




GEMS Wellington  
Academy- Al Khail

 Curriculum: UK

Overall Rating:

Good



"We are keen to prepare the new generation that is ready to be creative and innovative to help us achieve our ambitions for even greater prosperity"

Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum



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## School information



General information	
Location	Al Quoz
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2013
Website	www.gemswellingtonacademy-alkhail.com
Telephone	00971-4-5129100
Address	PO Box: 391922, Al Quoz, Dubai, UAE
Principal	Colin Callaghan
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	16 to 19 January 2017

Teachers / Support staff	
Number of teachers	104
Largest nationality group of teachers	British
Number of teaching assistants	42
Teacher-student ratio	1:11
Number of guidance counsellors	1
Teacher turnover	26%

Students	
Gender of students	Boys and girls
Age range	4-15
Grades or year groups	FS1-Year 10
Number of students on roll	1144
Number of children in pre-kindergarten	0
Number of Emirati students	47
Number of students with SEND	107
Largest nationality group of students	Arab

Curriculum	
Educational permit / Licence	UK
Main curriculum	UK
External tests and examinations	CAT4, GPTM, GLPTE, GLPTS, BASE
Accreditation	None
National Agenda benchmark tests	GL Assessments



## The DSIB inspection process



In order to judge the overall quality of education provided by schools, inspectors consider the six standards of performance that form the basis of the UAE School Inspection Framework (the framework). They look at children's attainment and progress in key subjects, their learning skills and their personal and social development. They judge how effective teaching and the assessment of learning are across the school. Inspectors consider how well the school's curriculum, including activities inside and outside classrooms, meet the educational needs of all students. They judge how well schools protect and support children. In addition, inspectors judge the effectiveness of leadership, which incorporates governance, management, staffing and facilities.

Inspection judgements are drawn from evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observation of students' learning in lessons, review of their work, discussions with students, meetings with the staff, parents and governors, and review of surveys completed by parents, teachers and students.

### Judgements are made on a six-point scale

DSIB inspection teams make judgements about different aspects, phases and subjects that form the work of the school, using the scale below, which is consistent with the framework.

<b>Outstanding</b>	Quality of performance substantially exceeds the expectation of the UAE
<b>Very good</b>	Quality of performance exceeds the expectation of the UAE
<b>Good</b>	Quality of performance meets the expectation of the UAE (This is the expected level for every school in the UAE)
<b>Acceptable</b>	Quality of performance meets the minimum level of quality required in the UAE (This is the minimum level for every school in the UAE)
<b>Weak</b>	Quality of performance is below the expectation of the UAE
<b>Very weak</b>	Quality of performance is significantly below the expectation of the UAE

## Inspection journey for GEMS Wellington Academy- Al Khail



- The school's student population has been steadily growing since it opened in 2013. At the time of this inspection the school had 1144 students aged from four to 15 years, an increase of 26 students from the previous year. The principal was appointed in 2016. Teacher turnover at the time of the inspection was 26 per cent compared to 30 per cent in the previous year.
- The previous inspection identified strengths in teaching and learning, the curriculum, leadership, students' personal and social development and support for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Recommendations for improvement focused on improving attainment and progress in Arabic and Islamic education and the moderation of assessments of students' attainment and progress.



## Summary of inspection findings 2016-2017



**GEMS Wellington Academy- Al Khail** was inspected by DSIB from 16 to 19 January 2017 . The overall quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The section below summarises the inspection findings for each of the six performance indicators described in the framework.

- Attainment in the Foundation Stage (FS) is good in English, mathematics and science. Progress in the FS is consistently very good. Attainment and progress in the primary and secondary phases are good in mathematics and science. Attainment in English is acceptable in both phases, although progress is good in the primary phase and very good in the secondary phase. Students concentrate hard when working individually and collaborate well with others when working in pairs or small groups.
- Across the school, students are very well behaved and have positive attitudes to their studies. They have a good knowledge of Islamic values and Emirati heritage. They are well aware of environmental issues and take their responsibilities within the community seriously.
- Mostly good and better teaching is underpinned by thoughtful lesson planning to meet the needs of all students. The school gathers assessment information that compares students' potential with their attainment in international benchmark tests. However, there is inconsistency in the extent to which teachers use assessment information to ensure that work is challenging enough for students of all ability levels.
- The curriculum effectively supports the development of students' knowledge, understanding and skills. Curriculum options in the upper secondary are being increased to offer students more personalised pathways as the school grows. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) guide curriculum modifications for students with SEND. However, planned modifications to meet the needs of wider groups of students, particularly those of higher ability, are not always seen in classroom practice.
- The school provides a safe and secure environment for students. The school's health and safety procedures and practices are good. The care and support offered by the school is good. Older students are provided with personalised guidance towards their future academic choices.
- The principal has a clear vision for the future of school and has the support of other senior leaders, governors and the majority of staff. Because a number of leaders are new to senior leadership roles, their effectiveness in driving improvement is inconsistent. Relationships with most parents and the community are good. Governors are very knowledgeable and closely engaged with the school. Management, staffing, facilities and resources are very good.

