. Unfortunately, TIMSS 2007 did not gather information related to the nationality of students and hence it is not possible to determine how Emirati students performed in the assessment. Therefore, TIMSS 2007 results cannot be included in this analysis. In 2009, Dubai participated for the first time in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), in which the nationality of students was identified. In 2011, Dubai also participated in TIMSS and PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) and both took account of student nationality. The results of the 2011 assessments are not yet available for use in this report.

#### Key findings

Recent research and data presented in this section indicate that:

- In PISA 2009, Emirati students in private schools performed better than students in other Arab countries participating in the assessment in all domains;
- In PISA 2009, Emirati students in UK curriculum schools are performing better than Emirati students in other curricula;
- In PISA 2009, female Emirati students outperformed male Emiratis in all domains in all types of Dubai schools.

## Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

PISA is an international assessment conducted every three years by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). PISA evaluates education systems in OECD participating countries and partner economies by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students in three domains: reading, science and mathematics. Dubai participated as a partner economy in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2009. The other emirates of the United Arab Emirates participated in PISA 2009+, a follow-up assessment that is similar in all respects to PISA 2009. The following analysis of PISA 2009 results covers only the assessments conducted in Dubai.

PISA 2009 results indicate that the Dubai average is higher than any of the other Arab countries. Emirati students in Dubai private schools outperformed both Emiratis in public schools and pupils in other participating Arab countries in reading and mathematical and science literacy. Nonetheless, average Emirati pupil performance in private schools is lower than the OECD scale average of 500 by 91 points in reading, 89 points in mathematics and 85 points in science.

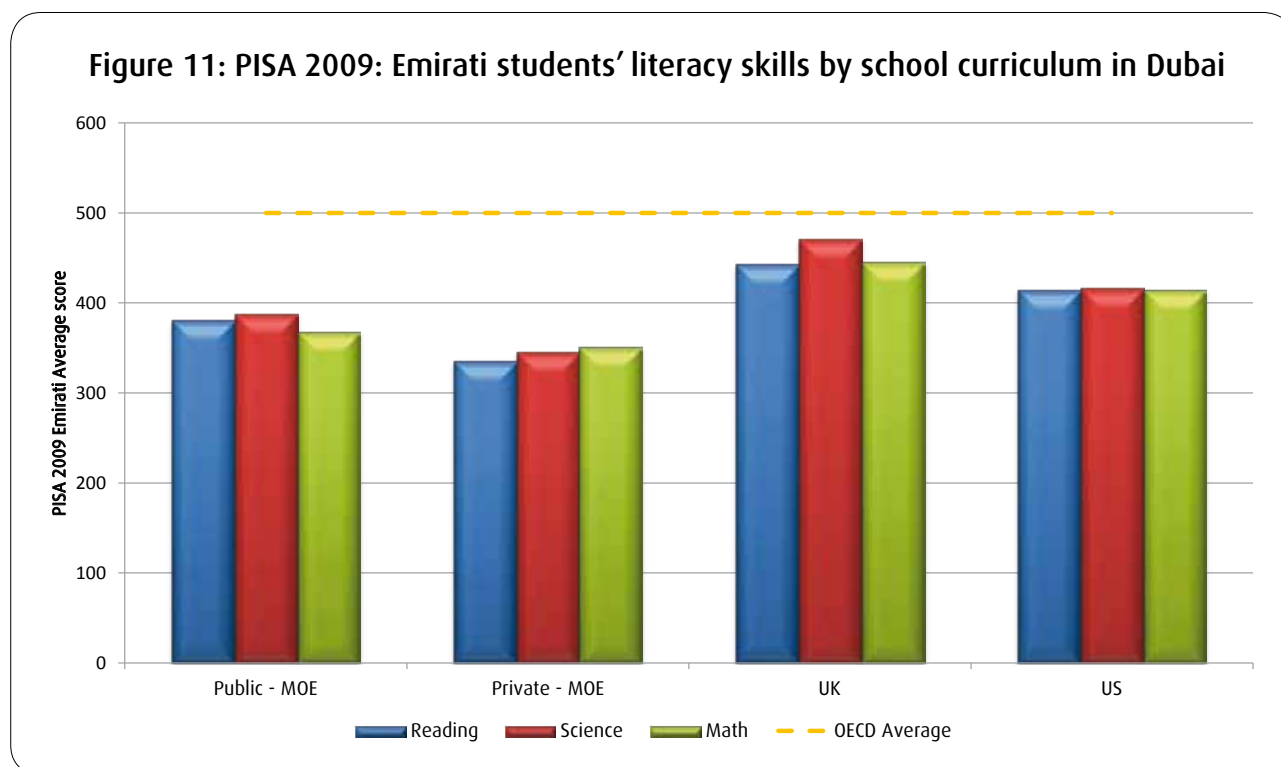
Overall, Emirati students in Dubai's private schools performed better than Emirati students in Dubai public schools. In reading, Emiratis in private schools did better than Emiratis in public schools by 28 points, with an average of 409 compared with that of 381 in public schools. In science, Emiratis in private schools performed better on average than Emiratis in public schools by a similar margin of 27 points; 415 to 388. In mathematics the difference was larger, with Emiratis in private schools outperforming their public school peers by 43 points; 411 to 368.

	Reading literacy	Maths literacy	Science literacy
Emirati students in private schools	409	411	415
Emirati students in public schools	381	368	388
Qatar	372	368	379
Jordan	405	387	415
Tunisia	404	371	401

Source: PISA 2009

## School curriculum differences

As mentioned earlier in the report, Emirati students mainly attend private schools that provide MoE, UK and US curricula. PISA 2009 results indicate that Emirati students who are studying at UK curriculum schools outperform other Emirati students in other types of schools, including public schools. Emirati students who are studying a US curriculum outperform those students studying at Ministry of Education curriculum schools. Emirati students in public MoE curriculum schools are doing marginally better than students at private MoE curriculum schools.



Source: PISA 2009

While Emirati students at UK curriculum schools were found to be the most proficient, their PISA results still did not reach the OECD international scale average, and were markedly lower than the results of non-Emiratis; in reading by 71 points, in science by 56 points and in mathematics by 60 points.

The mean score amongst Emirati students who are studying in US curriculum schools was only marginally above 400 in reading, science and mathematics. Similarly, their performance was lower than that of expatriate students in the same curriculum by 63 points in reading and science, and by 61 points in mathematics.

Finally, the performance of Emirati students at private MoE curriculum schools was lower than that of expatriate students studying the same curriculum by 81 points in reading, 78 points in science and 43 points in mathematics.

## Gender differences

In each country or partner economy that participated in PISA 2009, female students outperformed males in reading. The average differential was 39 points, while in Dubai it was higher at 51 points. Amongst Emiratis in all Dubai schools, the differential between female and male students was more pronounced, with females performing even better. Females outperformed males in all domains - in reading by an average of 79 points, in science by 56 points and in mathematics by 20 points.

In mathematics, Emirati students studying at public schools recorded lower gender differences than Emirati students at private schools with the same curriculum. In public schools, Emirati females outperformed Emirati males by 21 points, whereas in private MoE curriculum schools the gender difference was 52 points. Gender difference was lower between the Emirati students who were studying at US and UK curriculum schools.

