



National Agenda



Early Years



Special
Educational Needs



Innovation

Inspection Report 2015-2016

The Kindergarten Starters

Curriculum: Indian

Overall rating: Good

Read more about the school



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“Don't look
behind to
see who is
following you,
but look forward
to be ahead”



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

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School information

General information



Location	Al Garhoud
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	1990
Website	www.gemskgs.com
Telephone	04-282-4090
Address	PO Box 4973, Dubai
Principal	Asha Alexander
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	26 to 29 October 2015

Students



Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	4 to 11
Grades or year groups	Kindergarten 1 to Grade 5
Number of students on roll	5,335
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	0
Number of students with SEND	54
Largest nationality group of students	Indian

Teachers / Support staff



Number of teachers	225
Largest nationality group of teachers	Indian
Number of teaching assistants	34
Teacher-student ratio	23:1
Number of guidance counsellors	3
Teacher turnover	20%

Curriculum



Educational permit / Licence	117186
Main curriculum	Indian / CBSE
External tests and examinations	CAT4, IBT, PIPS-CEM, WCT
Accreditation	None
National Agenda benchmark tests	IBT

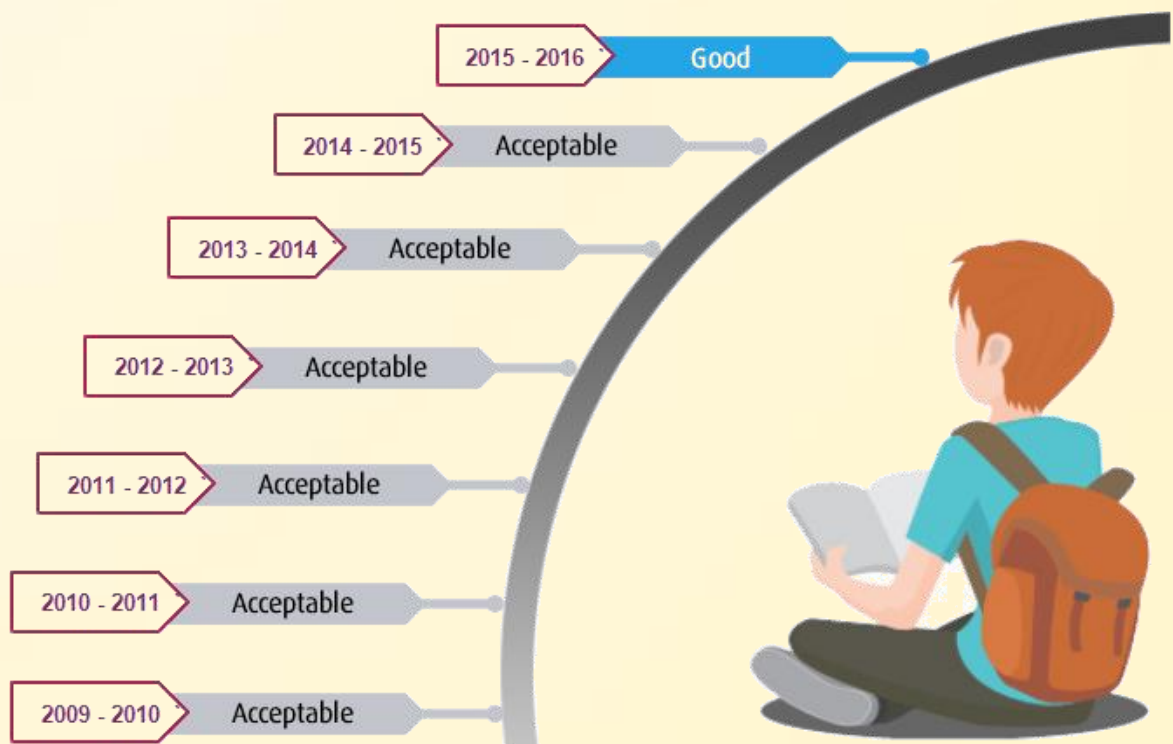


Summary for parents and the community

The Kindergarten Starters was inspected by DSIB from 26 to 29 October 2015. The overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **good**.

