

# INSPECTION REPORT

## GEMS Jumeirah Primary School

Report published in April 2014

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

P.O. Box 500008, UAE, Tel: +971-4-3640000, Fax: +971-4-3640001, [info@khda.gov.ae](mailto:info@khda.gov.ae), [www.khda.gov.ae](http://www.khda.gov.ae)

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT GEMS Jumeirah Primary School

Location	Al Safa
Type of school	Private
Website	<a href="http://www.jumeirahprimaryschool.com">www.jumeirahprimaryschool.com</a>
Telephone	04-3943500
Address	P O Box 29093, Dubai
Principal	Christopher McDermott
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-11 / Foundation Stage 1-Year 6
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	1415
Largest nationality group of students	UK
Number of Emirati students	26 (2%)
Date of the inspection	27th to 30th January 2014

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## The context of the school

GEMS Jumeirah Primary School is a private school providing education for boys and girls, aged three to 11 years, from Foundation Stage to Year 6. The school follows the National Curriculum of England. At the time of the inspection, there were 1,415 students on the roll. 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 range of experience. They were supported by 56 teaching assistants, including assistants who specialised in supporting the early years, science and physical education. There were also 24 learning support assistants who worked with individual students. There were 26 Emirati students. Among the student population, 70 nationalities were represented. The school had identified around 100 students with special educational needs, in addition to 150 who were more able, gifted and talented.

## Overall school performance 2013-2014

### Outstanding

#### Key strengths

- The rapid progress students made in English, mathematics and science throughout the school;
- Students' outstanding personal development, including their exemplary behaviour and thirst for learning;
- The high quality teaching that enthused students and successfully promoted their learning skills, including a high degree of independence and resilience;
- The imaginative curriculum which thoroughly engaged students and contributed significantly to their academic achievement and personal development;
- Highly effective attention to students' safety and well-being, and the excellent support for different groups, including those with special educational needs;
- The inspirational leadership given and the outstanding contribution to school improvement made by leaders at all levels.

#### Recommendations

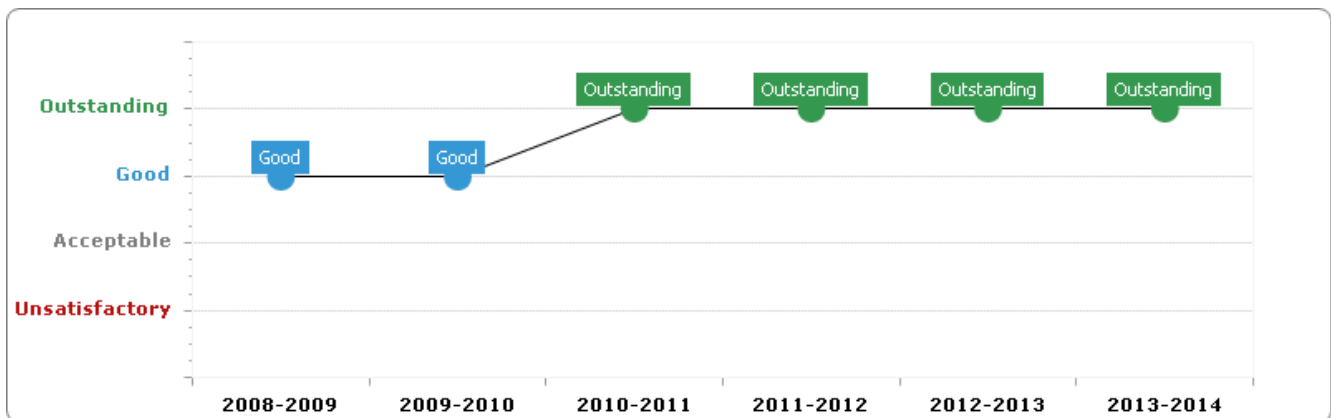
- Refine the accuracy of assessments made when children start school and as they move from year to year.
- Further improve the teaching of Islamic Education and Arabic to ensure more consistent progress through the school.
- Ensure that the requirements of the Ministry of Education are met regarding the suitability of the curriculum followed by Arab students studying Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language.

