

INSPECTION REPORT

GEMS Jumeriah Primary School

Report published in May 2012

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT GEMS Jumeriah Primary School

Location	Jumeirah
Type of school	Private
Website	www.gemseducation.com/MENASA/jps0024/home.php
Telephone	04-3943500
Address	PO Box 29093, Jumeirah, Dubai
Principal	Christopher McDermott
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-11 / Foundation Stage to Year 6
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	1,321
Number of Emirati students	17 (1%)
Date of the inspection	13th to 16th February 2012

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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 English National Curriculum. At the time of the inspection, there were 1,321 students on the roll. The student attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was good.

There were 82 full-time teachers, including the Principal and nine part-time teachers. Teachers were very well qualified and had a good range of experience. They were supported by 40 teaching assistants. There were six classes in Foundation Stage 1 and eight classes in Foundation Stage 2. In this phase there were 22 children in each class and each class had a full-time teaching assistant. Seven classes had been formed from Year 1 to Year 3 and there were six classes from Year 4 to Year 6. The number of children in each primary class varied from 23 to 27. There were 17 Emirati students, equivalent to one per cent of the roll, and students from more than 50 other nationalities represented among the student population.

The Principal had been appointed to the school at the beginning of this session as had the two deputy principals and a further eight teachers.

Overall school performance 2011-2012

Outstanding

How has the school progressed since the last inspection?

The school provided an outstanding education for children. In a bright and stimulating environment, very high standards of performance were being obtained in English, mathematics and science. Students with additional learning needs made very good progress. Standards of attainment were not as high in Islamic Education or Arabic. Students were confident, articulate and courteous. The quality of teaching and learning was generally very high and the children thrived in the positive, well-ordered and caring atmosphere. The curriculum was rich and carefully planned, and staff were developing further students' skills as learners. The recently appointed senior leadership team were ambitious and determined to take the school forward from its already very strong position.

Since the last inspection, the senior leadership team had been very effective in empowering middle managers to take on a greater leadership role and they were relishing this increase in responsibility. Steps had been taken to improve Islamic Education and Arabic. Changes had been made to the leadership and staffing for Arabic, and included staff training. While improvements had been made to teaching methods and additional resources obtained, as yet there had not been enough improvement in students' progress and attainment.

Key strengths

- The outstanding progress and attainment in English, mathematics and science;
- Students' exemplary behaviour and their very positive attitude to learning;
- The very high quality of teaching and learning in most classes;
- The rich and varied curriculum;
- The commitment of the school to inclusion and the very high quality of support provided to students with dyslexia and other special education needs;
- The quality of leadership throughout the school.

Recommendations

- Improve attainment and progress in Islamic Education by reviewing the curriculum and developing further teaching, learning and assessment;
- Improve attainment, progress and enjoyment of learning Arabic by drawing on the best practice of teaching which takes place in the school;
- Provide more creative and imaginative homework by including more research and investigative activities;
- Use assessment data more effectively to set learning targets for individual students in all subjects.

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	Outstanding
Progress	Outstanding	Outstanding

Students' attainment in Islamic Education and Arabic was acceptable. Students had an acceptable level of understanding of the meaning of the Pillars of Islam. However, their understanding of key values and forms of worship in Islam was limited. Most students of Arabic as a first language demonstrated acceptable listening and speaking skills. Students of Arabic as an additional language understood and could use common words and phrases about themselves. Their writing skills were limited to copying

letters, words and short sentences from their textbook. Attainment was outstanding in English, mathematics and science throughout the school. Foundation Stage children had highly developed listening and speaking skills. Reading standards were excellent in upper primary. In Year 6, students were very adept at interpreting and analysing data, and applying their mathematical skills to solve everyday problems. Most students had above average standards of scientific knowledge, a detailed understanding of key concepts and had particularly well developed investigative skills.

Students made acceptable progress in Islamic Education. They were making better progress with their memorisation of verses from The Holy Qur'an. The majority of students made good progress from their starting points in learning Arabic as both a first and as an additional language. Through directed and free reading, most students were effectively developing their reading skills, especially in Arabic as a first language. All students made outstanding progress in English, mathematics and science across the school. In science, they developed high levels of understanding through applying their knowledge to make predictions. They tested their predictions in practical activities and evaluated their results. Conclusions were increasingly well reasoned. Most students with additional learning needs were making at least good progress from their starting points in English, mathematics and science. Many, particularly those with dyslexia, were making very good progress.