In order to judge the overall quality of education provided by the school, inspectors considered six key standards of performance. Inspectors looked at children's attainment and progress in key subjects, their learning skills and their personal and social development. They judged how effective teaching and the assessment of learning were across the school. Inspectors considered how well the school's curriculum, including activities inside and outside classrooms, met the educational needs of all children. They judged how well the school protected and supported children. In addition inspectors judged the effectiveness of leadership and governance, including management, staffing, facilities and resources.

The inspection judgements were drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observing children learning in lessons, looking at their work, talking with children, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and reviewing the parents', teachers' and senior students' surveys.





How well did the school perform overall?

Overall, The Kindergarten Starters provided a **good** quality of education for its students.

- The attainment and progress of children in the Kindergarten were good in learning English, mathematics and science. The attainment and progress of students in the primary phase were good in English and mathematics and very good in science. In Arabic, they were acceptable. Students' learning skills were good in both phases of the school.
- Young children and older students consistently demonstrated outstanding personal responsibility. Their understanding of Islamic values and their awareness of Emirati culture were good. Their responsible attitudes towards the community and the environment were very good and often better.
- The quality of teaching was good in both phases of the school; teaching had improved since the previous inspection. The assessment of learning had also improved and was good in both phases.
- The curriculum design was of very good quality and the adaptation of it was good, another improvement since the previous inspection.
- The provision for students' health and safety was very good and the quality of support provided to students was good. Both of these had improved since the previous inspection.
- The overall leadership of the school was very good, as was the work of the senior leaders to evaluate and improve the school. Links with parents and the community were outstanding. The governance of the school was good, but some classes still had too many students in them. The management, staffing, facilities and resources of the school were all of good quality.



What did the school do well?

- Very good leadership had resulted in significant improvements to the school.
- Good progress was being made by most students in most key subjects.
- There was outstanding personal and social development amongst students.
- Curriculum provision, teaching and assessment of learning were of good quality.
- Health and safety provision and support for students were good.



What does the school need to do next?

- Improve students' progress in learning Arabic as an additional language so that their attainment of the curriculum standards is at least good.
- Improve teaching quality so that all teachers:
 - deliver lessons at an appropriate level of challenge and maintain a calm and purposeful learning atmosphere
 - use assessment information to better inform lesson planning and support for students
 - improve support for students with special educational needs and disabilities by establishing clear learning goals and collectively monitor students' progress towards them.
- Reduce class sizes so that all students can participate in active learning and teachers can interact with them more effectively.



How well did the school provide for students with special educational needs and disabilities?

- The school's leaders and teachers were committed to including students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) within the school. These students had learning targets and individual action plans, however support for them in lessons did not consistently ensure that they made good progress.
- The school identified students' needs as early as possible to ensure that the right resources and support were provided. Parents were encouraged to contact the school regarding any concerns they had about their children.
- The school held formal meetings for parents about the progress of their children. The support and guidance provided to parents by the SEND department, was infrequent and irregular. The school did not consult parents when developing their children's educational programme and were not encouraged to be fully involved.
- In some classes teachers helped individual students by changing their teaching methods and activities, enabling a better understand of their learning.
- The progress of the students was tracked, however the information was not always used to personalise their learning experiences. Some students were not involved in organising their learning programmes and relied too much on adults to do this for them.

National Agenda Parameter



In 2014, H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of UAE, and Ruler of Dubai, launched the UAE National Agenda 2021, with education being a prime focus. The National Agenda includes two major objectives developed with the intent of placing the UAE among the most successful countries that provide world-class education. By 2021, it is expected that the UAE will feature in the top twenty countries in the 'Programme for International Student Assessment' (PISA) test and in the top fifteen countries in the 'Trends in Mathematics and Science Studies' (TIMSS) test.

In response to this, each participating school was issued a report on their students' performance in these international assessments and in addition, they were provided with clear targets for improving their performance. This academic year, KHDA introduced the National Agenda Parameter, which is a method for measuring and monitoring schools' progress towards achieving their individual National Agenda targets through the use of external benchmarking assessments.

Main points:

- The school met the registration requirements of the National Agenda Parameter.
- Progress towards the National Agenda attainment targets was acceptable.
- Governors and the principal promoted awareness and understanding of the National Agenda and its targets among the majority of stakeholders.
- The curriculum for mathematics and science had been aligned to the knowledge and skills tested on the TIMSS test for Grade 4 students.
- The development of students' critical thinking, enquiry and application skills were regular features of most lessons.
- Students used information and communication technology (ICT) and many other resources effectively to develop their research skills.

