GEMS AL BARSHA NATIONAL SCHOOL

UK CURRICULUM

INSPECTION REPORT
2021-2022

ACCEPTABLE

Contents

School Information

General Information			
	Location	Al Barsha 2	
	Opening year of School	2020	
	Website	https://www.gemsnationalschool-barsha.com/	
	Telephone	045069222	
	Principal	Karim Murcia	
	Principal - Date appointed	9/1/2020	
	Language of Instruction	English	
	Inspection Dates	14 to 17 March 2022	

Students			
	Gender of students	Boys and girls	
	Age range	3 - 18	
	Grades or year groups	FS1 - Year 13	
	Number of students on roll	1191	
	Number of Emirati students	905	
	Number of students of determination	154	
	Largest nationality group of students	Emirati	

Teachers			
	Number of teachers	105	
	Largest nationality group of teachers	British	
	Number of teaching assistants	21	
	Teacher-student ratio	1 : 11	
	Number of guidance counsellors	2	
	Teacher turnover	31	

Curriculum			
	Educational Permit/ License	UK	
	Main Curriculum	UK	
	External Tests and Examinations	GL Progress Tests, CAT 4, IGCSE, AS.	
	Accreditation	None	

School Journey for GEMS AL BARSHA NATIONAL SCHOOL

| Outstanding | Very Good | Good | Acceptable | Weak | Very Weak |

2021-2022

Summary of Inspection Findings 2021-2022

The overall quality of education provided by the school is **acceptable**. The section below summarizes the inspection findings for students' outcomes, provision and leadership.

<table>
<tr>
<td>Students Outcomes</td>
<td>

- Students' rates of progress are inconsistent across subjects, between year groups and boys and girls. Girls generally make faster progress than boys. Standards of attainment are weaker in the primary phase in English, mathematics and science than in other subjects and phases. In most phases, some students can take responsibility for their own learning and collaborate with others, but often they are too reliant on the teacher. This is most evident in lower secondary boys' classes.

- Students' personal and social development is good. They have good relationships with their peers and teachers. In lower primary and lower secondary classes boys, at times, struggle to manage their own behaviour. Students have a very good knowledge of Islamic values and are proud of their own cultures. They take on leadership roles and make good contributions to the school community. Girls demonstrate a stronger work ethic than that seen in many boys' classes.

</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision for learners</td>
<td>

- The quality of teaching is strongest in Foundation Stage (FS) and in Post-16. Most teachers have good subject knowledge. They use a variety of teaching methods to engage students in learning. Internal assessment systems are not fully aligned to the expected standards of the National Curriculum for England (NCfE) or to those of the Ministry of Education (MoE).

- The curriculum provides students with interesting topics linked well to student interests. In Secondary and Post-16, the curriculum is planned to enable students to study a range of subjects to IGCSE and AS levels. There is a restricted range of subjects offered at Post-16. Adaptation of the curriculum at times leads to low expectations of students and hinders independent learning.

- Staff provide a caring and welcoming environment for students. Health and safety arrangements are good throughout the school. Procedures for identifying students' special educational needs are well established. Support for students with significant barriers to learning is a strength of the school.

</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership and management</td>
<td>

- Leaders express a clear educational vision. Self-evaluation systems include the analysis of internal and external assessments. Inaccuracies with internal assessment systems have resulted in leaders having an over-optimistic view of the schools' effectiveness. Parents have mostly positive views of the school. Governors have contributed to the strengths of the school, for example, in promoting strong systems for inclusion. They have not fully identified the weaknesses which prevent students from making consistently good progress.

</td>
</tr>
</table>

The Best Features of The School:

- Students' consistently good progress in learning Arabic
- Students' knowledge and understanding of the role and values of Islam in UAE society
- The quality of the support provided for those students of determination who have significant barriers to learning
- The day-to-day management of the school and the quality of the facilities and resources to support student learning

Key Recommendations:

- Increase the rate at which students make progress to raise standards of attainment.
- Improve leaders' understanding of the assessment systems, linked to the NCfE, in order to:

    - ensure accurate measures of students' attainment and progress against the curriculum standards;
    - improve curriculum adaptation to allow all students to independently reach high levels of attainment.