**Table 6: Gender differences in Emirati student performance in PISA 2009**

Curriculum	Performance on the mathematics scale			Performance on the reading scale			Performance on the science scale		
	Males	Females	Difference	Males	Females	Difference	Males	Females	Difference
			(F - M)			(F - M)			(F - M)
Private UK	436	461	25	415	482	68	455	489	34
Private US	404	432	29	384	454	69	392	448	55
Private MoE	330	382	52	304	405	101	330	398	68
Public MoE	356	377	21	330	419	89	352	415	63

Source: PISA 2009

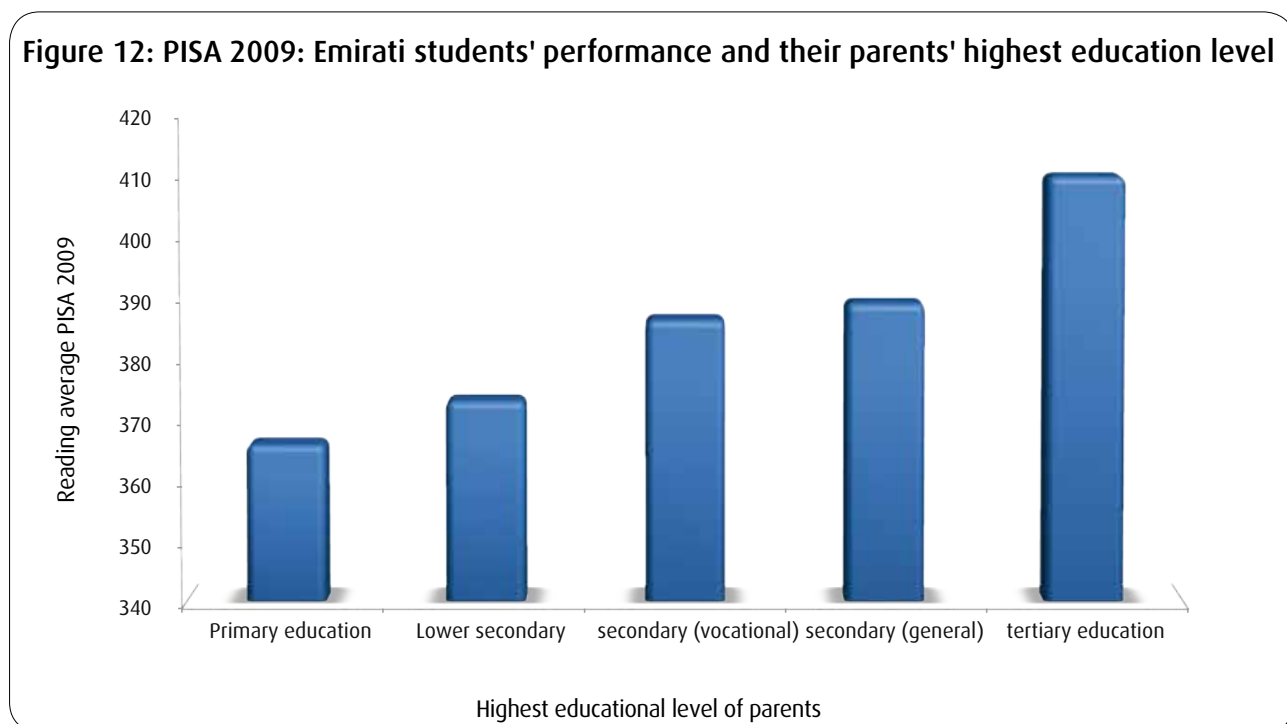
In the reading domain, which was the focus for PISA 2009, Emirati students who were studying in private MoE curriculum schools recorded the highest gender difference, with Emirati girls outperforming Emirati boys by 101 points.

In science, Emirati students who were studying in UK curriculum schools recorded the lowest gender difference, with females outperforming males by 34 points. As with reading and mathematics, Emirati students who were studying in private MoE curriculum schools recorded the highest gender differential, with Emirati females outperforming Emirati males by 68 points in science.



## Parents' level of education and PISA results

PISA 2009 also included questionnaires that provided details on the socio-economic background of students. Statistically there is a correlation between parents' education level and the performance of all participating students, including Emiratis. In the reading domain, Figure 12 shows that the average score for Emirati students whose parents did not progress beyond primary education was 366 points, while those who had at least one parent with a tertiary education qualification scored an average of 410 points.



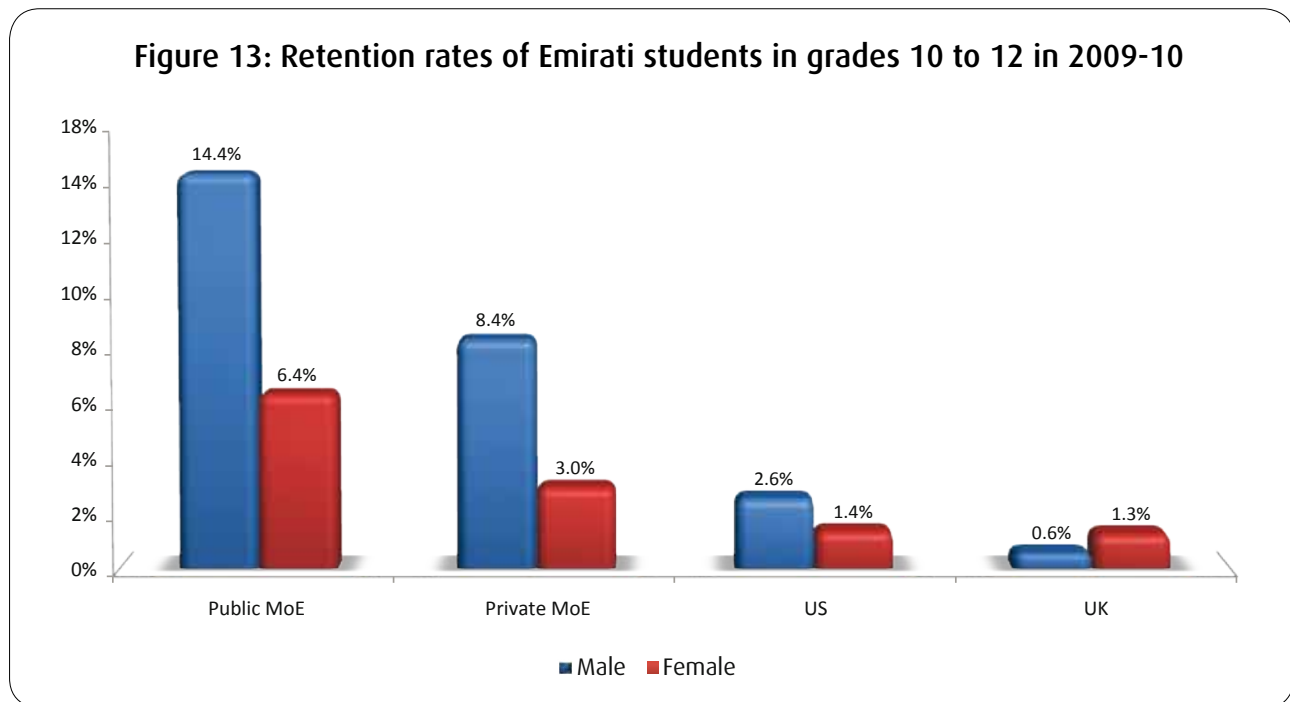
Source: PISA 2009

## Retention rates of Emirati students in Dubai schools

Failing in one or more subjects in the school curriculum often results in a student being retained in the same grade the following year. While few comprehensive statistics have been collected on the retention rate of Emirati students, the analysis of PISA 2009 demographic data indicates that around 12% of 15-year-old students in Dubai had repeated one or more years of school. It is a figure that is comparable to the OECD average of 15%. However, PISA 2009 data indicate that Emirati students have higher retention rates than students of other nationalities in Dubai. While 19% of Emirati students were found to have repeated the same grade, only 8% of students from other Arab countries and 10% of non-Arab expatriate students had repeated a grade by the age of 15.