## Progress since the last inspection

The school had made strong efforts to improve the provision in Islamic Education and Arabic, particularly in developing the curriculum in order to stimulate students' engagement and interest in these subjects. These endeavours had been partly successful but there remained inconsistencies in the confidence of teachers in implementing the improved plans within day-to-day lessons

Excellent headway had been made evaluating students' learning in the creative aspects of the curriculum. Modern technology was being used imaginatively to develop a highly efficient two-way communication system for parents. This meant they were kept up-to-date with how their children were progressing in all aspects of the curriculum, including the creative subjects.

## Trend of overall performance



## How good are the students' attainment progress and learning skills?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Quality of students' learning skills	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

## How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Personal responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding
Students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness	Outstanding	Outstanding
Community and environmental responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

## How good are teaching and assessment?

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Outstanding
Assessment	Good	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)



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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Outstanding
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	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	Outstanding
Parents and the community	Outstanding
Governance	Outstanding
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

## How good are the students' attainment and progress?

Attainment was acceptable in Islamic Education and Arabic. It was mostly outstanding in other subjects, except for science in the primary phase, which was good. Most students studying Islamic Education could recite short Surahs to an acceptable level. Students' understanding of Seerah and of Islamic principles and laws were as expected for their age. In Arabic as a first language, students' listening and reading skills were secure. In speaking, most students lacked confidence in expressing their ideas and opinions in standard Arabic. Their skills in writing extensively and creatively were relatively weak. Students of Arabic as an additional language knew and could recognise an adequate range of vocabulary and their listening skills were acceptable. However, their speaking and writing were less well developed.

In English, students could explain their learning in detail and give reasoned and persuasive arguments. They had a strong love of reading and had good comprehension skills both at a literal level and through inference and deduction. They could synthesise information from their research. Year 6 students could write accurate complex sentences, which they varied for effect, and could construct a logical essay. In mathematics, most primary students understood place value and could calculate quickly and accurately. They could plan and carry out investigative work using mathematical ideas and terminology. Older students were adept at solving complex calculations, including the volume of cylinders and they had a good grasp of probability. Students demonstrated a very good understanding of scientific concepts and frequently used the correct scientific vocabulary.

Students' progress was acceptable in Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language, good in Arabic as a second language and outstanding in English, mathematics and science. In Islamic Education, most students made acceptable progress in their recitation of the holy Qur'an and in their understanding of Islamic practices. In Arabic as a first language, students' progress in speaking and writing was slow although their vocabulary was developing securely. In Arabic as an additional language, students were progressing well in lessons and over time. Progress was rapid in all aspects of English from the students' starting points. It accelerated towards the end of the primary phase, in particular, boys' writing and girls' reading skills. In mathematics, students made excellent progress in solving increasingly complex, multi-step problems linked to real-life situations. Students made outstanding progress in science. They acquired very good scientific enquiry skills through the many opportunities they had to learn through practical investigations. Children in the Kindergarten made outstanding progress in all areas of learning.

[View judgements](#)

## Quality of students' learning skills

Students' learning skills were outstanding in both phases. In most lessons, students were excited by the anticipation of learning something new or developing their skills and understanding. They responded well to teachers' questions and most were able to think deeply about topics and explain their ideas clearly. They took every opportunity offered to work in teams with their classmates and could work equally well alone for sustained periods. Students knew what they needed to do to be successful; they could reflect on their work and identify ways to improve it. Their ability to use modern technology was used to good effect to support their learning and carry out research. Students understood that new learning built on what they already knew and could see the relevance of their learning in the context of their own lives in the real world. In a few lessons, particularly in Islamic Education and Arabic, they had insufficient opportunities to demonstrate the breadth of learning skills they possessed.