Innovation in education

The *UAE Vision 2021* sets out the National Agenda for the UAE to be among the most innovative nations in the world. The National Innovation Strategy sets the context for 'innovation' and 'innovative leadership'. It provides a basis for evaluating public and private schools in order to deliver a world-class education for all children in the UAE.

Innovation is driven by a commitment to excellence and continuous improvement. It is based on curiosity, the willingness to take risks, to experiment and to test assumptions as well as questioning and challenging the status quo. Being innovative is about looking beyond what we currently do well, identifying the great ideas of tomorrow and putting them into practice.









Promoting a culture of innovation:

- The school leaders were enthusiastic about promoting innovation across the school. They had encouraged the development of a wide range of projects and initiatives impacting positively on the achievements of students and on the social aspects of the school and its wider community. Leaders sought creative ways to network globally and bring expertise to the school. Teachers and leaders had encouraged the use of non-traditional learning spaces for activities and promoted enterprise and entrepreneurship. Learning technologies were increasingly being used to complement the curriculum. Changes to the curriculum had facilitated increased opportunities for students to develop innovation skills including problem solving, perseverance, risk-taking and creativity.

Overall school performance

Good ↑

1. Students' achievement

		KG	Primary
Islamic education 	Attainment	Not applicable	Good
	Progress	Not applicable	Good
Arabic as a first language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Progress	Not applicable	Not applicable
Arabic as an additional language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable
English 	Attainment	Good	Good
	Progress	Good	Good
Mathematics 	Attainment	Good ↑	Good
	Progress	Good ↑	Good
Science 	Attainment	Good ↑	Very good ↑
	Progress	Good ↑	Very good ↑

	KG	Primary
Learning skills	Good ↑	Good

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

	KG	Primary
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Very good ↑	Outstanding

3. Teaching and assessment

	KG	Primary
Teaching for effective learning	Good ↑	Good
Assessment	Good ↑	Good ↑

4. Curriculum

	KG	Primary
Curriculum design and implementation	Very good ↑	Very good ↑
Curriculum adaptation	Good ↑	Good ↑

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

	KG	Primary
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Very good ↑	Very good ↑
Care and support	Good ↑	Good ↑

6. Leadership and management

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



Main inspection report

The Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) is responsible for inspecting and reporting on the standards reached by students and the quality of education provided in Dubai's private schools.

Judgements are made on a six-point scale



Using this scale, the *Main inspection report* contains the judgements about the different aspects, phases and subjects that form the work of the school.

It provides the reasons for the answers to the questions in the *Summary for parents and the community*:

- How well did the school perform overall?
- What did the school do well?
- What does the school need to do next?

1. Students' achievement

KG

Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Not applicable	Not applicable
Arabic as a first language	Not applicable	Not applicable
Arabic as an additional language	Not applicable	Not applicable
English	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good ↑	Good ↑
Science	Good ↑	Good ↑

- The reading, writing and speaking skills of the majority of Kindergarten children were above the curriculum standards. The majority of children demonstrated sound knowledge and well developed skills for their corresponding ages in lessons and their work, and the school's assessment information showed that they had made good progress developing their speaking, listening and reading skills. In recent years their attainment had improved significantly. Groups of children, including those for whom English was a second or third language, made better progress than expected. Observation of lessons confirmed this progress when measured against the curriculum standards.
- The mathematical skills of the majority of children in the Kindergarten were above the curriculum standards. They were developing confidence in numbers, shapes and measures, leading to good levels of attainment and progress. For example, all children were able to estimate, measure and record the capacity of containers. In recent years the attainment of a majority of children had improved significantly, this was in agreement with the school's internal assessment information. Groups of children, including those learning mathematics in an additional language, made better than expected progress.
- In science, the children were keen and curious to learn how the world worked. They explored and investigated scientific concepts, for example, 'learning corridors' displayed plants grown by children from seeds, allowing them to understand that plants needed light and water to grow. They understood the concepts of floating and sinking by going on a 'Wonder Bus' trip to explore how a bus could move on land and float in water. The school's assessment information showed that a majority of children made good progress developing their investigative skills. This progress was confirmed in the lessons observed when measured against the curriculum standards. Groups of children, including those learning science in an additional language, made better than expected progress.