### What the school does best

- The very stimulating provision in the FS that underpins the very good progress children make in English, mathematics and science and their outstanding personal and social development.
- The very good personal and social development of students in the primary and secondary phases and their enthusiasm for learning.
- Students' good progress in English, mathematics, science and Arabic as a first language.
- The inclusive ethos of the school that ensures good care and support for all students, particularly those with SEND.
- The very good resources and excellent accommodation provided to support students' academic and personal development.

### Recommendations

- Raise attainment and progress in Islamic education by ensuring that:
  - lesson planning is based on a clear understanding of students' differing starting points
  - students are provided with more opportunities to develop skills of analysis, inference and application to their daily lives.
- Raise attainment and accelerate progress in students' day-to-day learning in Arabic as an additional language by ensuring that teaching is of a consistently high quality.
- Improve teaching in the primary and secondary phases by making full use of assessment data and information about students' potential, to plan work that is appropriately challenging for all students, particularly those at the upper end of the ability range.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership, particularly those with senior leadership roles, by ensuring that:
  - senior leaders are highly visible to staff and parents
  - leadership roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood
  - where appropriate, professional development opportunities are provided to enhance leadership skills
  - judgements about the performance of the school are based on accurate and reliable assessment information
  - rigorous monitoring confirms the consistent implementation of all school initiatives, policies and plans.

## 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 intention 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. In 2015, KHDA launched 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.

The following section focuses on the impact of the National Agenda Parameter in meeting the school's targets:

- The school meets the registration requirements for the National Agenda Parameter.
- Attainment based on National Agenda Parameter tests is above expectations in mathematics and science. In English, attainment based on National Agenda Parameter tests is below expectations
- Leaders have accurately analysed the National Agenda Parameter reports and produced a detailed action plan to raise attainment. Information relating to students' cognitive ability and potential has been gathered. This information has been shared with teachers. However, this has not been fully utilised to ensure that all students realise their full potential and attainment is maximised. Outcomes from National Agenda Parameter benchmark tests are published to all stakeholders including parents and students.
- Subject and other middle leaders, demonstrate an understanding of the skills tested in international assessments. However, the school has yet to undertake systematic analyses to identify specific gaps in relation to the additional requirements of TIMSS and PISA assessments. Consequently, the curriculum is not yet fully aligned to ensure students are prepared to be successful in TIMSS and PISA. The skills and abilities that students need to demonstrate in order to be globally competitive are not promoted well enough in order for all students to know what is expected of them.
- The subject leaders in English, mathematics and science are continuing to improve the curriculum in relation to the requirements of the international assessments. There are increasing opportunities for students to apply their learning to real life contexts, but these are not yet extensive. Students are provided with opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding across the wider curriculum but are not given enough opportunity to develop critical thinking and evaluative skills.
- Information relating to international benchmark tests has been communicated to students. However, many students are unable to articulate their understanding of the National Agenda and what it means for them. Students are unclear about what is expected of them and the skills that they need to demonstrate. There are too few opportunities provided for students to research independently and gather a wider range of information from different sources.

Overall, the school's improvement towards achieving its National Agenda targets meets expectations.



## Innovation in Education

The UAE Vision 2021 sets the aspiration 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' and provides a basis for evaluating schools in order to deliver a world-class education for all children in the UAE.









## Promoting a culture of innovation:

- School leaders are successfully fostering a climate of innovation across the school. Most students are keen and demonstrate a well-developed understanding of the use of advanced technologies to generate innovative ideas of benefit to themselves and others. When given the opportunity they show that they are able to research independently and effectively, communicate their findings, both orally and in writing. The school recognises the need to provide more opportunities for students to solve problems and to link their learning to other subjects. The curriculum provides students with a range of opportunities to explore new ideas and develop enterprise and leadership skills.