- Improve the effectiveness of the self-evaluation processes by ensuring accurate internal assessments provide data that is used to measure the impact of the quality of teaching on student learning.

Overall School Performance

Acceptable

1. Students' Achievement

		Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Islamic Education	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a First Language	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good	Good	Good
Arabic as an Additional Language	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not applicable
	Progress	Not applicable	Good	Good	Not applicable
English	Attainment	Acceptable	Weak	Acceptable	Not applicable
	Progress	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not applicable
Mathematics	Attainment	Acceptable	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Acceptable	Good	Good
Science	Attainment	Acceptable	Weak	Acceptable	Good
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Learning skills	Good	Good	Acceptable	Good

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

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

3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Assessment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Good	Good	Acceptable
Curriculum adaptation	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

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

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

6. Leadership and management

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

For further information regarding the inspection process, please look at **UAE School Inspection Framework**

Main Inspection Report

1. Students' Achievement

Islamic Education

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not applicable	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable

- The progress of more able students and students of determination is noticeably slow when compared to other groups of students. Girls' attainment and progress are slightly better than the boys, particularly in secondary and post-16 phases.
- Students' knowledge of Islamic values and morals, Islamic etiquettes, and the pillars of Islamic faith is adequate, and is strongest in Primary. Students make expected progress in developing their understanding of Hadeeth, and the rules and objectives of Islam. Their recitation skills and understanding of Islamic law are still developing.
- The school provides an after school Holy Qur'an club to enhance students' recitation and memorization skills. However, this has had only a limited impact on students' ability to apply the recitation rules and quote Qur'anic verses.

For Development:
- Improve students' recitation skills and their understanding of Islamic law and the biographies and personalities of Islamic education, especially in the boys' section.
- Develop students' abilities to link together different elements of Islamic education, especially in Secondary and Post-16.

Arabic as a First Language

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not applicable	Good	Good	Good

- Attainment for most students, in all phases, is strongest in reading and listening. Girls in all phases demonstrate stronger comprehension skills than boys, consequently their Arabic writing has fewer grammatical and spelling errors. Girls make better progress than boys in the secondary phase.
- Students in Primary can analyse stories and continuously improve their vocabulary. As a result, their Arabic language skills are improving. In Secondary, students analyse different types of texts and develop independent reflection skills.
- Independent writing skills are improving across all phases. Speaking skills are improving at a slower pace. Students in Post-16 are confidently developing their debating and presentation skills.

For Development:
- Improve students' independent writing and speaking skills.
- Develop boys' reading comprehension and how this is reflected in their writing.

Arabic as an Additional Language

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not applicable
Progress	Not applicable	Good	Good	Not applicable

- Students' listening skills are the strongest element of their learning of Arabic. Speaking and independent writing skills are developing, but at a slower pace.
- As they complete more years of study, students continuously improve their reading skills and vocabulary acquisition and, as a result, writing is improving. Advanced level students can identify main and subsidiary ideas in texts and reflect on what they read.
- Handwriting in girls' and boys' notebooks is tidy and clear and their grammatical and spelling mistakes reduce over time. In lessons, students are becoming more confident in following correct language patterns when speaking.

For Development:
- Develop students' speaking and independent writing skills.

English

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Acceptable	Weak	Acceptable	Not applicable
Progress	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not applicable

- In FS, children's attainment and development is stronger in speaking and reading skills than in their emergent writing. In Secondary, girls progress at a faster rate than boys in all elements of English.
- In Primary, students' poor ability to speak in grammatically accurate sentences is reflected in weak writing skills. Errors in the use of punctuation and spelling are preventing students from reaching the expected curriculum standards.
- In FS, communication and language skills have been a particular focus in the department and this is having a positive impact on the development of listening and speaking skills. Reading skill development is a focus in the primary and secondary phases.

For Development:
- Develop children's writing skills in FS.
- Improve the accuracy of Primary students' use of grammar, both when speaking and writing, and their ability to use correct punctuation and spelling.
- Increase the rate of boys' progress in developing their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills, in lower secondary classes.