Male Emirati students were more likely to have repeated than Emirati female students. One quarter of Emirati male students had repeated a grade by the age of 15, compared with 14% of Emirati females. The objective of retention is to improve the attainment level of students. The results of PISA 2009, however, indicate that in Dubai this objective is not being achieved - students who had repeated a grade performed less well than those who had not. The retention rate of Emirati male students is very high and indicates that the current practice may not be yielding the desired results.

In a comparative study for the school year 2009-2010 from school census data, it is clear that a school's curriculum has a strong bearing on whether students are retained or not. Figure 13 shows that senior students at US and UK curriculum schools have quite low retention rates compared with students at MoE curriculum schools. Generally, more male students were retained than female students.



Source: KHDA School Census 2009-2010

## Assessments of Emirati students from private school inspections

Using data from Dubai private school inspections in 2011-12, this section evaluates how effectively private schools in Dubai have promoted success for Emirati students.

DSIB inspected 138 private schools in Dubai in the 2011-2012 inspection cycle. It collected information from all schools with Emirati students. There was a particular focus on the 93 private schools that had five or more Emirati students enrolled.

Prior to each inspection, schools were asked to provide information regarding the achievement of Emirati students in five key subjects (Islamic education, Arabic, English, mathematics and science). Questionnaires about the performance of the school were distributed to Emirati parents and Emirati students in Grades 10 to 12. During the inspection, classes involving Emirati students were observed. Inspectors also interviewed groups of students of different ages, including Emiratis. Inspectors met with school governors and with parents. In each context, Emirati parents were invited to participate.

## Key findings

Recent research and data presented in this section:

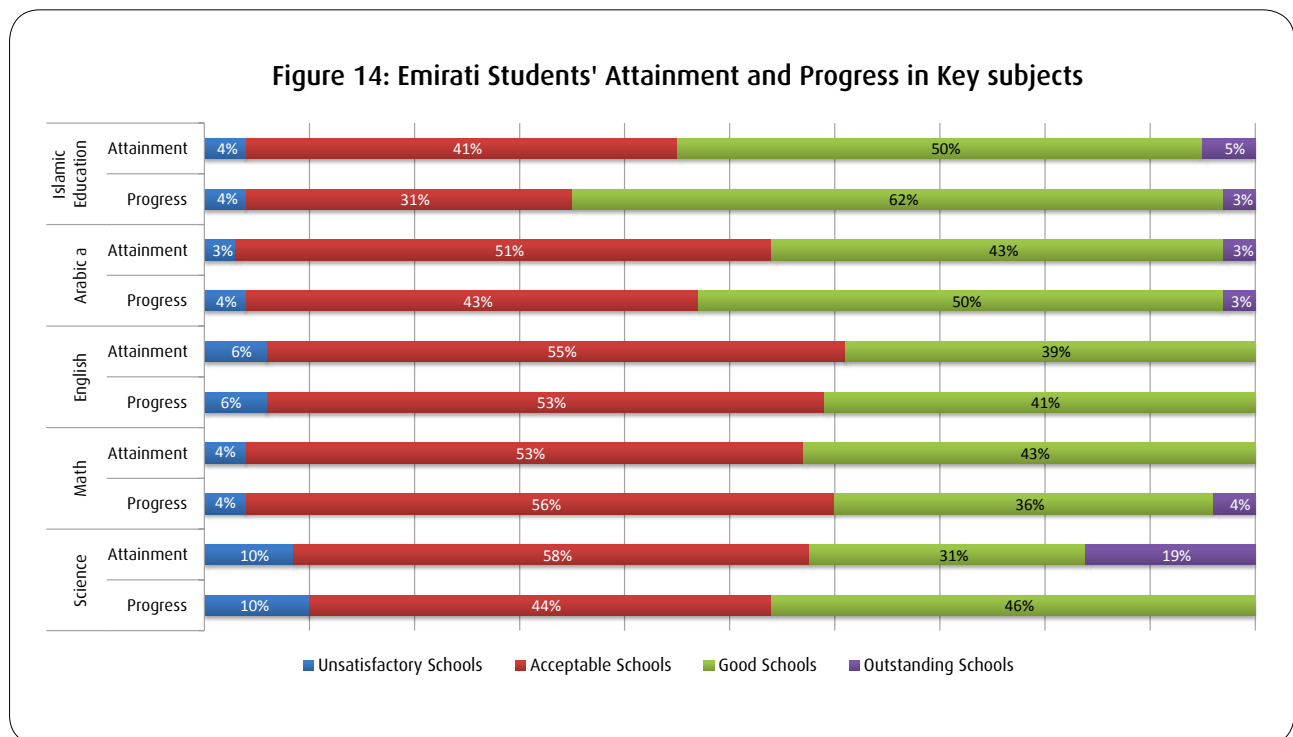
- Inspection evidence indicates that the achievement of Emirati students in better performing schools was good and, in most cases, in line with their peers of other nationalities attending the same schools. However, the Emirati students attending better performing schools are in a minority;
- Inspection evidence indicates that Emirati girls outperform Emirati boys in all key subjects across most phases of schooling;
- Inspection evidence indicates that the attainment of Emirati students in Islamic education and Arabic is broadly in line with expected levels, as set by DSIB;
- Inspection evidence indicates noticeable underachievement by Emirati students in private schools across all phases of education in the key subjects of English, mathematics and science as compared to their peers attending schools of the same curriculum and most notably when they attend lower performing schools;
- Inspection evidence indicates that the majority of Emirati students attend US curriculum schools that do not provide any form of external certification except the schools' own secondary school diploma;
- Inspection evidence indicates that the attitudes and behaviour of Emirati students are broadly good, but in a significant minority of cases, in lower performing schools, senior boys do not demonstrate appropriate attitudes to their learning;
- Inspection evidence indicates that the attendance of Emirati students in good and outstanding schools matched that of other students in the school. It was more variable in lower performing schools and was a significant factor in the underachievement of boys in the later stages of their education in unsatisfactory private schools in Dubai.

## Emirati student attainment and progress in key subjects

Besides PISA 2009 results, the data gained from DSIB inspections provided a further means of evaluating the attainment and progress of Emirati students. Inspectors evaluated Emirati students' attainment in key subjects in all Dubai private schools with Emirati enrolment. Using information provided by the school, including assessment results and observations in lessons, the inspectors judged the progress made by students in the key school subjects of Islamic education, Arabic, English, mathematics and science.