Emirati students' attainment and progress in Islamic Education were acceptable. Their recitation of The Holy Qur'an had improved slightly. In Arabic, students' progress in reading, speaking and listening was acceptable and their attainment was largely at the expected standards. However, standards of writing were less well developed. In English, most students' progress and attainment were good. They were outstanding in mathematics and science.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Attitudes and behaviour	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture	Outstanding	Good
Civic, economic and environmental understanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

Attitudes and behaviour of students were outstanding across the school. Students had excellent relationships with each other and with staff. They were confident and enthusiastic learners. Almost all enjoyed physical activity and understood the benefit of eating healthy foods at lunchtime. Students' attitudes towards learning were exemplary. They demonstrated high levels of self-discipline and great sensitivity towards others' needs and responded extremely well to adults. Attendance throughout school was good and almost all students arrived in good time for their lessons. Students voiced high appreciation for Islam. They had good awareness of local traditions and culture although their understanding of them was less well developed in primary. Students across both phases appreciated living in Dubai and the nature of its diverse population. They had positive relationships and worked in harmony with each other in the school regardless of nationality and cultural background. Students across the school, including the Foundation Stage, readily took on many roles of responsibility in the school. Students had excellent knowledge of the recent growth and development of Dubai. They knew its sources of income and had good knowledge of its recent history. Older students could eloquently explain key facts about its government. Children in the Foundation Stage had outstanding awareness and understanding of their immediate environment in Dubai. Older students had excellent understanding of the cause and effects of key global environmental issues. Their understanding of the importance of recycling and conservation of energy in Dubai was outstanding.

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

Teaching was outstanding across the school. Teachers were skilled and knowledgeable. Planning was detailed and consistent. Teachers had high expectations of students, shared clear learning intentions and used questioning effectively to support and extend students' learning. They encouraged students to persevere at tasks and successes were celebrated. Occasionally, students would have benefited from greater challenge and needed to have a better understanding of what a successful outcome would look like. Almost all lessons were suitably brisk, stimulating and purposeful. Very good attention was given to students' learning needs, styles and active learning. Resources, including information and communication technology (ICT), were of a high order and were used well by teachers to motivate and engage students. There was scope to broaden the nature of homework and to make it more engaging. Class and corridor displays were highly effective in supporting teaching and learning. In English, some lessons provided exciting contexts for writing, such as the Titanic project. Mathematics and science often made good and relevant links to real-life contexts.

The quality of learning was outstanding across the school. Students readily took responsibility for managing aspects of their own learning. They were confident and mature in making choices and adept at working with others to solve problems and share views. Their investigative skills were developed systematically, building on previous learning. In the Foundation Stage, students were highly motivated and selected activities to pursue, often in a sustained manner. Older students were enthusiastic learners who brought their well-honed critical thinking skills to bear when solving problems and reflecting on outcomes. Most students listened attentively to one another and to their teachers. They used computers effectively to research and support their learning. Several school-developed strategies were having a positive influence on students' attitudes to learning.

The quality of assessment was outstanding. Teachers knew their students very well. The school had developed a sophisticated assessment system. Rich data enabled staff to ask searching questions about performance at many levels. Staff were alert to the need to build further features into this effective system to further identify successes and drive improvement. Assessment information was not always consistently applied to impact on all students' learning experiences, especially in Islamic Education and Arabic. The school regularly reviewed students' progress and considered trends. Correction of students' work occasionally did not indicate sufficiently clearly what students needed to do to improve. From the early stages, students learned to become effective evaluators of their own and each other's work and provided thoughtful feedback. Assessment information was used well by teachers to report to parents on students' progress and to ensure there were smooth transitions across year groups. , assessment information was required to further improve students' learning.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Outstanding

The curriculum was outstanding across the school. It was broad and balanced, with extensive cross-curricular links integrated into units of work. It was stimulating and engaging as shown in classrooms, in students' work and in public areas throughout the school. Curriculum review across phases and subjects was regular and rigorous, and took into account the views of students. In most subjects, there was a strong emphasis on planning to provide differentiated activities to meet students' needs. The curriculum was modified after the identification of gaps in knowledge and skills. An extensive extra-curricular programme included sporting and creative activities. The curriculum was enhanced in most subjects with high quality resources including ICT. Curriculum provision for Islamic Education and Arabic was not developed appropriately across the year levels and did not fully meet students' needs. Students needed to articulate more clearly their understanding of Islam, local tradition and culture, and also their civic, economic and environmental understanding.