Mathematics

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Acceptable	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Good	Acceptable	Good	Good

- A large majority of primary students does not reach curriculum standards. This is evident when recording written answers, especially in word problems. Lower primary students can name 2D and 3D shapes but struggle to describe shapes according to their properties. Calculation skills in Primary often rely on teacher assistance.
- Students' abilities to explain their mathematical understanding is developing but is not yet fluent. This is better where students do not have an English language barrier. Most students are developing their understanding of a variety of mathematical concepts and operations.
- Post-16 students understand the relevance of integration to construction projects in Dubai. Interesting links between measurement and various EXPO 2020 pavilions have helped to improve conceptual understanding.

For Development:
- Raise primary students' attainment.
- Develop the ability of primary students to record their work accurately and to carry out calculations independently of their teachers.

Science

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Acceptable	Weak	Acceptable	Good
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

- FS children learn about the world around them and acquire new scientific words. Primary students can record facts provided by their teacher, but with little understanding. Their investigation skills have not developed well.
- Secondary students have reasonably secure subject knowledge and investigation skills in all sciences.
- Post-16 students do well, for example they can offer clear explanations of bonds in organic chemistry. All students are well prepared for public examinations.

For Development:
- Develop students' deeper understanding of what they learn in Primary.
- Raise primary students' attainment.
- Improve the quality of investigative work, especially in Primary.

Learning Skills

	Foundation Stage	**Primary**	**Secondary**	**Post-16**
Learning skills	Good	Good	Acceptable	Good

- Students have positive attitudes towards learning. They enjoy their learning experiences at school. In lessons, students engage positively and effectively in cooperative and collaborative learning settings. These skills are less evident in the lower secondary boys' lessons, where students rarely take responsibility for their own learning.
- FS children use digital technologies in age-appropriate contexts, for example, scanning QR codes to access reading books. Students across the other phases use digital technologies creatively as access tools which support their learning in most subject areas.
- In all phases, students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills are not regularly displayed in lessons. Too often, students are dependent on their teachers and do not develop independent learning skills.

For Development:
- Develop students' ability to take responsibility for their own learning, particularly in lower secondary classes in the boys' section.
- Improve all students critical thinking, problem-solving and independent learning skills.

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

	Foundation Stage	**Primary**	**Secondary**	**Post-16**
Personal development	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Students are respectful and demonstrate positive behaviour in lessons. In lower primary and lower secondary, a significant minority of boys find it difficult to manage their own behaviour. Children in FS come to school happy, and they follow directions well.
- Most students adhere to school regulations and rules and are sensitive to the needs of others. Student-staff relationships are generally friendly and respectful. A few students raised concerns about bullying and how this is dealt with by the school.
- Students make appropriate choices about their own health and safety. They are almost always on time for lessons, assemblies, and other activities. However, overall attendance during the week of inspection was less than 90%.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good

- Girls' knowledge of how Islamic values influence life in the UAE and their understanding of Emirati culture is noticeably better when compared to that of the boys. The students' knowledge of their own traditions and heritage is stronger in Primary than in other phases.
- The students have a clear appreciation of the impact Islamic values have, such as tolerance, fairness, support, and kindness. They eagerly share their knowledge of Emirati heritage and traditions. Knowledge of their own culture, and other cultures within the school, is generally strong.
- The school celebrates a range of national and international events. However, students' understanding of worldwide cultures that are not represented in the school is underdeveloped.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Students have a clear understanding of their responsibilities as members of the school community. They willingly take on leadership roles through, for example, membership of the school council, supporting charity initiatives and devising major presentations for International Women's Day.
- Girls have a more developed work ethic than boys and are also more likely to be innovative and take the initiative in developing different projects. For example, they have devised a Chat Bot, a user-friendly means for students to access support.
- Students have a good appreciation of environmental issues through for example, Eco Champions and the Simply Bottle recycling scheme. They participate enthusiastically in national and international projects such as designing sustainable schools in Africa and the Plant a Legacy tree-planting programme.