The attainment of Emirati students in Islamic education and Arabic was broadly in line with expected levels and similar to that of their peers in other private schools. However, in English, mathematics and science their achievement was often lower than that of their non-Emirati peers, most notably when they attended lower performing schools.

In English, for example, the number of Emirati students performing at an unsatisfactory or unacceptable level was double that of expatriate students attending Dubai private schools. Similarly in science, only a third of Emirati students achieved good standards as compared to students of other nationalities. Figure 13 shows that a much higher percentage of Emirati students, around 10%, achieved unsatisfactory levels of attainment in science. In mathematics a majority of Emirati students achieved acceptable standards, and there was a greater proportion of students with good attainment levels than in English and science.



Source: DSIB Inspections 2011-12

The inspectors found that the progress of Emirati students in key subjects follows a similar pattern to that noted above regarding attainment. However, in English, mathematics and science, their progress is often slower than that of their peers, most notably when they attend lower performing schools. In English, mathematics and science, over half of all Emirati students were judged to be making either acceptable or unsatisfactory progress. The inspectors noticed that younger Emirati students enrolled in schools where English is the medium of instruction often experienced difficulties accessing the curriculum. They often required intensive English language and learning support, but in too many cases did not receive such support.

The inspectors reported that Emirati girls outperformed Emirati boys in all key subjects across most phases of schooling. Inspectors noted higher levels of attainment and better progress for both boys and girls in higher performing schools, where better teaching leads to faster progress.

In lower performing schools, particularly in middle and secondary school phases, boys' progress was slower, often as a result of poor motivation and low teacher expectations. In segregated schools, better attitudes to learning were evident in girls' sections of the schools compared to that of the boys'. This is again most evident in the latter stages of schooling. In a few schools, achievement in science and mathematics by senior boys was strong.

Around one third of Emirati students attend private schools rated as good. In these schools, consistently good quality teaching is a key factor in ensuring that all students, including Emiratis, make good or better progress. Tasks are carefully planned according to the particular needs of different students in each class. Emirati students are accurately assessed and their strengths and weaknesses identified. Teachers have high expectations of their students and make learning relevant, interesting and engaging for students.

### Emirati students' attitudes and behaviour

To assess students' attitudes and behaviour, inspectors evaluate a number of key aspects relating to the school. They review students' attitudes, their relationships with one another and with adults, students' personal responsibility and their adoption of a healthy lifestyle. Students' attendance and punctuality are also examined.

Inspectors found that Emirati students were, in most cases, very well-behaved and enthusiastic learners. In the early years, however, developing skills in English had an impact on the engagement and motivation of a significant minority of Emirati students. Similarly, older students who had recently transferred from another school took time to adapt to the new schools' expectations regarding initiative, responsibility, attendance and punctuality. In a few schools, the behaviour of Emirati boys was unsatisfactory. This was evident particularly in unsatisfactory schools. In low performing senior schools Emirati boys often demonstrated poor attitudes to learning.

Inspectors found that good and outstanding schools have well-developed, robust and consistently well-implemented behaviour management policies. Expectations are high and Emirati students respond in the same way as other well-behaved students. Challenging behaviour in such schools is managed positively, with close liaison and communication with parents. Where patterns of attendance cause concern, high performing schools monitor the attendance and punctuality of individual students and groups within the school and often devise innovative reward schemes to promote better levels of attendance.

### How well does the curriculum meet the needs of Emirati students?

In all Dubai private schools, inspectors evaluated whether the curriculum met the learning needs of the students. A majority of Emirati students attend schools in which the curriculum was judged to meet their needs to an acceptable level. In good and outstanding schools, inspectors noted that a number of the curriculum's features catered to Emirati students even in those contexts where Emiratis were a minority.

Almost all US curriculum schools chosen by Emiratis do not follow any specific US curriculum standards. The curriculum in such schools is often no more than acceptable as it lacks breadth, balance and relevance. Although linked closely to US textbooks, the curriculum is not adapted well by schools to make it relevant and interesting to Emirati students, particularly boys. Students cannot always associate what they learn to their everyday lives and have too few opportunities to engage in practical work, investigations, problem-solving and critical thinking.

Amongst the US curriculum schools, it is notable that most Emiratis attend schools which do not currently provide any form of external certification, except the secondary school diploma.

Around 15% of Emirati students attend private schools offering a Ministry of Education curriculum. In almost all of these schools the curriculum was evaluated as no more than acceptable by inspectors. There were no examples of good curriculum breadth or balance. In most cases the schools provided a text-based curriculum with an over-reliance on routine tasks that neither met the needs of all students, including Emiratis, nor challenged them appropriately.

A significant number of private schools did not ensure that Emirati students attended the required Arabic programme for first language learners.

In schools where the curriculum was rated acceptable or unsatisfactory, the inspectors found that the Kindergarten curricula were often not sufficiently adapted to meet the needs of Emirati students whose understanding of English was lower than expected. As second language learners, additional resources and support were often required but not in place. Delayed early learning slowed students' achievement as they progressed through the school. While Emirati students quickly developed oral language and listening skills, their reading and writing skills required more time and more effective support from school staff. By secondary schools these weaknesses frequently impacted on students' attainment and progress.

### Emirati students with special educational needs

The DSIB inspectors also reported on Emirati students with special educational needs in Dubai's private schools. These students are categorised according to the six main areas of special educational needs as identified by the Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau. The students typically have physical, sensory and specific learning needs such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia. A minority of these students are on the autistic spectrum or have been diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome. A few Emirati students with special educational needs are categorised as gifted and talented, in a similar proportion to the rest of the school population.



Most of these students are enrolled in schools delivering a US or MoE curriculum and are predominantly in the Kindergarten and elementary sections of the schools. A minority of Emirati students with special educational needs are enrolled in schools delivering UK and IB curricula. Very few of them attend schools delivering any other curriculum.

The identification of Emirati students with special educational needs is variable and is reflective of the individual school's capacity to identify accurately the needs of the students. The inspectors found that UK and IB schools are the most effective in having secure identification procedures in place. These procedures had several common elements. Special educational needs policies had been developed. These policies reflected the broad range of general and specific needs of these students. The schools in general have expertise available, either within the school or through contracts with external agencies, to administer appropriate tests. When the tests have identified a need, individual educational plans are designed. Such plans are, in the best settings, inclusive of the ongoing contributions of parents, sometimes students themselves, teachers and external specialists. In contrast, the inspectors found that the identification procedures and capacities of US and MoE curricula schools were, in the main, not as well advanced. These schools were less knowledgeable of the categories, less skilled in the recognition of the signs that the students displayed and less sure of how to design and monitor improvement programmes for them. Common to all schools with Emirati students with special educational needs, however, was a commitment to support these students as fully as possible and a willingness to ensure that everything that could be provided for any individual student was either in place or planned for.