Primary		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Good	Good
Arabic as a first language	Not applicable	Not applicable
Arabic as an additional language	Acceptable	Acceptable
English	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- Most Muslim students had good knowledge about the key principles of faith and worship in Islam, such as the Pillars of Faith. They had detailed and accurate knowledge about the Prophet's life, his followers and companions. However, their memorisation of the Holy Qur'an and recitation skills were less well developed. The attainment of girls against national expectations was higher than that of boys, especially in Grade 5. Against their starting points, the majority of students were making better than expected progress.
- In learning Arabic as additional language, students demonstrated good listening skills. They could communicate simple answers appropriately, but the speaking skills of few students were slightly below the curriculum expectations. They made good progress developing their listening and reading skills, however their progress in developing writing skills was slower. The attainment of girls was slightly higher than that of boys. Overall students' progress was in line with curriculum expectations when compared to their starting points.
- In English, students' speaking and listening skills developed very well and most of them answered questions with confidence. Reading skills developed well and the majority were able to read fluently and with expression. In writing, the use of punctuation including commas, inverted commas and apostrophes was increasingly accurate. Students' attainment on external examinations was above expectations; highest in Grade 5 but lower in Grade 4. A majority of students attained levels of knowledge and skills that were above the curriculum standards and their attainment had improved in recent years. The majority of students, most of who spoke English as an additional language, were making better than expected progress against their starting points.
- In mathematics, Grades 1 and 2 students were able to count objects and accurately produce tally charts. They were able to identify patterns, decide on the information that should be presented on a pictogram and were beginning to understand scales. In Grade 3 they understood the concept of 'area' and could relate this to everyday life. Students in Grades 4 and 5 used IT successfully to research, solve problems and discuss concepts with their peers. They were able to apply what they were learning in mathematics to life outside school. A majority of students attained levels of knowledge and skills that were above the curriculum standards and their attainment had improved in recent years, demonstrating good overall progress.
- There were high expectations for learning in science, which were achieved by a majority of the students. They demonstrated good investigative and analytical skills and understood the scientific method of enquiry. They made very good progress through the primary grades to gain very good overall achievement by Grade 5. Their attainment on external tests showed that students ranked higher than both regional and international averages. Students' attainment was strongest in life science and marginally weaker in physical science. In lessons and in recent work the large majority of students demonstrated knowledge and skills that were above the curriculum standards. Their attainment had improved in recent years and was the highest of the five key subjects.

	KG	Primary
Learning skills	Good 	Good

- The learning skills of children in the Kindergarten had improved, as they were more actively engaged in learning. Children took pride in their work and enjoyed taking part in well-planned activities. Students in the primary grades clearly enjoyed learning and welcomed opportunities to take responsibility for their learning. In robotics lessons they were confident to experiment, resolve problems, identify the reasons for these and plan how to avoid recurrence. When given opportunities to reflect and evaluate their learning, students identified what they had done well and what they needed to improve.
- Children in Kindergarten enjoyed formal and informal learning, acquiring social skills through collaborative activity. Students relished meaningful opportunities to work together and the majority were building a range of skills to become confident, resourceful and successful learners. Those from different grades collaborated and interacted in performing arts, working as accomplished teams.
- Children in the Kindergarten used their experiences of the real world as a platform to gain understanding in meaningful ways. Students made valid connections between the content of different subjects, which enabled them to consolidate learning and deepen their understanding of complex issues. They usually understood what they were learning and why it was important. Projects and expeditionary work allowed students to widen their understanding of different communities in the UAE and globally. In Grades 4 and 5 they linked findings from their research to previous learning and used it to think creatively. Projects such as the recent 'Walk for Water' campaign raised students' understanding of the environmental, social and health issues that arise when water is scarce.
- The school's mission to 'encourage children to explore, experiment and express' was reflected in students' enthusiasm to discover, research and reflect on tasks and their work. This involved use of technology to research, analyse and present information. Most students were confident to attempt new ways of working and learning. Enquiry was not limited to investigations in science or problem-solving in mathematics, as projects and charity work provided numerous opportunities for students to think creatively and be innovative. In the robotics laboratory students used technology to gather extensive information about a major earthquake in Pakistan and Afghanistan and went on to construct Lego models of a mosque before and after the earthquake. Innovation and creativity ran through the curriculum in meaningful ways that supported subject learning and built understanding of global, environmental, social and cultural issues. For example, Grade 5 students worked diligently and enthusiastically to create a software application to contribute to the school's move away from paper documents.