For Development:
- Improve the ability of boys in lower primary and secondary classes to manage their own behaviour.
- Ensure that the students' knowledge and understanding of the Emirati traditions and worldwide cultures are more consistently developed across both boys' and girls' sections.
- Develop boys' work ethic and motivate them to be more innovative and to take the initiative in developing their own projects.

3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	**Primary**	**Secondary**	**Post-16**
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

- Most teachers have secure subject knowledge and plan purposeful lessons in well-developed learning environments with mainly positive and respectful teacher-student interactions. A few teachers have difficulty in managing unacceptable student behaviour, and in these classes, this impedes learning for other students.
- Most teachers use their knowledge of students to provide targeted support. However, this is not always appropriate to enable all students to reach their full potential. Teaching in intervention lessons is strong. This allows students with English language gaps to access the curriculum more effectively.
- Teachers' low expectations of students' abilities to work independently in primary and lower secondary classes is slowing the rate of student progress. The use of information technology is well embedded in teaching and learning. However, technology is seldom used for student-led research.

	Foundation Stage	**Primary**	**Secondary**	**Post-16**
Assessment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- The school has an emerging data bank gained from internal and external assessments, as it continues its journey of expansion. The data is collated, analysed and interpreted to influence teaching and the curriculum. Assessments of students' learning potential are used to identify students with low verbal reasoning skills.
- The school tracks progress from identified baselines and starting points. Teachers' assessments of student attainment are not clearly linked to expected curriculum standards. This provides a misleading picture of attainment and progress.
- Through assessments, students have a developing awareness of their own strengths and areas for development. The school is moving to a different data platform to provide teachers with more reliable analysis leading to faster and more targeted support.

For Development:
- Raise the progress of students in primary and secondary phases by providing opportunities for them to work independently.
- Ensure that assessment data accurately reflects established curriculum standards and that students use assessments to direct their own learning towards more purposeful challenge and improvement.
- Ensure teachers have high expectations of students' abilities and effectively use assessment data to target support for all groups of students.

4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum design and implementation	Good.	Good.	Good.	Acceptable.

- The requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, NCfE and the MoE are fully met. The curriculum is well organised allowing students to progress smoothly through the school and develop their language skills. There are particularly effective links between FS and Primary.
- Opportunities for students to learn about the wider world as they move through the school are provided through effective links between subjects. The school offers opportunities for students to learn about different careers and educational pathways, preparing them for their future lives.
- The school reviews the curriculum regularly, ensuring omissions are filled and students' interests are identified and met. However, the Post-16 curriculum is narrow and does not provide a sufficient range of academic or vocational subjects for older students.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum adaptation	Good.	Acceptable.	Acceptable.	Acceptable.

- The curriculum is not effectively adapted for all students and work is not consistently challenging. In the attempt to support students, teacher scaffolding provides too much support, preventing students demonstrating independent attainment. Nevertheless, support for students with the most significant barriers to learning is effective.
- There is a limited range of extra-curricular activities to enrich students' learning and personal and social development. However, there are many possibilities for students to participate in innovation and enterprise activities.
- There are many opportunities for students to learn about the culture, values and life in the UAE, and to celebrate local and national events. The school provides students with ample chances to develop responsible attitudes towards protecting the environment.

For Development:
- Ensure curriculum adaptations do not limit students' abilities to demonstrate their attainment independently.
- Increase the range of extra-curricular activities.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Good	Good	Good	Good

- The safeguarding and pastoral teams are well established. There are rigorous procedures and comprehensive child protection policies, with staff training provided for all employees. The school promotes E-safety. Students have ready access to counsellors for support although some cases of bullying have not been addressed to the satisfaction of parents.
- Supervision of students using school transport is effective. The fully accessible site is generally safe and secure. There are regular checks and risk assessments. However, a number of health and safety issues were identified and shared with the school during the inspection.
- Promoting healthy living, including mental health, is a high priority throughout the school. Regular and effective advice on healthy eating and exercise is provided for all students, including children in FS. There are effective measures to ensure hygiene and infection control.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Care and support	Good	Good	Good	Good

- Relationships between staff and students are caring and based on mutual respect. In the majority of classes, teachers follow a consistent approach to behaviour. This has less impact in the boys' section. The school has procedures to monitor attendance and punctuality.
- The school has robust systems to identify and provide for students of determination. Support and curriculum modification, particularly for students with significant barriers to learning, enable the large majority to make good progress. Provision for gifted and talented students is less effective.
- Student wellbeing is at the school's heart. Teachers are aware of and well informed about students' emotional needs. Students have access to individual advice and support from the pastoral team. Internships and careers advice prepare older students for the next phase of their learning.