Inspectors' findings show that, in all the private schools where Emirati students with special educational needs are enrolled, they receive a range of services. In good and outstanding schools - where provision for these students is good - relevant, inclusive and specific individual education plans are in place. Such plans have short- and long-term targets that meet the needs of the students. Regular specialist support is provided, typically in a one-to-one setting or occasionally in a small group setting outside the classroom. In these settings, special resources, reflecting a range of teaching and learning strategies, are available. In the specialist settings, students are often treated with great sensitivity, engaged in open-ended questioning that allows the students to answer successfully but only when understanding has been mastered and steps are taken in their learning that promote significant progress over time. Close monitoring of the progress ensures that the students' achievement reflects genuine and sustained progress in the development of the skills they need to improve. In classes the students receive focused support that reflects the topic being covered. This support differentiates the tasks assigned on a particular topic appropriately in order to ensure that the students can make similar levels of progress to the other students attending the lesson. The capacity of teachers to ensure that this successfully takes place is variable. It is only in schools with good or outstanding provision for Emirati students with special educational needs that the in-class support is continuously focused, relevant, achievable and regularly assessed.

A few Emirati students with physical impairment attend mainstream private schools and, in the main, the judgement of inspectors is that they are supported well. For such students, schools with good provision enable the students to have easy physical access to all levels of the schools. The schools provide necessary resources for the students to manipulate their learning tasks in a manner that supports the ongoing progress of individual students. Good and outstanding schools are best at ensuring that the students are not hindered in their cognitive, social, emotional and sensory development because of their physical impairment. In schools where provision for students with special educational needs was judged as acceptable, Emirati students with physical difficulties often cannot move about the school independently and do not have access to the range and quality of specific resources which they need to progress.



## Partnership of schools with Emirati parents

Emirati parents and students contributed to inspections through the completion of surveys and through their attendance at interviews with inspectors. In 2011-12, DSIB received over 2,300 questionnaires from Emirati parents and senior school students. Only ten per cent of Emirati parents completed the DSIB survey, compared to over half of other parents in private schools.

In the private schools attended by Emirati students, inspectors evaluated partnerships with parents to be acceptable in around half of all cases. Emirati parents who were interviewed by the inspectors shared strong views about the quality of education available in their children's schools. Most parents either strongly agreed or agreed that their child was making good progress in Islamic education. They were much less positive about progress in Arabic, English and mathematics. Emirati parents stated in their questionnaire returns that they felt welcome in school.

In a number of schools judged to be acceptable or unsatisfactory by DSIB, Emirati parents felt that the academic information provided by the school was not detailed enough and did not include sufficient guidance to help them improve their children's performance.

In the unsatisfactory and acceptable schools, inspectors observed that parents were generally not sufficiently involved in the work of the school. Emirati students stated that they obtained only intermittent educational support at home from parents. Help with homework, discussions about their daily learning, story-telling and educational resources were not present to the same degree as in families of other nationalities. It was often reported to inspectors that it was the nanny who helped or completed the homework of younger children. In contrast, many good or outstanding schools reported that Emirati parents showed a high level of interest in their children's education. They attended school activity days and performances on a regular basis.

Across all schools, Emirati parents were members of parents' forums, advisory councils and committees, such as the Parent Teacher Association. However, only a few boards of governors had Emirati parental representation.

In most schools attended by Emiratis, communication to parents about school activities was effective. These schools provided reading and homework logs and others had websites that enabled parents to be more involved in their children's education while at home. Many schools used SMS or the internet to maintain contact. Emirati parents in most schools expressed high levels of satisfaction with communication between school and home. Information about school improvement and about the future direction of the school was less evident, even in high performing schools.

Many Emirati students, particularly boys, rely on out-of-school tutoring to help them develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. While no specific data have been collected on the extent of private tutoring amongst Dubai's Emirati students, PISA data show that more than half of 15-year-old Emirati students have taken out-of-school lessons, which is higher than the OECD average.

Higher performing schools have encouraged Emirati parents to visit and observe lessons. This often helps parents gain a fuller understanding of the mission and practice of the school and facilitates a collaborative approach to supporting the learning of each child.

As noted by the inspectors, good and outstanding schools demonstrate initiative and commitment to involving all parents in the life and work of the schools. For example, in cases where few male Emirati parents attend meetings or open-day events, these schools devise specific events to capture the interest and contribution of such parents. These schools obtain the involvement and commitment of Emirati parents by demonstrating cultural sensitivity and understanding of best international practice, as well as by having strong induction arrangements for new students and parents.



In schools where partnership with parents is judged as outstanding, reports to parents about their children are often detailed, comprehensive and accurate. They include clearly stated next steps which parents understand and can act upon at home. Such reports avoid educational jargon and regular meetings are held between teachers and parents during which their children's progress is discussed.

### Factors influencing Emirati student achievement

Inspectors found Emirati student achievement to be influenced by a number of factors. These include:

#### **The length of time the students have spent in their current schools**

There is a greater rate of transfer from one private school to another by Emirati families compared with expatriate families. This can affect the students' continuity of education. It often leads to a repetition of work and omission of key skills and knowledge.

#### **The students' attendance patterns**

The attendance of Emirati students in good and outstanding schools matches that of other students in the school. However, it was more variable in lower performing schools, becoming a significant factor in the underachievement of boys in the later stages of their education in unsatisfactory schools.

#### **The schools' ability to monitor individual students' progress**

Most schools only began to closely monitor the achievement of groups of students, including that of Emiratis, in the last year. Consequently, most schools are not sufficiently aware of the discrepancies in achievement between different groups of students. For many schools attended by Emirati students, attainment data is school-based. The schools do not use internationally benchmarked examinations or, if they have used such tests, they do not use the results effectively.

#### **The students' attitude and behaviour**

In most schools Emirati students demonstrated very good behaviour, in line with other students at the same school. However, in the early years, a lack of English had an impact on the engagement and motivation of a notable minority of Emirati students. Similarly, older students who had recently transferred to another school took time to adapt to the new school's expectations regarding initiative, responsibility, attendance and punctuality. In a few schools, the behaviour of Emirati boys was unsatisfactory. This was particularly observed in unsatisfactory schools.

## The transition of Emirati students to higher education

Emirati students have many opportunities to continue to higher education after they graduate from secondary school. They can join federal or private universities in Dubai or elsewhere in the UAE, or apply to study abroad. This section will analyse available data from universities located in Dubai. Dubai universities are either the free federal universities overseen by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research or the private universities which are located in or outside Dubai Free Zones. Dubai universities which are located in Free Zones are mainly located in Dubai International Academic City, Dubai International Financial Centre, Dubai Knowledge Village, Dubai Internet City and Dubai Healthcare City.

While Emirati school students tend to attend private schools close to the communities in which they live, they are more mobile when it comes to studying at higher education institutes. Dubai-based Emirati students show a willingness to attend tertiary institutions in other emirates, while students from other emirates will similarly travel to Dubai for their tertiary education. In addition, some Dubai-based school students will choose to study in overseas higher education institutes. This mobility means that two separate approaches need to be taken to assess the transition from school to higher education. The first is to study Emirati enrolment at universities, while the second is to follow a cohort of students as they graduate from school.