[View judgements](#)

## How good is the students' personal and social development?

All aspects of students' personal and social development were outstanding. Attitudes to learning were excellent in both phases. All students acted sensibly and enjoyed responsibility. Behaviour was outstanding, even when not directly supervised, and students showed great self-discipline. Relationships among students and between teachers and students were very positive. Students effectively dealt with most problems themselves. Nearly all students had a good understanding of healthy eating. They could describe healthy and unhealthy foods, sharing healthy eating recommendations with other students. Attendance was good. Punctuality was less so, especially after break-times.

Students showed an outstanding appreciation of Islamic values. For example, Foundation Stage children knew about Islamic celebrations. Across the school, students respected and appreciated the major aspects of modern Dubai, and were aware of the Islamic features of the UAE. They knew about the UAE's history and heritage and had an excellent awareness of each other's and their own culture.

Children in the Foundation Stage had an age-appropriate understanding of their roles and responsibilities as members of the school community. They looked after their own equipment and school resources, and understood that their behaviour had an impact on their classmates. They were aware of the many nationalities that made up the Emirate and were part of their lives. They understood the need to care for their pets. Older students in the Primary phase took on a variety of roles. They had a good understanding of the needs of other communities and raised funds for those less fortunate than themselves. The School Council had been effective in improving playtimes. The students had a strong work ethic and were proud of what they could do. Students took part in recycling in the school and practised other conservation measures at home. They knew about alternative sources of energy.

[View judgements](#)

## How good are teaching and assessment?

Teaching for effective learning was outstanding in both phases. Bright, attractive learning environments gave students the clear message that their work was important, valued and celebrated. Most teachers had excellent subject knowledge but a few were less confident in some areas of the curriculum, most noticeably science and Islamic Education. However, effective teamwork, and the sharing of planning and best practice were having a positive impact on this. Teachers understood how students learn and planned activity-based opportunities, often linked to the creative curriculum or real-life experiences, to engage students and to give their work a real purpose. Teachers had high expectations for all students and made it clear what they needed to do to be successful. They used high quality resources, including modern communication technology, very effectively to motivate students and deepen their understanding. Their questions enabled students to think deeply about their work and the expectation for high quality responses with correct terminology was evident in most lessons. These approaches were also evident in the more practical subjects, such as art, music and physical education, where some extremely skilled teaching was observed.

Assessment was good in the Foundation Stage and outstanding in the primary phase. Comprehensive systems were in place for formative and summative assessment. As a result, teachers had a detailed knowledge of their students' strengths and areas for development so they could plan work that closely matched their levels of ability. An outstanding feature of the assessment process could be seen in the sharing of personalised information during transition from one year to the next and to the secondary phase of education. Assessment was also used effectively to allocate provision to those pupils who needed additional support or challenge. The school was in the process of refining its procedures to ensure greater accuracy of assessment on entry to Foundation Stage and between phases. A revised marking policy was in place but was not yet fully embedded.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum was outstanding across the school. Students experienced a broad, balanced and exciting curriculum from Foundation Stage to Year 6. The Foundation Stage curriculum recognised the uniqueness of each child through a programme of learning that promoted challenge and personalised education. Through a process of regular evaluation and taking into account students' views, the school has ensured a clear progression in the acquisition of skills. It had produced a creative curriculum in which information and communication technology (ICT) was embedded and used to create an extra dimension to learning. For example, a Year 6 science project involved groups of students working collaboratively online using the

school's 'cloud-based' resources in order to produce a single document on the topic of space. There was a strong focus on personal and social development and this was exemplified by the 'SECRET' curriculum. This was a means of developing personal skills such as independence and collaborative learning so that pupils were prepared for the challenges that faced them in the transition to secondary school. The cross-curricular approach allowed learning to be meaningful and relevant, enabling students to develop enquiring minds and to hone their analytical and critical thinking skills. An innovative, extensive and popular range of after school activities enabled students to develop academic, creative and sporting skills. School visits and residential camps provided students with memorable experiences.