How well does the school protect and support students?

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

Ensuring students' health, safety and security was taken extremely seriously and arrangements to promote these were outstanding. Roles and responsibilities at both managerial and operational level were well defined and understood. Clear and comprehensive policies and procedures governed all aspects of school life and they were implemented rigorously and consistently. Record keeping was meticulous. There was regular monitoring of the effectiveness of arrangements and any matters identified or brought to the attention of leaders were acted upon immediately. The site was very secure, and arrangements for accessing or leaving it, including for students travelling by bus, were very ordered and strictly supervised. The building was extremely well maintained and kept very clean. The effective medical team promoted students' health through preventative and remedial measures. Innovative features of practice included a computerised medical record system. This enabled easy identification of patterns of referral. Underlying reasons were identified and acted upon. A well-being team focused exclusively on promoting students' emotional health. Healthy lifestyles were promoted extensively with students of all ages through a wide range of strategies. Child protection arrangements were clear and very well understood. Students' individual needs were dealt with sensitively and effectively.

The quality of support for students was outstanding. Relationships between staff and students were warm, respectful and caring. Attendance and time-keeping were closely monitored. Students had a strong work ethic and thrived on opportunities to take responsibility for managing aspects of their learning and developing self-reliance skills. The school was inclusive. A wide range of skilled support staff ensured that students with special educational needs received outstanding support. Very good steps were taken to involve parents fully in this support. Individualised education plans were in place but were not yet written in a style that could readily be understood by students. Best practice was demonstrated in the provision for students with dyslexia. Good steps were also taken to challenge those identified as gifted and talented. Effective links were established with external support agencies.

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

The quality of leadership was outstanding across the school. The new Principal was ambitious and determined to further improve the quality of education provided. He was very well supported by an energetic and skilful senior leadership team. Strong leadership was evident at each year group and for each curriculum area. The ambition and skills of the school leadership indicated a strong capacity for the further development of this very successful school.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. A comprehensive and well-thought-out approach was taken to evaluating the quality of education. Included were surveys of students, parents and staff, as well as a thorough analysis of students' performance. The leaders systematically evaluated classroom lessons, however some assessments were too high. The use of mini self-evaluation forms to capture performance by each year group and by each curriculum area was an excellent innovation. Driven by middle managers, it successfully engaged a wide range of teaching staff. Very sound improvement plans resulted. The continuous improvement of teaching and learning involved a well-developed approach to performance management, as well as coaching and the provision of continuous professional development. It was well supported by teachers. Senior managers were planning to involve parents more in the improvement planning process.

The school had outstanding links with parents. All were very supportive of the school. They played an important role in the education of their children and many were involved on a regular basis in helping in class. High quality communication with parents occurred. An information bulletin was produced for each year group and posted on the school's website each week. The school provided very good, detailed reports to parents on their children's progress and attainment. These helpfully included the next steps for learning.

Governance was good. The school owners held the Principal to account and monitored the performance of the school regularly through the use of performance indicators. Governors systematically surveyed a sample of parents' views each month and fed them back to the Principal. The school had a Parents Association and a parental representative for each year group and class. These arrangements provided useful social links for parents, especially when their children were new to the school. There was not a representative of the parents on the governing body of the school.

Resources were excellent, of high quality and were very well maintained within this bright, airy and generally spacious accommodation. Staff deployment was highly effective. They were resourceful and innovative in creating displays with students to illustrate and celebrate the high standard of work they produced. The facility for students with dyslexia was of high quality. Space was used very well overall and physical education was well resourced. The resources for investigative work in science and ICT were used very well to support students' learning; however, the area designated for the teaching of Arabic was too small.

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	305	28%
	Last year	275	20%
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.

A minority of parents responded to this year's survey, a few more than last year. Like last year, almost all were satisfied with the quality of education provided by the school. They offered a more positive view of Islamic Education, Arabic as a first and additional language, as well as English, mathematics and science, than last year's surveyed parents. Staff were also positive about the quality of education provided and almost all felt that inspection had helped improved their practice.

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

Our work with schools

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) inspects schools to inform parents, students and the wider community of the quality of education provided. Inspectors also give guidance to staff about how to improve the standard of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the principal and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan our time in school. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which students are involved. We also gather the views of students, parents and staff. We find their views very helpful and use them, together with the other information we have collected, to arrive at our view regarding the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well students are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children work together and how they go about improving the school. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

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