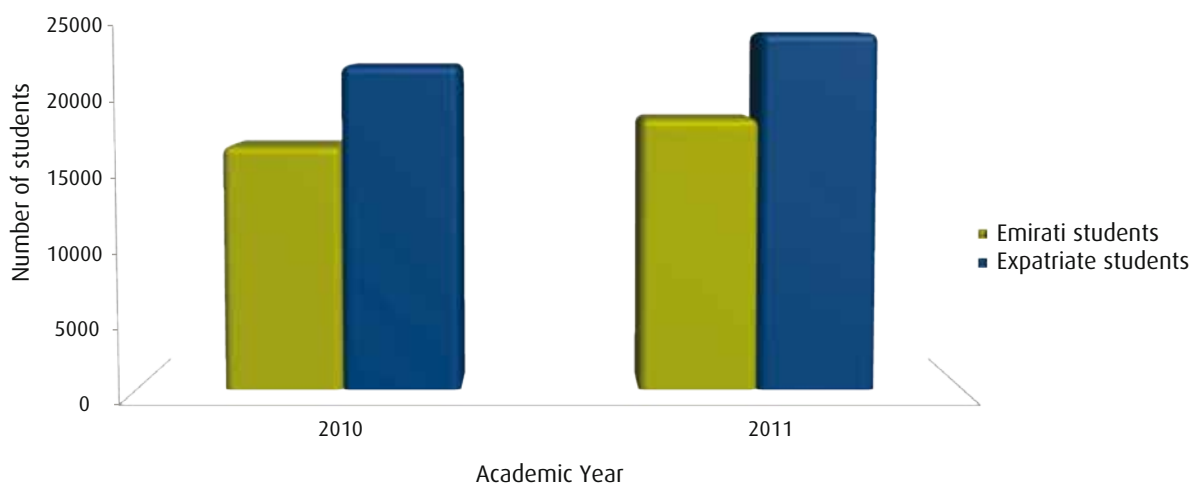
## Key findings

- The number of Emiratis enrolled in Dubai’s higher education institutes in 2011 reached 18,708, an increase of 11% from 2010;
- 42% of Emirati tertiary students in Dubai, the majority of whom are female, attend a federal university;
- A 2008 cohort study indicated that Emirati students attending private schools are more likely to enrol at higher education institutes than those from public schools;
- Emirati students attending private schools are more likely to achieve 180 and above in the Common Educational Proficiency Assessment (CEPA), indicating a level of English sufficient for direct entry to degree-level courses;
- The main factor Emirati students consider when choosing a Dubai-based branch campus of a foreign university is the perception that the international qualifications it offers has greater value;
- 55% of Emiratis in Dubai’s higher education sector major in business.

## Emirati students’ enrolment in higher education institutions

In 2011/12, there were 52 higher education institutions in Dubai, with 31 universities located inside Free Zones, 18 outside Free Zones and 3 federal universities. Data from the higher education census 2011 showed a total of 43,212 students studying in federal and private universities in Dubai. Of those, 18,708 were Emirati. Figure 15 shows that the number of Emirati students in higher education institutes in 2011 increased by 11% from 2010.

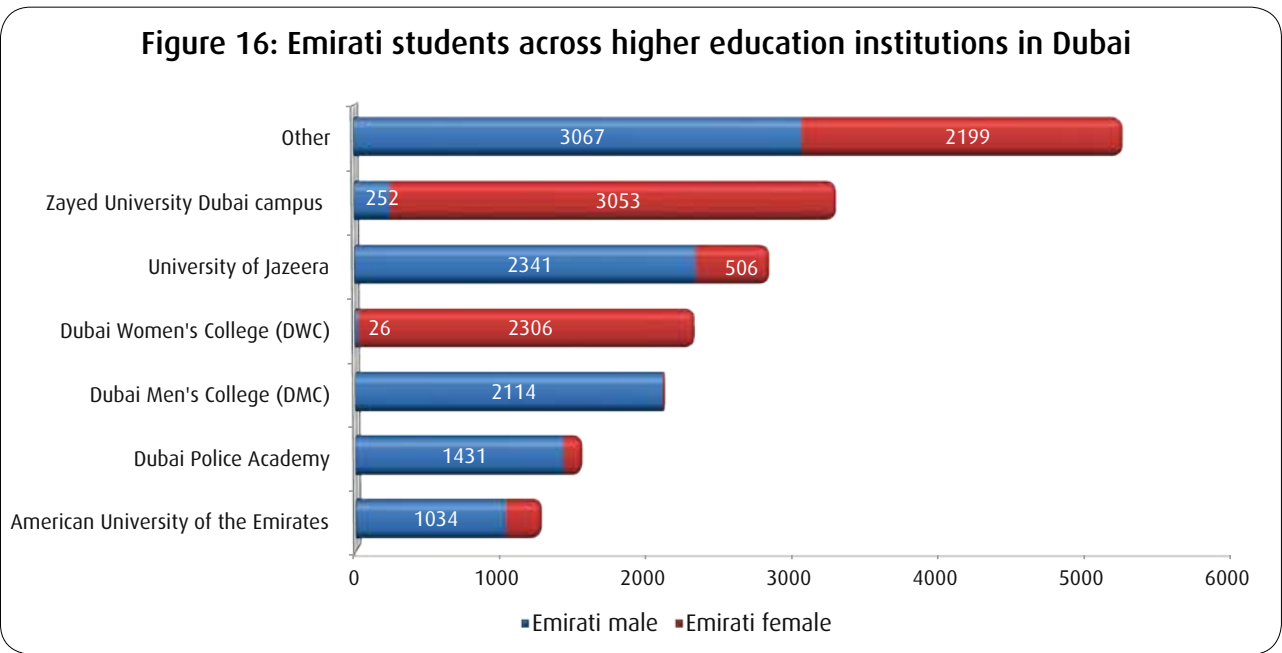
**Figure 15: Higher education student enrolments in Dubai by nationality**



Source: KHDA Higher Education Census 2011

The Higher Education Census 2011 indicates that 42% of Emirati students in Dubai attend the three federal universities. While 64% of female Emirati students were studying at federal universities, just 23% of Emirati males were doing so, many of them choosing to travel to UAE University in Al Ain. This pattern of enrolment could be attributed to social factors – unlike private universities, federal universities are segregated by gender, which Emirati parents prefer for their daughters. In addition, many Emirati males chose to study at private universities such as Al Jazeera University, the Dubai Police Academy or the American University of the Emirates, as illustrated in Figure 16.

**Figure 16: Emirati students across higher education institutions in Dubai**



Source: KHDA Higher Education Census 2011



## Transition to higher education and work

KHDA conducted a cohort study of all Emiratis who graduated from Dubai secondary schools in the summer of 2008. This was a total of 2,657 students: 1,356 males (51%) and 1301 females (49%). The students attended four main types of schools: public schools, the Institute of Applied Technology (IAT), private schools which offered different international curricula in English and private schools offering the MoE curriculum in Arabic.

	Male	Female	Total
Public MoE	490	835	1325
IAT	242	-	242
Private MoE	203	121	324
Private Other	421	345	766
Total	1356	1301	2657

**Source: KHDA cohort study**

This was the first time that a comprehensive study has been made of a cohort of Emirati school graduates in Dubai. By the end of the study, information had been obtained on 79% of the male and 92% of the female graduates that had been contacted. One of the main findings of the cohort study was that the majority of Emirati private school graduates continued on to higher education, with the enrolment rate for women being much higher than that for men.