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


	KG	Primary
Personal development	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students took a very confident approach to their work and were responsible for their own learning. They were enthusiastic about school and showed independence and initiative. They responded positively to constructive feedback from their teachers.
- Students had strong self-discipline, which contributed to excellent relationships throughout the school. Their behaviour was excellent and they had very positive influences throughout the school, resulting in a safe and enjoyable atmosphere for all.

- Students celebrated their differences and cared for each other. This created an ethos of respect which permeated the whole school community. The students and community participated in activities that promoted publicly their differences in a variety of positive ways, including the performing arts and morning assemblies.
- The promotion of healthy eating choices and healthy living in the school resulted in the students internalising the importance of good choices. Through a variety of projects, they took many opportunities to help promote healthy living throughout the school community. Students were observed eating healthy meals and participating in physical exercise.
- The effective procedures followed across the school and students' self-discipline resulted in outstanding attendance. Students were encouraged and rewarded for their attendance and punctuality and were almost always on time to school and to their lessons.

	KG	Primary
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good

- Students were aware of the importance of Islam in the modern society of Dubai and they respected and appreciated Islamic traditions. They could talk confidently about important Islamic values, the main calendar dates and some of the practical applications of those values.
- Students had good understanding of the traditions and culture of Dubai. They described some of the main sporting activities such as falconry, camel and horse racing. They had good knowledge about local foods and the traditional clothes of the UAE and participated in several activities each year. All students could sing the UAE national anthem in Arabic.
- Students fully appreciated and celebrated their own Indian culture. However, they had only limited awareness of the diversity of cultures from around the world.

	KG	Primary
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Very good 	Outstanding

- Students were provided with many opportunities to interact with the wider community by their participation in a number of projects promoted, supported and encouraged by the school. The school's charity work and its contributions to social causes had very positive influences upon the wider community. Students eagerly participated in these activities and were aware of the importance of contributing to good causes.
- The students were keenly interested in learning, anxious to succeed and worked hard to achieve their goals. Students had initiated and participated in a number of computer projects which heightened their awareness of school activities among the whole school community. They had been active in raising funds and resources for a variety of local and global charities. They managed many of these projects independently, using their skills of enquiry and analysis.

- Students had well developed awareness of the importance of conserving and improving the environment. They actively participated in many important projects aimed at improving their school and the wider local environments. Issues of sustainability and conservation were integrated throughout the school and students were actively involved in leading projects to promote behavioural changes.

3. Teaching and assessment



	KG	Primary
Teaching for effective learning	Good 	Good

- In most subjects, teachers made good use of their subject knowledge to plan lessons that engaged students' interest. In the Kindergarten, good lesson planning ensured that time and resources were used effectively. This underpinned the good progress children were making in both their academic and personal development. While teachers of Arabic as an additional language had secure subject knowledge, their lesson planning and teaching strategies did not meet the needs of different groups of students well enough.
- Most teachers made good use of assessment information to plan work that matched students' different abilities. In these lessons, the work provided appropriate levels of challenge. Engaging learning activities enabled all groups of students to experience success. In a few lessons, however, not enough progress was made because the work was not challenging enough, expectations were too low or the pace of learning was too slow.
- Very good relationships between adults and students provided a firm base for the good class management in most lessons. Most students responded well to the many opportunities to take responsibility for their learning and develop as independent learners. However, in a few lessons, mainly in the lower primary grades, teachers did not manage the over-enthusiastic behaviour of students well enough. As a result, the noise level in these lessons interfered with purposeful learning.
- The majority of lessons provided students with a suitable mix of individual, small group and whole class learning. This range of activities met the learning needs of most students, as they were able learn from each other. However, in a few lessons, teachers were unclear about how to promote this form of learning. In these lessons, there were not enough checks on students' progress to ensure that misunderstandings could be identified and corrected.
- There were many examples, both in the Kindergarten and the Primary phase, of teachers providing opportunities for the promotion of critical thinking skills. For example, the application of research and reasoning skills, together with the use of computers, were built into many learning activities in English, mathematics and science lessons. However, this was not consistently done in all subjects. The development of high level enquiry and critical thinking skills was evident.
- The quality of teaching of Arabic as an additional language varied between acceptable and good. Teachers had good subject knowledge. The strategies used were more often teacher-centred, meaning that students did not have frequent opportunities for effective interactive learning. Resources were used well in most lessons.