Curriculum design was outstanding. The Achievement Centre, for example, provided excellent support for students with special educational needs. They received skilled support in improving basic skills and staff provided sensitive help, when appropriate, regarding their personal development. The centre helped to ensure that all students could follow a very similar curriculum as their classmates by modifying planning and producing comprehensive individual education plans. Challenge for gifted and talented students was provided through enrichment programmes and activities, such as science teaching at the local college. For a small group of Arab students however, the curriculum was not fully compliant with statutory requirements, as they were learning alongside non-Arab students in Islamic Education and Arabic.

[View judgements](#)

## How well does the school protect and support students?

The school placed the highest priority on the care and safety of students and staff. Policies and arrangements for health and safety were thorough and detailed, and effectively communicated to parents and students. Supervision was highly effective but appropriate for a school that encourages students to develop their own independence and manage their relationships. There were robust bus safety procedures, from the collection of children and students to their arrival at home. Buses were well maintained and carried the appropriately-serviced safety equipment. Day-to-day maintenance systems were well established; the site and classrooms were clean and provide excellent learning environments. Two nurses provided a good level of care and contributed to the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme in the school. Several teachers, notably the physical education staff, had first aid training, and provision was made to ensure safety on visits out of school. The school had an effective child protection policy, which was known and followed by all staff.

The quality of support was outstanding across all phases. The relationships between staff and students were excellent and contributed to outstanding learning. Behaviour was exemplary and was characterised by a spirit of mutual trust and confidence. The management of attendance was systematic; however, students were occasionally late for lessons. The school had an accurate system for the identification, monitoring and review of students with special education needs and those who were gifted or talented.

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An exceptional range of well-targeted support was managed by an expert multi-disciplinary team. Students with particular challenges in literacy and mathematics had access to outstanding provision in a dedicated dyslexia and dyscalculia unit. There was a well-being department that provided a range of personal support for students.

[View judgements](#)

## How good are the leadership and management of the school?

Leadership and management were outstanding. The principal provided insightful and inspiring leadership and was extremely well supported by a highly effective senior leadership team. There was a strong sense of shared vision and common sense of purpose. At the same time, leaders at all levels were successfully encouraged to be innovative and empowered to explore and develop initiatives to build further on the school's considerable successes, a strong factor in the school's excellent capacity for further improvement.

Self-evaluation was outstanding. Rigorous review by senior leaders regarding the school's overall performance was fully embedded and provided a very secure basis for development planning. Year group and subject leaders played a significant role in self-review by keeping a close eye on students' progress and monitoring closely the quality of learning and teaching. Successful teaching methods were shared widely and there was innovative and highly effective support for staff through coaching, mentoring and training. The recommendations from the previous report had been tackled with relentless determination.

The partnership with parents and the community was outstanding. Parents were extremely positive about the welcome they received from all staff and about the wealth of information they received about their children's progress. Parents volunteered to help during the school day and willingly shared their expertise and experience. For example, some joined staff in reviewing and developing the curriculum in Islamic Education. A strong and active parent council contributed to the pervasive sense of community and provided a very effective conduit for parents to express their views. Well-established communication systems included frequent newsletters, emails and instant messaging, and had been enhanced by the newly designed school website. Strong links with the local community through educational visits contributed to students' understanding of local culture, traditions, values and beliefs.

Governance was outstanding. The chief education officer kept in close touch with the leadership team and this link enabled the members of the central board to monitor all aspects of the school's performance and hold the school to account. They gained insights through regular comprehensive reports from senior leaders, consulting parents and canvassing students' views and made a significant contribution to strategic planning. The management of finances was excellent due, not least, to the effectiveness of the corporate arrangements for financial accountability.

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Excellent administrative procedures meant that the school ran very smoothly. Staff were well qualified and their skills and expertise were used to good effect. Leadership roles were distributed very effectively. The premises provided students and staff with a pleasant working environment. They were generally spacious and well maintained, although some rooms used for Islamic Education and Arabic were a little small. Resources were plentiful and used very successfully to support students' learning. The library was very well stocked. The time allocated for subjects enabled students to study them at the appropriate depth.