Males who had studied in English were more likely to go on to higher education. 83% from private schools with international curricula and 71% from IAT continued to higher education institutions. This compared with 30% of those who attended public schools and 54% of those in private schools with the MoE curriculum. On the other hand, larger numbers of males graduating from public schools (50%) and private schools with the MoE curriculum (32%) went from school directly to employment. A small minority of the male secondary school graduates from all types of schools were neither working nor studying 10 months after finishing secondary school.

Like the males, most females (95%) who attended private secondary schools with international curricula continued their education at university. A similar small minority of the female secondary school graduates from all types of schools were neither working nor studying 10 months after finishing secondary school. A significant number of females from public schools (44%) remained at home. The majority of Emirati females who were employed went to public schools.

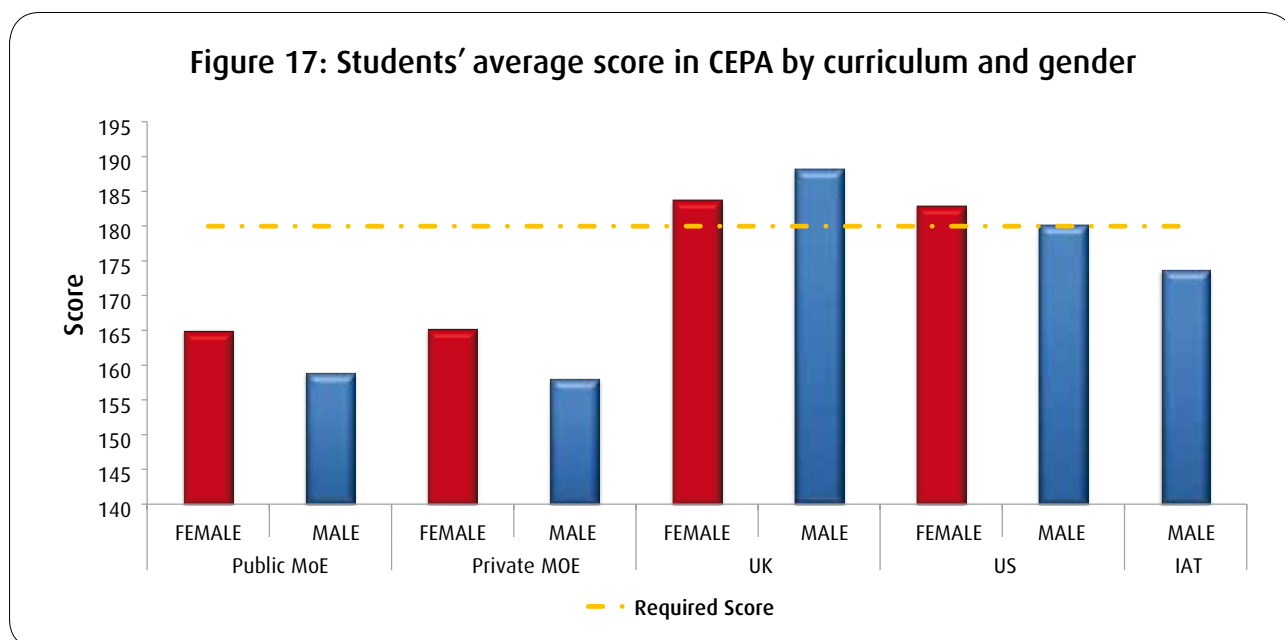
## Foundation programmes and CEPA

Federal universities and colleges teach in English and require students to have a good attainment of English before commencing their degrees. Emirati students who graduate from many of the secondary schools that are taught in Arabic are often ill-prepared to meet these requirements, and so must undertake additional training, especially in English. Overall, 86% of Emirati students who enrolled in federal universities in 2008 were obliged to attend a foundation programme before commencing their university studies.

There is little consistency in how well schools prepare Emirati students for university. This can be identified through Emirati students' performance in the Common Educational Proficiency Assessment (CEPA) and the proportion of Emirati students enrolled in foundation programmes. Students who score 180 points and above in CEPA are, in many cases, in a position to commence their undergraduate degrees without first enrolling in a foundation programme.

The Common Educational Proficiency Assessment (CEPA) is a prerequisite for Emirati students who want to apply through the National Admissions and Placement Office (NAPO) to gain a scholarship to study abroad or study at the government universities: The United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), The Higher Colleges of Technology or Zayed University. CEPA measures the students' performance in two main subjects: mathematics and English. Students who plan to attend a private university within the UAE do not need to take CEPA tests.

Data for the year 2010 show that 2,180 Emirati students in Dubai took the CEPA assessment: 1,279 from public schools and 901 from private schools. Figure 17 shows that, on average, Emirati students in UK and US curriculum schools achieved better CEPA results than students in public MoE, private MoE and IAT curriculum schools.



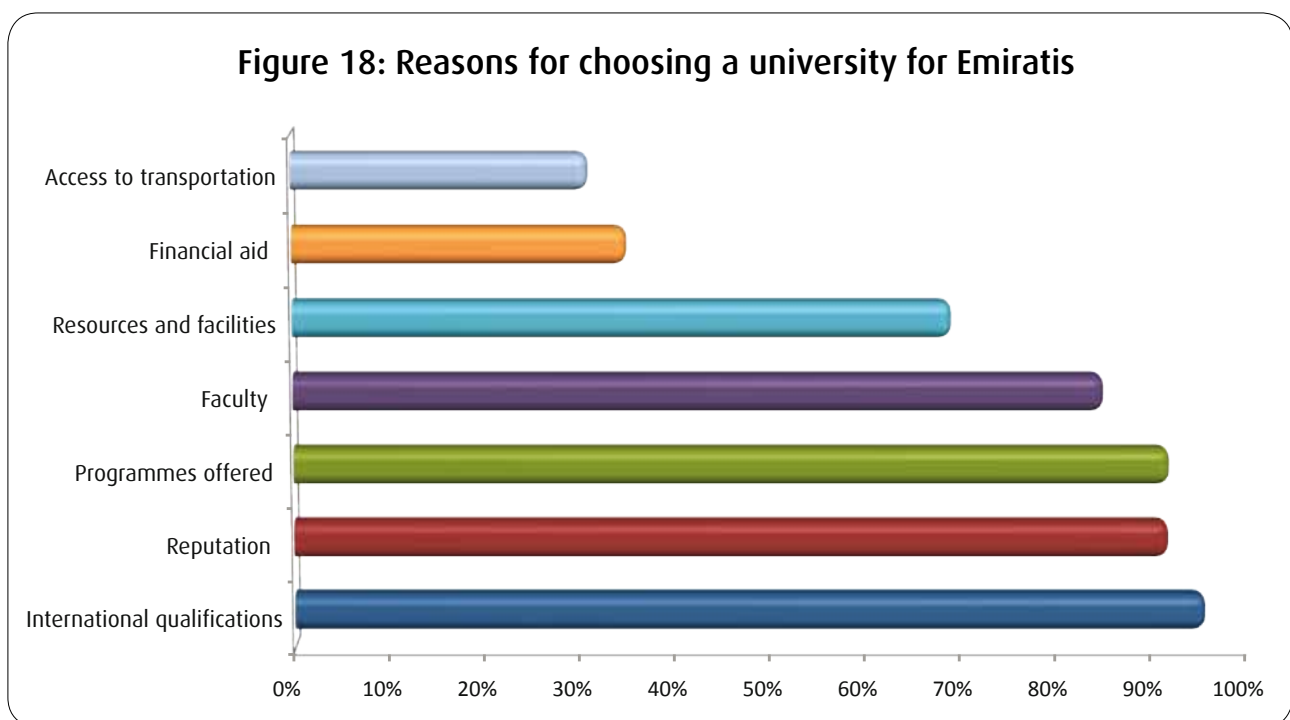
Source: National Admissions & Placement Office, CEPA results 2010

Out of 2,180 students, 568 obtained more than the required score of 180 points. 76% of Emiratis who attended UK-curriculum schools and 59% of those in the US curriculum schools attained this level. This contrasts with a figure of 9% for those in private MoE schools.