## Overall school performance

Good

## 1 Students' achievement

		Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Islamic education 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Good ↑
	Progress	Not applicable	Good ↑	Good
Arabic as an additional language 	Attainment	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
English 	Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Very good ↑	Good	Very good
Mathematics 	Attainment	Good	Good ↑	Good ↑
	Progress	Very good ↑	Good	Good
Science 	Attainment	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Very good ↑	Good	Good
		Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Learning skills		Very good ↑	Good	Good

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

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

## 3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Very good ↑	Good	Good
Assessment	Very good ↑	Good	Good

## 4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum design and implementation	Very good ↑	Good	Good
Curriculum adaptation	Very good ↑	Good	Good

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

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


## 6. Leadership and management

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

# Main inspection report



## 1. Students' achievement

 Foundation Stage		
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	Very good ↑
Mathematics	Good	Very good ↑
Science	Good	Very good ↑

- The majority of children's language development exceeds age related expectations. For the majority, English is an additional language. They make very good progress over time and against lesson learning objectives, measured against their starting points. They are given many varied opportunities to improve their vocabulary through speaking and listening. Children use their understanding of phonics well to read words and write simple sentences, especially when topics are exciting.
- The development of children's knowledge and understanding is good in all aspects of numeracy. They make very good progress from their starting points in lessons and over time. They are able to carry out the key skills of counting, reading and writing numbers and measuring different quantities. They can add and subtract two numbers and record these using the correct symbols. Children are able to place numbers in order and recognise those that are larger from smaller ones. They are able to identify and describe the features of simple shapes such as squares and triangles.
- Children have a good understanding of scientific concepts and are developing good enquiry skills. They demonstrate a natural curiosity about things in their environment. In lessons, critical thinking and problem solving are integral features of learning during focused play as seen, for example, when children had to select material to make a museum for a dinosaur skeleton. A review of children's books, shows that they are making very good progress in the development of scientific skills over time.

Primary		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language	Acceptable	Good ↑
Arabic as an additional language	Acceptable	Acceptable
English	Acceptable	Good
Mathematics	Good ↑	Good
Science	Good	Good

- In Islamic education, most students attain levels that are in line with curriculum standards. Students understand the ideas conveyed in verses and their contexts. However, skills of analysis and inference, and the application of Islamic concepts to their daily lives are underdeveloped. Most students make expected progress in relation to learning objectives such as understanding Hadeeth and the Islamic values of 'best manners'. Not all groups of students make the same progress in lessons and over time because not enough account is taken of their individual starting points.
- In Arabic as a first language, most students' language skills are in line with curriculum expectations. Internal assessment data confirms acceptable attainment. Upper primary students are able to use Arabic adequately both in conversation and in writing. The majority of students make better than expected progress in relation to the learning objectives and their starting points. The reading skills of higher ability students are good.
- In Arabic as an additional language, the attainment of most students is broadly in line with curriculum expectations. Students are able to answer simple questions, although their vocabularies are not extensive. They use visual prompts to blend and read familiar words. Progress in the development of students' listening, responding and speaking skills is adequate. Although progress in reading and writing lags behind, students are able to read and write short simple sentences. Most have difficulty in differentiating masculine and feminine when using present tense verbs.
- The school's internal assessment of attainment in English is below the very good level indicated by external tests. Inspection evidence shows that, when measured against the curriculum standards, attainment in reading, writing, speaking and listening is broadly typical for the students' age. This level of attainment represents good progress over-time for all groups, including those with SEND and students joining the school in the course of the school year. Those learning English as an additional language, around two-thirds of students, mostly make good progress.
- In mathematics, attainment measured using the school's reliable internal assessments, indicate that the majority of students achieve above the minimum curriculum standards. International benchmark results show levels of attainment that are above curriculum expectations for most students and that a large majority of students achieve above that expected. Work completed over-time in books reflects the consistently good progress students make in lessons. Students with SEND also make good progress because their needs are met well.
- In science, students make good progress and the majority of them demonstrate levels of scientific knowledge and skills that are above curriculum standards. Students show competence in a number of areas, including practical and thinking skills, such as measuring and recording. While there is some evidence of basic investigative work, higher order skills, such as analysing and hypothesising are less evident. Nevertheless, a majority of students make better than expected progress when measured against learning objectives and over time.