For Development:
- Ensure the health and safety issues identified during the inspection are rectified.
- Develop robust procedures for identification of gifted and talented students across the school, and ensure lessons provide these students with sufficient challenge.

Inclusion of students of determination

Provision and outcomes for students of determination	Good

- All leaders facilitate a highly inclusive ethos. The school's strategic planning is linked to an inclusive vision. Well-developed policies and guidance are effective and ensure that provision is responsive to the needs of a large majority of students of determination, including the most vulnerable and challenging.
- The school uses a range of assessments to ensure accurate identification of students' needs. Consequently, provision and support effectively lower the barriers to learning. The school uses a graduated system of support and has an accurate understanding of student's needs. This ensures consistent and effective approaches to intervention.
- Home-school communication is a priority within the school. Parents are encouraged to be fully involved in the development of their child's educational programme. Their involvement and feedback are systematically sought and valued. This establishes a shared vision and a clear focus on outcomes.
- Curriculum modification and support provision match ability levels for the majority of students, especially those facing the most significant learning barriers. Support is well targeted and skilfully promotes the development of confidence and resilience. In-class modification and support is at times less effective.
- The majority of students of determination develops independence and makes good progress in their learning. Teacher feedback and scaffolding supports progress over time. Students are encouraged to take ownership of their learning and contribute to the design, implementation and review of their educational programmes.

For Development:
- Ensure that the provisions for students of determination who mainly access learning and support within mainstream classes are consistently applied across all phases, and result in all students making good progress.

6. Leadership and management

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

- Leaders at all levels share a commitment to realising the vision of a national school founded on the principles and values of the UAE. Leaders are fully committed to inclusion. Senior leaders demonstrate a secure understanding of the best practices in teaching, but the impact of this is not yet sufficiently consistent across all sections. Knowledge of the systems of assessments associate with the NCfE is not fully secure and hinders leaders in setting a clear educational direction for improvement.
- Internal and external data analyses is included in the evaluation process. However, the checks required regarding the accuracy of internal assessments are not embedded. Systems to monitor the quality of teaching are consistent and regular. However, when implementing these systems insufficient account is taken of the impact of teaching on student outcomes. As a result, leaders have an excessively-positive view of the schools' overall effectiveness.
- Parents views of the school are, in the main, positive. Regular newsletters inform parents of day-to-day events. Workshops help parents understand how to guide their children's learning at home. Information to parents about what their children are studying is not extensive, or informative. Reports to parents lack personalised detail and do not help parents understand what their children need to learn next to be successful.
- Governance of the school includes representatives of most stakeholders. Through meetings, reports from the principal and visits, governors gain detailed knowledge of most aspects of the school. Governors support and challenge school leaders and make suggestions for improvement, for example, ensuring the school operates as a fully inclusive school, and the developingexpertise within the Arabic department. Governors have not identified the weaknesses in the school's accuracy in assessing students' attainment and progress.
- The school operates smoothly on a day-to-day basis. It is well-staffed and all teachers are suitably qualified. Targeted programmes of professional development are delivered at whole-school and at subject department levels. Specialist learning facilities are available across many curricular areas and most learning spaces provide a consistently high-quality learning environment.

For Development:
- Increase leaders' knowledge of assessment practices associated with the NCfE to ensure accurate internal assessments and rigorous monitoring of the school's assessment systems.
- Improve the monitoring of the quality of teaching to focus on its impact on student outcomes.
- Develop the systems for communicating student achievement to parents to improve the quality and detail provided by reports.

What happens next?

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

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

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

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau
Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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