Data from the higher education census of 2011-2012 show that the number of Emirati students in foundation programmes in the 2011-2012 academic year was 2,394. Of these, 2,231 were enrolled in federal institutions and 163 in other higher education institutions.

## Factors influencing Emirati students' choice of university

For the last two years, KHDA has conducted an online survey of higher education students attending Free Zone institutions in Dubai. KHDA uses the Higher Education Student Satisfaction survey to identify the students' level of satisfaction with their higher education institutions and the programmes they are studying. Figure 18 shows that the five main factors which influence Emirati students' choice of particular Free Zone universities are: international qualifications offered by the university, the reputation of the university, the programmes offered by the university, the quality of the faculty and, finally, the resources and the facilities. Financial aid and availability of transportation or housing were less important influences on Emirati students' university choice.

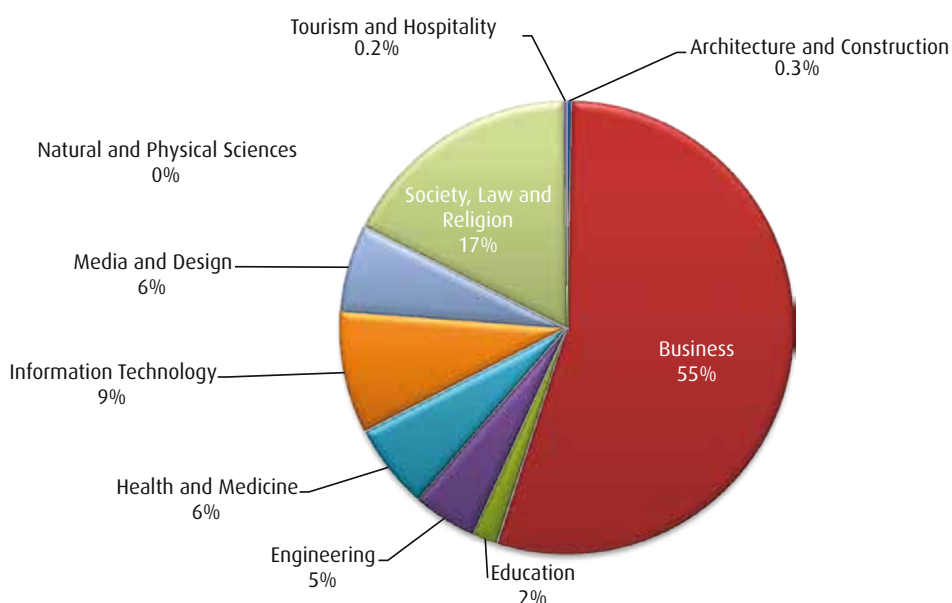


Source: KHDA Higher Education Census 2011

## Fields of study for Emirati graduates

Figure 19 shows that most Emirati students (55%) graduating from Dubai universities had majored in business, followed by 17% in social studies, 9% in sharia and law, 6% in media, 6% in health and only 5% in engineering. No Emiratis graduated with a degree in the natural and physical sciences. Similarly, there are few Emiratis graduating in subjects related to priority growth sectors for Dubai such as tourism and hospitality (0.2%), architecture and construction (0.3%) and education (2%).

**Figure 19: Emirati graduates by field of study - 2011**



Source: KHDA Higher Education Census 2011

## Successful completion of tertiary education for Emiratis

In 2011, 2,904 Emiratis graduated from higher education institutions in Dubai, a slightly lower number than in 2010 when 3,083 Emirati students graduated.

Table 8: Emirati Students graduating from higher education institutions in Dubai			
Year	Total Emiratis	Emirati males	Emirati females
2010	3,083	1,477	1,606
2011	2,904	1,383	1,521

Source: KHDA Higher Education Census 2011

## Conclusion

The purpose of any educational system is to meet the national and individual needs of the students and to prepare them for lives as active citizens. Government policies at the federal and local levels highlight the critical importance of providing a first-rate education for Emiratis. In Dubai, with its high proportion of Emiratis in private schools, this focuses attention on how government can influence the role of private schools in advancing the quality of education provided to Emiratis.

The findings in this report have provided an overview of the current status of the education of Emiratis in Dubai's private schools, as well as various factors associated with these schools. It presents a baseline of the current situation by presenting all available information in the one report for policymakers and other stakeholders to use as evidence for developing policies and strategies. Further analysis of the data is continuing and will be provided by KHDA in subsequent reports.

Areas for future research and analysis will examine the results of DSIB inspection findings and international assessments, particularly with the release of TIMSS/PIRLS 2011 data. Gender differences will continue to be paramount, as well as how the cultural needs of Emirati students are met. KHDA will use this data to identify the quality of schooling that Emirati students receive and will develop policies, in collaboration with the school community, to continue to improve the quality of education for Emirati students.



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## Related Publications

<p>In search of Good Education Why Emirati parents choose private schools in Dubai</p>	<p>Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau The Overall Performance of Private Schools Key Findings 2011-2012</p>
 <p>The cover features a green and yellow abstract design with palm fronds. The title 'In search of Good Education' is prominently displayed in the center, with the subtitle 'Why Emirati parents choose private schools in Dubai' below it. The DSIB logo is in the bottom right corner.</p>	 <p>The cover shows a young boy in a school uniform looking at a book. The title 'THE OVERALL PERFORMANCE OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS' is at the top, with 'Key Findings 2011-2012' below it. The DSIB logo is in the bottom left corner.</p>
<p>Private Schools Landscape in Dubai 2011 / 2012</p>	<p>The Higher Education Landscape in Dubai 2011</p>
 <p>The cover depicts a group of children playing on a large wooden wheel-like structure. The title 'Private Schools Landscape in Dubai' is at the top, with '2011 / 2012' below it. The DSIB logo is in the bottom left corner.</p>	 <p>The cover features a blue background with a white silhouette of the Dubai skyline, including the Burj Khalifa. The title 'THE HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE IN DUBAI' is at the top, with '2011' below it. The DSIB logo is in the bottom left corner.</p>
<p>Addressing the Early School Leaving Challenge 2011</p>	<p>Dubai PISA 2009 Report</p>
 <p>The cover shows a group of children sitting on a green field. The title 'Addressing the Early School Leaving Challenge' is at the top, with '2011' below it. The DSIB logo is in the bottom left corner.</p>	 <p>The cover features a red and white design with a student writing. The title 'DUBAI PISA 2009 Report' is prominently displayed in the center. The DSIB logo is in the bottom left corner.</p>