	KG	Primary
Assessment	Good 	Good 

- The school's internal assessment processes were well organised and consistently applied across all grades. Summative assessments were conducted every quarter, clearly linked to the strands of international and Indian curricula as appropriate for the age / grades or year groups.
- The school benchmarked students' academic outcomes against appropriate external national and international expectations.
- Heads of curriculum and assessments analysed assessment data in good depth. The progress of individuals and groups of students was tracked and analysed frequently. Consequently, the curriculum was reviewed and adjusted regularly as needs were identified by the students' performance.
- Almost all teachers demonstrated good knowledge of their students' strengths and weaknesses and shared these with students, in writing, after assessments. Teachers set individual learning targets every three months but more frequently with younger students. Students self-assessed their learning and that of others. Marking in students' work books was carried out thoroughly in most, but not all subjects and was an area for improvement.

4. Curriculum

	KG	Primary
Curriculum design and implementation	Very good 	Very good 

- The curriculum in the Kindergarten and primary grades had a clear rationale, it was skills based and highly integrated. Drawn from several sources, it was broad and balanced and provided almost all students with learning opportunities that matched their interests and abilities. Children in the Kindergarten had many opportunities to develop their senses in diverse learning environments. In the Primary phase, students in each grade enjoyed themes of learning that unified different subjects. All statutory requirements were met in the weekly timetables.
- The curriculum had been mapped vertically and horizontally and showed clear progression of concepts, skills and understanding. The curriculum was very well planned to ensure structured progression, which gave opportunities to students to construct their own knowledge based upon their interests, talents and individual goals. There were emphases on critical thinking, creativity, and problem solving skills. The curriculum ensured that students moved smoothly and progressively to their next phase of education.
- There was a wide range of options for students in the weekly timetable, including robotics, vocal music, drama, visual art, computers and physical education. After and before school activities included cricket, football, instrumental music, games and other fine arts.
- The curriculum supported learning across subjects in order to promote the personal development of students in all learning domains. Students were able to incorporate literacy skills with mathematics and science hypothesise and conduct simple experiments. There were regular and meaningful cross curricular links observed in lessons and in the school's annual plans. For example, a 'Cross Curricular Exhibition' was organised, enabling students to devise projects that provided opportunities for scientific enquiry, such as pulleys, levers and art assignments with Kandinsky circles.

- The curriculum was continuously reviewed, developed by a 32 member committee, using curriculum standards, monthly and daily lesson plans, assessments and resources. This process provided all students with good opportunities for academic and personal development. For example, modifications were made for students with SEND for better inclusion and to help students meet the UAE National Agenda targets.
- The social studies curriculum included content specific to geography, history and culture of the UAE. The rationale and balance of the social studies curriculum were shared with and similar to those of other key subjects. There were meaningful links made between the UAE and Indian social studies curriculum that allowed students to appreciate their country of residence more fully.

	KG	Primary
Curriculum adaptation	Good ↑	Good ↑

- The curriculum committee modified the curriculum by adding strands from various international curricula to meet the needs of almost all students. It was enriched with electronic learning platforms such as 'Spielgaben' for enquiry skills, 'Mathletics' for numeracy, 'Spellodrome' for reading and 'Dino Lingo' for learning Arabic.
- The curriculum for students with SEND was modified to incorporate accommodations and exemptions to support learning. Gifted and talented students were given challenging activities that encouraged them to reach higher levels, for example, 'Steam' in the LEGO room. Students were given opportunities to further develop and perform at school events and inter-school competitions.
- The curriculum was enhanced by using UNESCO themes such as: 'Education for sustainable development,' 'Inter-cultural learning' and 'Peace and human rights.' A programme called 'Global perspective' gave students opportunities for enterprise innovation, creativity and social contributions. For example, students organised fund raising activities for victims of typhoons and a recent earthquake in northern India and Pakistan.
- Students participated in creative projects with the local community to enhance their understanding of UAE's values, culture and society. These were celebrated on display boards and in portfolios.
- The school offered two 60-minute sessions of Arabic as an additional language per week for all of the children in the Kindergarten. This programme targeted Arabic alphabet sound recognition, basic vocabulary and common phrases at a beginner's level.