Secondary		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic education	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language	Good ↑	Good
Arabic as an additional language	Acceptable	Acceptable
English	Acceptable	Very good
Mathematics	Good ↑	Good
Science	Good	Good

- In Islamic education, most students attain levels that are in line with curriculum standards. Students understand, explain and conclude rulings and guidelines from verses, such as explaining how 'Tafakkur' proves the oneness of Allah. However, students' recitation skills of the Holy Qur'an are less developed, as are their critical thinking skills. Most students make expected progress in lessons and in their recent work. Students with lower starting points make slower progress, for example, in understanding the impact of Tawheed on Muslim people's lives.
- In Arabic as a first language, the majority of students attain levels that are above curriculum standards. They are able to analyse literature and use the language with grammatical accuracy. The majority of students make better than expected progress in lessons and over time. They are confident in the use of the language in small group discussions and this is reflected in their writing. The progress of a few students with SEND is below that of others because the work is not always matched to their learning needs.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students display levels of knowledge and understanding that are in line with the curriculum expectations. Students are able to identify and note the main points in discussion. They answer simple questions based on familiar contexts. In lessons, students make acceptable progress in developing their speaking and writing skills, such as when answering questions about their favourite television programmes and films they have seen.
- In English, the school's internal data compared against the curriculum standards and the results of international benchmark tests indicate weak attainment. However, current secondary students demonstrate reading, speaking and listening skills that are broadly typical of their age. Writing skills are improving, but not as quickly as the other three skills. Higher ability students show well-developed speaking and listening skills in class discussions. Students with English as an additional language, make very good progress both in lessons and over time. Students with SEND also make very good progress.
- In mathematics, the majority of students achieve levels of attainment that are above the expected curriculum standards. This is supported by accurate and reliable internal assessments. Students' attainment is also benchmarked against international expectations. These results indicate that attainment exceeds international averages and that the large majority attain levels higher than expected in relation to their potential. Students' work in their exercise books reflects the good progress they make in lessons.



- Internal and external tests in science suggest different levels of attainment and progress. Nevertheless, these data, together with an examination of students' work, lesson observations and discussions with students, show that the majority are performing at a level that is above curriculum expectations. Students show a good understanding of concepts. A number of students, for whom English is an additional language, have difficulty in expressing their scientific knowledge. Practical skills are developing well. However, higher order skills of analysing, evaluating and hypothesising are relatively underdeveloped.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Learning skills	Very good ↑	Good	Good


- Most students are keen and eager to learn. They are rarely off task in lessons and, when given the opportunity, show that they are able to work independently and take responsibility for their own learning. This is particularly the case in FS, where children engage enthusiastically in many independent learning activities. Across the school, students respond well to teacher feedback. Most know their strengths and where they need to improve.
- Students collaborate well when working in pairs or small groups to good effect. They work purposefully and most enjoy sharing their ideas and learning from each other. However, communication skills vary depending on students' competence in speaking English.
- Children in the FS make meaningful connections between their new learning and their prior knowledge. When given the opportunity, students show that they are able to make connections between their learning and the real world, so consolidating knowledge in new contexts. However, connections between areas of learning are less evident in the primary and secondary phases than in the FS.
- When given the opportunity, most students show that they are enterprising and capable of carrying out independent research. They are able to use digital resources to carry out investigations. Critical thinking skills are developed well in the FS and in English. However, the development of higher-order critical thinking and problem solving skills is not consistently seen in all subjects.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Personal development	Outstanding ↑	Very good	Very good

- Students across the school have mature attitudes towards their learning. In the FS, children's self-reliance and discipline support them in their learning, but this is not as strong in other areas of the school. Students exchange opinions readily and are comfortable learning from one another and from staff through constructive feedback.
- Students are generally self-disciplined and respond very well to their peers and adults. Their positive behaviour contributes much to a harmonious learning community. They show genuine concern and sensitivity to the needs of their friends and report that they feel safe and well supported by others in the school community.

- Very positive relationships are prevalent in almost all lessons. Teachers are skilful in the way they value the contributions of each student and in the manner in which they do so. As a result, students are not only respectful to staff but to each other.
- Students understand the importance of having a safe and healthy lifestyle. Sport and physical activity are encouraged and enjoyed by students. They are well aware, from an early age, of the need to eat sensibly. They are able to explain the reasons for, and encourage others in, making healthy eating choices and taking regular exercise.
- Students' attendance is good and most are punctual in arriving at school and for lessons throughout the school day. They are very aware of how good attendance influences their academic achievement.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
<b>Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures</b>	Good 	Good	Good

- Students have a clear, but not fully developed, understanding of how Islamic values influence the community in which they live. They appreciate that life in the UAE is different from life in other countries, but their variable knowledge of Islam limits their full appreciation.
- Most students have a good knowledge of facts about buildings, cities, dress and modern business in the UAE. They have a good understanding of how Islamic values influence their community and the reasons for the rapid growth of Dubai.
- Students are aware of the importance of the relationship between their own culture and that of others. They understand that there are similarities and differences between cultures and see the school as one community, regardless of students' different backgrounds. However, not all students show interest in the different cultures of their peers.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
<b>Social responsibility and innovation skills</b>	Good	Good	Good

