

INSPECTION REPORT

GEMS Jumeirah Primary School

Report published in April 2013

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT GEMS Jumeirah Primary School

Location	Al Safa
Type of school	Private
Website	www.jumeirahprimaryschool.com
Telephone	04-3943500
Address	PO Box 29093, Dubai
Principal	Christopher McDermott
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-11 / Kindergarten to Grade 6
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	1,370
Largest nationality group of Students	British
Number of Emirati students	16 (1%)
Date of the inspection	21st January to 23rd January 2013

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The context of the school

Located in Jumeirah, GEMS Jumeirah Primary School is a private school providing education for boys and girls from Foundation Stage to primary, aged three to 11 years. The school follows the National Curriculum of England and Wales. At the time of the inspection, there were 1,370 students on the roll, an increase of 50 students since the last inspection. The student attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was good.

There were 80 full-time teachers, including the Principal, and 12 part-time teachers. Teachers were well qualified and had a good range of experience. They were supported by 60 teaching assistants and 22 learning support assistants. There were six classes in Foundation Stage 1 and eight classes in Foundation Stage 2. In the Foundation Stages there were up to 22 children in each class and each class had a full-time teaching assistant. There were seven classes in each Year 1 to Year 4 class and six classes at Year 5 and at Year 6. The maximum number of children in each primary class was 27. There were 16 Emirati students, equivalent to one per cent of the roll. There were 70 nationalities represented among the student population. The school had identified 100 students with special educational needs, in addition to 143 who were more able, gifted and talented. Enrichment support was provided to 390 students. There were 23 students who were learners of English as an additional language. The school had a well-established Achievement Centre and a Dyslexia Unit.

The Principal was in his second year at the school. One of two deputy heads had recently joined the school, as had 24 other teachers.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Outstanding

Key strengths

- The outstanding attainment and progress of children in the Foundation Stage and of primary years' students in English and mathematics and their progress in science;
- Students' outstanding behaviour and work ethic, and their positive attitude to learning;
- Teachers' delivery of a carefully considered curriculum, leading to high quality learning;
- The outstanding provision for support, care and welfare of students, including that given to those with a wide range of special educational needs;
- Outstanding leadership at all levels.

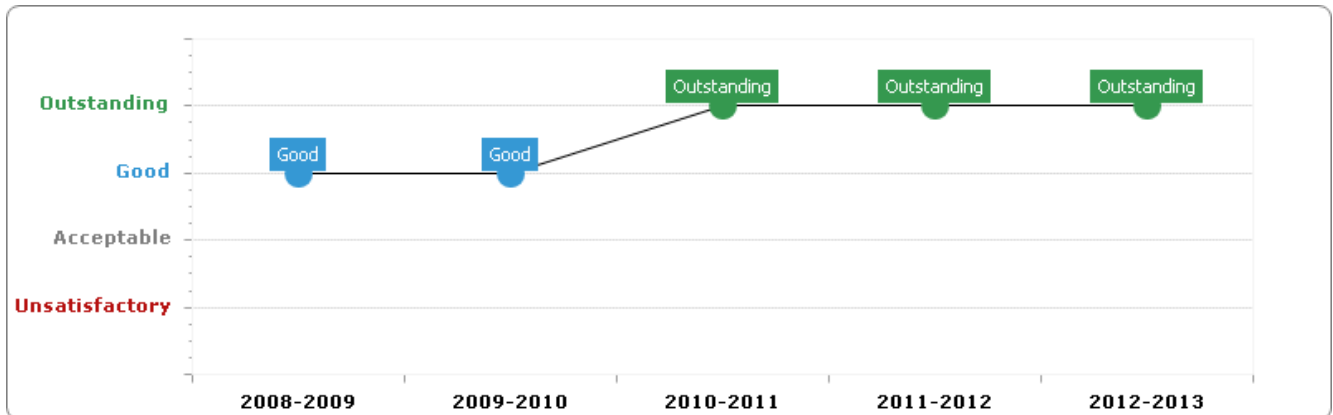
Recommendations

- Continue to ensure consistency in high quality teaching and learning in Islamic Education and in Arabic in order to improve students' attainment and progress;
- Evaluate students' learning in the creative aspects of the curriculum more robustly and share this information with parents.