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

	KG	Primary
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Very good ↑	Very good ↑

- The school had rigorous procedures in place to safeguard all students. There was a clearly articulated child protection policy which was well understood across the school. The school protected students from bullying and any form of abuse, including online.
- The classrooms, common areas and toilets were all safe, clean and secure. Safety checks were carried out regularly and thoroughly. The supervision of students was highly effective both in school and on the buses.

- The school kept the facilities well maintained. There were comprehensive and secure records of maintenance, incidents and any subsequent actions taken.
- The premises and facilities were well suited to the learning needs of students, but some classrooms were too small for the numbers of students using them.
- The school promoted safe and healthy living very effectively. There were many initiatives to educate children about healthy living, which resulted in, for example, nutritious lunches being brought to school by almost all of them.

	KG	Primary
Care and support	Good 	Good 

- The relationships between teachers and students were underpinned by the school's mission statement and vision. Teachers knew their students well and were aware of their individual needs. Positive behaviour, based upon mutual respect, was promoted and managed well, particularly in the upper primary grades.
- The school kept accurate records of students' attendance and punctuality. Appropriate action was taken on students who were repeatedly late or absent. Parents were contacted promptly when there were concerns about individual students.
- Early identification was key in the provision for students with SEND. The school had established achievement baselines and used a variety of formal and informal identification procedures. These were matched to intervention and support plans, as yet not effectively delivered across all subjects. The majority of lessons provided sufficient challenge to promote the development of gifted and talented students.
- The school had appropriate systems to support students with SEND, but these did not always enable consistently good progress to be made. Some students were withdrawn from lessons for individual support or small group activities in the Achievement Centre where provision was effective.
- The school's counsellor in collaboration with classroom teachers and the designated inclusion leaders, provided an effective system of support for students with special educational needs and disabilities. Transition procedures from Kindergarten to Grade 1 were well managed and supported the children's progress.

Provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

The overall effectiveness of provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities

Acceptable

- The school admitted a range of students with SEND and the school's leaders promoted an inclusive ethos and vision for their success. The majority of teachers showed a commitment to the inclusion of students with SEND within the school, but the effective application of support and resources was not consistently evident in lessons.

- The school identified students with SEND as early as possible upon entry to the school, in order to ensure that appropriate resources and support were provided. It operated a 'three wave' process for identification and support. As a result of accurate identification, support and targets were closely aligned to the needs of students. The identified support was effective for some students, but not all and lacked a regular process of review or adjustment. The school held formal meetings for parents about the progress of their children. However, a few parents indicated that informal communication was not encouraged and had to be initiated by them. Parents had access to support from the SEND department, although this was inconsistent. Some parents were not involved in developing their children's educational programmes and in these cases their usefulness was minimal.
- Curriculum modifications met the personal, social and learning needs of some students with SEND, but not all. Teachers' development of provision and resources to meet the learning needs of some students was adequate. In the majority of lessons students were given appropriate support, including seating close to their teachers, different work and a class 'buddy,' however, their learning goals lacked detail in some cases.
- The progress made by students with SEND in acquiring learning skills and their personal development was acceptable across most subjects, and better in mathematics. The progress of all students was effectively monitored across the school. However, this information was not always sufficiently analysed to set specific goals for SEND students, impacting negatively on their progress. Some students were not sufficiently involved in the design of their learning programmes, as a result they were often too reliant upon adults.

6. Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership

Very good ↑

- The overall quality of leadership of the school was very good. Led by the principal, leaders at all levels shared a clear strategic direction for the school and its students, linked to the GEMS core values. They were committed to achieving the UAE National Agenda and the priorities of Dubai, as reflected in lessons and many types of plans. The school had an inclusive approach that was demonstrated effectively by leaders, teachers and students.
- Leaders demonstrated a sound and thorough knowledge of the curriculum. They understood clearly the best ways to teach, learn and assess its outcomes. There was a sharp focus on increasing students' achievements across the curriculum. Leaders had succeeded in establishing a purposeful learning culture that was understood by stakeholders.
- The relationships amongst stakeholders were strong. Communication was regular, clear and carried out in a variety of ways. The school offered developmental opportunities to all staff members that built leadership capacity, empowered individuals and fostered effective team work. The morale was high and very positive across the school's staff.
- Leaders demonstrated an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and knew what was needed to improve. Their internal evaluation of the school's performance was highly accurate. They were innovative in many ways and understood the obstacles that remained to be addressed in order to improve the school further. Many opportunities for teachers to make innovations had been added to the school's programme; for example, 'LEGO' and 'Steam' learning projects to encourage critical thinking by students.