[View judgements](#)

## How well does the school provide for Emirati students?

Emirati students made outstanding progress in English, mathematics and science. Their progress in Islamic Education and Arabic was acceptable, following a similar pattern to that of other students. Emirati students were fully integrated in lessons and enjoyed excellent relationships with their classmates. Curriculum topics often included local studies and covered areas of particular interest to Emirati students, such as the conservation of energy and water. Emiratis showed the same enthusiasm for learning as other students, as reflect in their excellent rates of attendance.

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

Most students with special education needs made at least good progress. Progress was acceptable in Islamic Education and in Arabic as an additional language. The learning support assistants supporting students during Arabic lessons did not speak the language and this somewhat constrained students' progress. There was some outstanding progress in English, science and mathematics at primary level. The school had an accurate system for the identification, monitoring and review of the provision for special education needs. No child in the school was assigned a diagnostic label unless it was clearly documented by a relevant specialist, such as an educational psychologist. The school had a detailed policy on the identification of gifted and talented students and dyslexic students. They had established a dyscalculia Unit for students with particular challenges in mathematics. Parents were valued as co-educators and had excellent relationships with the school. The effectiveness of the various units depended greatly on this high quality partnership. The Dyslexia Unit had an outstanding arrangement whereby parents attended with their child during individual support lessons. Teachers displayed considerable flexibility and innovation in their planning and timetabling, and thus ensured that no student was excluded from any learning area. Music, art and physical education lessons demonstrated high levels of modification. The Head of Inclusion had a very expansive role that demanded particular skills in formulating policy and managing staff. She led the various sections within the Achievement Centre with great expertise and

dedication, and thus ensured very high quality inclusive provision across all phases. She had particular support from the heads of each unit who were also highly qualified.

## How well does the school teach Arabic as a first language?

Across the primary phase, the quality of teaching Arabic as a first language was inconsistent. Teachers' subject knowledge was secure. This enabled teachers to model the correct language for their students. Lesson planning was done regularly, often with clear activities and steps to follow, but teachers were more confident and skilled in implementing them in Years 1, 2 and 3. In almost all the lessons, these steps were communicated to students but, in too many cases, they did not indicate the expected learning outcomes to students. In the upper primary grades, opportunities for students to work independently and with others were rarely sufficient and there was a lack of activities that integrated the four skills of the language. Lessons were more teacher-centred with limited opportunities for students to use the language purposefully. Probing questions that extended students' thinking were a strong feature of the younger primary classes. Across the school, there were some attempts to meet the needs of different groups of students, for example the most able and those falling behind. However, there was an over-reliance on worksheets rather than providing opportunity for students to practise the language in a meaningful context. Although the school had reviewed the curriculum in order to provide work to suit the needs of different groups of students, the practical implementation of enrichment activities during lessons was not consistent. In the lower years of primary, teachers effectively used a variety of resources, such as ICT and puppets. In the upper years, teaching was based mainly on the fixed content of Ministry of Education textbooks. Students found this uninspiring.



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

Before the inspection, the views of parents and teachers 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	247	24%
	Last year	321	35%
Teachers	67		68%
Students	There were no senior students in the school		

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

Parents' views were overwhelmingly positive. Those responding to the survey were entirely happy about almost all aspects of the school. Almost all felt their children were making very good progress in the key subjects of Islamic Education, Arabic, English, mathematics and science, although a small minority expressed some concerns about the rate of progress made by children studying Arabic as an additional language. Parents had every confidence in school leaders, particularly their friendly, open approach and their immediate response to even the most minor concerns individual parents might raise. Parents were very happy with the quality of teaching and were confident that their children were looked after well. Teachers were very content and had extreme confidence in the school leadership, particularly in the support provided for their continuing professional development.

## 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**

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## 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](mailto:inspection@khda.gov.ae)

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