Progress since the last inspection

- There had been no significant improvement in attainment and progress in Islamic Education;
- Some improvements had taken place in the teaching of Arabic, particularly as a second language;
- Staff now provided more creative and imaginative homework and this placed greater emphasis upon research and investigative activities;
- Assessment data was used more effectively to set learning targets for individual students in most subjects.

Trend of overall performance



How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Islamic Education		
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language		
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Good
Arabic as an additional language		
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Good
English		
Attainment	Outstanding	Outstanding
Progress	Outstanding	Outstanding
Mathematics		
Attainment	Outstanding	Outstanding
Progress	Outstanding	Outstanding
Science		
Attainment	Outstanding	Good
Progress	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Attitudes and behaviour	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness	Outstanding	Outstanding
Community and environmental responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of students' learning	Outstanding	Outstanding
Assessment	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students?

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Health and Safety	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of Support	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	Whole school
Quality of leadership	Outstanding
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good
Partnerships with parents and the community	Outstanding
Governance	Good
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?

Students' attainment was acceptable in the primary phase in Islamic Education and in Arabic as a first and as a second language. Attainment in English, mathematics and science was outstanding across the school, except in science where attainment was good at the primary phase. In Islamic Education, most students demonstrated appropriate levels of knowledge and understanding of major Islamic principles, values and laws. In Arabic as a first language, students' skills in listening, speaking and reading were inconsistent across classes although writing skills were broadly acceptable. In Arabic as an additional language, students listened and responded well but they interacted mainly in English and reading skills were limited to textbook sentences. A minority had difficulty in pronouncing Arabic words correctly and the writing skills of most were limited to copying from textbooks. In Foundation Stage, in English, most children listened well, responded to instructions and wrote simple words using correct letter sounds. In primary classes, most students could read texts with good understanding and write in different styles using imaginative language. Attainment in mathematics was supported well by learning about the importance of mathematics to everyday life. All students had very high levels of skill in scientific investigation. The links between practical activities and scientific knowledge were not so well developed, particularly with older students.

Students made acceptable progress in Islamic Education and good progress in Arabic as a first and as an additional language. Progress in English, mathematics and science was outstanding across both phases. In Islamic Education, memorisation and recitation skills of The Holy Qur'an were developing but students' skills in other aspects progressed slowly. Students' progress in Arabic as a first language was better in speaking and reading. In Arabic as an additional language, students progressed well in their comprehension skills. In English, most students were confident speakers, readers and writers and expressed their opinions clearly. Almost all students handled increasingly challenging mathematical concepts very well. Activity based learning ensured most students progressed steadily in acquiring good scientific skills, knowledge and understanding.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school provide for Emirati students?

Emirati students' attainment and progress were good overall. Attainment was acceptable in Islamic Education and in Arabic. It was good in English and science, and outstanding in mathematics. In English, students' attainment was restricted as most experienced an element of language difficulty in understanding words used across the curriculum. Progress was acceptable in Islamic Education. Students made good progress in Arabic as a first language and in English. Their progress in mathematics and in science was outstanding. High expectations of students' attendance and punctuality ensured that almost all had no

shortcomings in these aspects. Students' behaviour and application to classwork were good. Most completed homework appropriately and on time. Mid-year progress reports to parents provided good information about literacy and numeracy and clearly identified next steps in learning. A comprehensive end-of-session report did not provide any next steps for improvement and lacked detail of skills development in the creative aspects of the curriculum. Parents had good opportunities to meet with teachers to discuss their child's schoolwork. In common with all other parents, Emirati parents were not represented on the school's Governing Body. However, they had good opportunities to volunteer to assist the school in many ways, including as members of the Parent Teacher Association and in a new development, the Parental Engagement Council.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Attitudes and behaviour of students were outstanding across the school. They were respectful and courteous with both adults and each other and demonstrated a high level of independence and self-reliance. Students were responsible and required little supervision from adults. They were very aware of the importance of physical activity and adopting a healthy life-style. Evidence of this was observed at lunchtime when most of the lunchboxes contained healthy food. Students were punctual in the morning and into lessons; their attendance was good. Students demonstrated outstanding appreciation of Islamic values and understanding of the UAE culture. At Foundation Stage, students knew about the holy month of Ramadan, mosques, and major Islamic celebrations. They could identify the major aspects of Dubai, and could describe several of its distinguishing features. Primary students considered Islam as a widespread religion and knew that it influenced people's lifestyles. They were aware of the UAE's Islamic features. They knew about the UAE's history, development, and even its varied terrain. They were well aware of each other's culture and of their own. Students' understanding of community and environmental issues across the school was outstanding. Responsibilities were incorporated into the everyday class routines and many students had opportunities to take leadership roles. These were further developed in the school council where students made carefully researched contributions to school improvement. Students had a strong work ethic and were confident to work together and find solutions to questions or challenges. Older students were able to express the major challenges facing the environment such as global warming and could describe this in scientific terms.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