- The leadership team had been very successful in making improvements to the school since the previous inspection. They were accountable for the school's work and ensured that it was compliant with all relevant statutes and regulations. There was rigorous monitoring of progress on the development plan, peer coaching and leadership training carried out in cooperation with the GEMS corporate office.

School self-evaluation and improvement planning


Very good ↑

- There were highly effective systems established for rigorous internal evaluation. Leaders used data from many sources to inform the school's integrated 'Improvement and Action Plan.' The priorities were clearly identified with appropriate strategies, personnel and resources allocated to ensure achievement of the objectives. Recent progress on the plan had been clearly identified and communicated.
- There was very effective monitoring of teaching and learning across the school. The evaluation of these had resulted in clear improvements, especially in the Kindergarten. For example, the children's progress in learning both mathematics and science had improved, as had their learning skills.
- The school's development and action plan was coherent, relevant to the previous inspection report and based upon highly accurate information. It contained strategic and operational actions. It addressed both local and national priorities and had already resulted in positive effects upon students' achievement.
- All of the recommendations from the previous inspection report had been implemented, except for one which was partially implemented. The school had improved in many key aspects, including students' academic progress, the quality of teaching and curriculum adaptation.

Partnerships with parents and the community




Outstanding

- Parents were highly involved in the life of the school as a result of regular communication and many opportunities for meaningful participation. They were consulted regularly and their opinions and requests were taken into consideration by leaders and the school's governors. Parental involvement played a visible role in raising students' achievements.
- Parents were consistently well informed about their children's academic progress and overall development. They formed fruitful partnerships with teachers and other staff members, but a few parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities expressed a desire for more frequent dialogue about their children's learning plans.
- The quality of reporting was very high and included reviews of students' progress plus their next steps for learning. Parents had access to current reports on their children's status in all subjects, as well as information about their social development.
- The school made significant and sustained contributions to the local, national and international communities. For example, there were partnerships with local schools for cultural exchange, sports and learning Arabic. There were formal links with organisations in London, Washington and India that allowed students to develop skills and help others, including those less fortunate.

Governance	Good 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governance of the school included representation from most stakeholders and included the school's owner, the GEMS Corporation. The corporate personnel sought and considered the opinions of stakeholders and had a thorough understanding of the school's provision and outcomes. • The corporate officers regularly monitored the work of the school and particularly the quality of leadership. They held the school's leaders accountable for the achievements and overall development of students and demonstrated a strong commitment to these objectives. • The corporate officers exerted a positive influence upon the school's direction and were supportive of leaders' efforts to improve. For example, staffing resources had increased significantly since the previous inspection, particularly those for teaching and learning. There was also good support for the recruitment and professional development of teachers. Conversely, the corporate officers had made only limited progress on reducing the numbers of students in classrooms, which was a recommendation of the previous inspection. Classrooms in all primary grades were overcrowded, impeding teachers and students in their work and in some cases creating safety hazards. 	
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The daily operation of the school was well managed. All main aspects were highly organised and events ran smoothly. School procedures and routines were understood by all members of the community, which allowed teachers and students to focus upon teaching and learning. • The school was appropriately staffed, allowing it to achieve the goals of GEMS and provide a holistic, skills based educational experience to students. Most teachers were suitably qualified and all received opportunities for regular professional development, linked to the school's development plan. The deployment of teaching assistants was effective in helping Kindergarten children learn. • The school premises were adequate overall and included good specialist facilities. However, some classrooms were too small for the number of students in them. Most learning areas were of high quality, including many outdoor activity corners and improved playing fields. The overall environment supported good teaching and learning. • A range of relevant resources were available to support the curriculum. Teachers and students had what they needed to carry out their work effectively. 	

The views of the parents, teachers and students

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

Responses to the surveys		
Responses received	Number	
Parents* 	2015-2016	852
	2014-2015	940
Teachers 	244	
Students 	0	

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

- Parents were mostly positive in their responses to all items on the survey of opinions, but a very few expressed dissatisfaction with the overall quality of education available.
- The vast majority of parents agreed, but a very few parents disagreed that their children were making good progress in learning the five key subjects.
- Teachers who responded to the survey were also positive overall.
- The school does not have any senior students.

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