Teaching was outstanding across all phases of the school. Teachers and adult classroom support staff had a very good understanding of how young people learn. Lesson planning followed a common format but teachers used it flexibly. Individual modifications to plans took place before and during lessons, based on continual assessments of student needs. In the Foundation Stage, there was a good balance between activities which children could choose and those which were led by adults. Teachers had enabled even the youngest of children to use computer tablets with confidence. The use of dialogue to develop learning was a very strong feature of the school, with students taught how to ask and answer questions in most subjects. Students were often given the time to reflect before answering questions which enabled higher level thinking. Students of all abilities thrived in carefully planned activity-based learning with peer support. Students benefited from high quality teaching from specialists in music and physical education.

The quality of students' learning was outstanding in all phases of the school. Students' engagement in and responsibility for their own learning was outstanding, particularly in the Foundation Stage. Children were articulate and confident about their learning and could work independently. Children in the Foundation Stage were able to use computer tablets and laptops very well to improve numeracy. In all years, students' interactions and collaboration were highly developed. Students of all ages worked in a co-operative fashion with their peers and were well-organised in group work. Students made very good connections to the real world and to other areas of learning. The skills of scientific investigation were exceptionally well developed. However, more able, gifted and talented students were not challenged frequently enough in lessons.

Assessment was outstanding across both phases of the school. Summative assessment was used consistently. Teacher assessments were used as the main indicator of progress in key subjects. The school did not use externally marked optional papers but did moderate teacher assessments against National Curriculum past papers in mathematics and English. The system for doing this in science was not yet secure. Formative assessment was an integral part of teaching styles. Many lessons had a starter activity which was used effectively for self-assessment against lesson objectives. Plenaries were used to assess progress during the lesson and guide the teacher in the planning of future lessons. Teachers knew the strengths and weaknesses of their students exceptionally well. Students were more frequently involved in target setting. Parents received this information ahead of parents' consultations so that they were felt better prepared to help their children at home.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students?

The quality of the curriculum was outstanding across the school. Teachers carried out an annual review of the curriculum based on feedback from teachers and students, and involved parents in new developments, such as home learning. The curriculum included clear and detailed planning about the skills and the broad range of knowledge students needed. Students' interests were increasingly being used to plan the curriculum. This motivated and engaged them with relevance to their lives and responsiveness to events across the world. Creative approaches to learning that developed imagination and which provided opportunities for independent learning and critical thinking were common across the curriculum. The use of information and communication technology by students was well established across the school. Shared planning by teachers within and across the phases was very effective and ensured that learning was extended as students moved through the school. Cross-curricular links and a wide range of extra-curricular activities, field trips, residential excursions and projects, enhanced students' learning.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

The quality of health and safety of students was outstanding. The school met the full range of needs of all students. Staff with a wide range of expertise worked together to ensure that learning, medical and emotional needs of students were promptly and effectively met, and that parents were able to build upon the support provided by the school. The school buildings were in excellent condition. School records regarding fire drills, school transport safety and site maintenance reflected the school's frequent checks and prompt action to make sure that students learned in a high quality and safe environment. The teaching of health-related issues was integrated into the curriculum. Most students ate healthy food. Almost all were involved in regular exercise, with a wide range of sports activities offered as part of the wider school curriculum. The school had clearly understood procedures for dealing with issues related to child protection.

The quality of support for students was outstanding. Relationships between staff and students were excellent and contributed to the outstanding learning, progress and achievement which took place throughout the school. All staff had high expectations of what was expected of students. The well-being and personal support of students was monitored through visits to the well-being room. Students felt very well supported and stated that staff were approachable, friendly and supportive. Procedures for managing and promoting attendance and punctuality were good and had improved since the school was last inspected.

[View judgements](#)

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

There were excellent systems to identify and support students who had special education needs which then enabled them to make outstanding progress. Parents were informed and involved from the outset. The support for students who were identified with dyslexia was a model of best practice. Specialist staff assessed and taught these students. Detailed documentation was kept to show the outstanding progress these students made. A few students received very good quality advice and guidance from learning support assistants who worked very closely with teachers and parents. Those students identified as gifted and talented received specialist teaching in many areas of the curriculum. A wide range of skilled therapists gave additional support to a number of other students.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership was outstanding across the school. The Principal provided inspirational leadership, drive and vision, and demonstrated a passion for students' rights to great learning experiences. The senior leadership team was skilled and committed to empowering middle managers and all staff, to take on leadership roles. Staff felt valued and stated that they had an important contribution to make to school improvement. Leaders demonstrated the capacity to take an already high performing school further forward.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good overall. The school's approach to evaluating its work was comprehensive and inclusive of all stakeholders. Students, parents and staff were surveyed regularly for their views and students' performance was analysed carefully. Classroom practice was monitored and support provided, where required, to improve outcomes for students. All teachers were involved in school evaluation through working teams. These produced very good mini self-evaluation reports to inform priorities for improvement. Middle managers played a more decisive role in ensuring good quality outcomes for each year group. In-house and externally provided continuous professional development kept teachers alert to best practice. Senior managers involved parents and students actively in the improvement planning process. A remaining priority was to address fully the need to improve attainment and progress in Islamic Education and Arabic.

The school had established outstanding links with parents. Many parents volunteered to support the school through assisting in classes and at regular coffee mornings, acting as a parental class representative, Parent-Teacher Association member or helping produce 'Links', a magazine for families. Communications with parents involved regular and helpful year group and class information newsletters, weekly homework posted

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on the school website, and mid-year and end-of-session progress reports. Reports needed greater detail regarding students' achievement in the creative curriculum. Reports did not consistently identify next steps in learning across subjects. Community links were strong and students engaged with other schools through sporting activities.

Governance was good. The school owners provided the Principal with very good support. They held the Principal to account for the work of the school and monitored key outcomes regularly and carefully. Whilst parents' views were sought, they did not have a representative on the Governing Body. The school was in the process of setting up a Parental Engagement Council to provide parents with an active voice in school improvement planning.

The school's resources and facilities, including the dyslexia unit, were outstanding and provided a pleasant learning environment. Staff were deployed to good effect. The day-to-day management of the school was efficient, with administrative, cleaning and security staff playing their important roles very well. Teachers were experienced and well qualified. New staff received excellent induction training. Accommodation, including that for physical education, was well-maintained. Displays of students' artwork celebrated and supported learning.

[View judgements](#)

What are the views of parents, teachers and students?

Before the inspection, the views of parents, teachers and senior secondary students were surveyed. Key messages from each group were considered during the inspection and these helped to form judgements. A summary of the survey statistics and comments from those who responded to the survey follows:

Responses to the surveys			
Responses received	Number		Percentage
Parents	This year	299	31%
	Last year	316	30%
Teachers	79		89%
Students	There are no upper secondary-aged students in the school		

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

All parents said their children enjoyed life at school, were safe and well cared for and were treated fairly and valued in school. Almost all thought that their child was making good progress in English and mathematics and most thought this for science. A majority said their child was not making good progress in Arabic as a first language and a minority felt the same for Islamic Education and Arabic as an additional language. Almost all parents and teachers thought that the behaviour of students in school was good, school leadership was of a high order and expressed satisfaction with the standards of teaching and learning. A minority of parents felt involved in decision-making processes.

What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an updated action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the most recent report. This plan 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 inspection will report on the progress made by the school.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

How to contact us

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

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