- From the FS onwards, students become responsible members of the school community. They understand their responsibilities to the school and contribute to the wider community in a number of ways. For example, through the charitable 'bake sale' organised by the student council. Many students are keen to offer their ideas in support of the school and would like to have more opportunities to do this.
- Students have positive attitudes to work and take pleasure from purposeful activities. Through a variety of projects, many display innovative and enterprising ideas and skills. They are able to initiate and participate in events and activities in a number of ways, such as international educational visits.
- Most students are aware of environmental issues and care for the school and its environment. They understand the merits of solar power in relation to pollution and participate in conservation projects, many of which are related to recycling.

### 3. Teaching and assessment

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Very good ↑	Good	Good


- Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. Teachers in the FS have a very good understanding of how young children learn. Teachers use their knowledge well to provide students with suitably challenging work. However, there is inconsistency in the setting of work to match students' ability levels in the primary and secondary phases. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support teaching and learning.
- Lessons are well planned and most plans include differentiated targets related to students' attainment levels. However, in practice, work is not always differentiated in a way which reflects lesson plans. As a result, progress slows because the work is too easy for some but too hard for others. Lessons are taught in stimulating, calm and purposeful environments. Resources are used well to support the achievement of lesson objectives.
- Interactions between students and teachers are positive and productive. In the most effective lessons, open-ended questioning encourages students, of all abilities, to think for themselves. This is a strong feature of teaching in the FS but is less evident in Arabic as an additional language. Effective paired and small group discussions are used in most lessons.
- In many lessons, teachers provide students with a range of activities that enable them to learn from each other as well as from the teacher. However, in a minority of lessons, teachers are unclear about how best to promote this form of learning. In these lessons, there are not enough checks on individual student's progress in order for misunderstandings to be quickly identified and corrected.
- There are many examples, particularly in the FS and English, of teachers providing opportunities for the promotion of critical thinking skills. The development and application of research and reasoning skills is built into the learning activities in these lessons. However, this is not a consistent feature across all subjects and the development of high level enquiry and critical thinking skills is a continuing school development priority.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Assessment	Very good ↑	Good	Good

- In the FS, effective assessment procedures provide accurate information on children's learning and progress. In the primary and secondary phases, subject leaders ensure that internal assessment provides detailed, accurate and reliable information relating to students' attainment in most subjects. In English, mathematics and science, internal assessments are aligned to the National Curriculum of England. There are internal assessments in Arabic but these are less accurate.
- There are no external examinations to measure students' attainment against curriculum standards at the end of the primary phase. For all students in the primary and secondary phases, their academic attainment in English, mathematics and science is benchmarked against international standards. Outcomes from international benchmark tests reveal significant differences compared to the school's internal assessments.

- Regular assessment enables students' progress in most subjects to be monitored. Subject leaders undertake detailed analyses to ensure that assessment outcomes accurately reflect the progress students make. This aspect of the school's work is further enhanced by the introduction of progress tests in English, mathematics and science in the primary and secondary phases.
- Assessment information is used in planning the curriculum and teaching to better meet students' learning needs. The use of this information by teachers to shape learning tasks to match students' needs is evident in the most effective lessons. However, this is most likely to be seen in the FS than the other phases.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of individual students. The school gathers information on students' potential together with information that compares this with attainment in international benchmarks. However, this information is not being fully used to ensure that students are realising their full potential. Evaluative feedback to students provides sufficient information on how their work can be improved.

#### 4. Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum design and implementation	Very good 	Good	Good

- The curriculum has a clear rationale. It is relevant and appropriate to the age and year groups. It effectively develops knowledge, understanding and skills, and promotes risk-taking and innovation. There is close alignment with the National Curriculum for England and UAE requirements. The curriculum in the FS is particularly vibrant.
- Curriculum planning ensures sequential progression in skill development as students move through the school. The curriculum is well planned to ensure that students are prepared for the next stage of their education. The curriculum in Year 1 is currently being reviewed to ensure continuity in learning from the FS. Curriculum provision in the FS is closely linked to the early learning goals.
- A wide range of learning opportunities is available to children in the FS across all areas of learning. High levels of motivation are promoted because learning is based on children's interests. Choices have been extended in the secondary phase to match students' interests and the growth of the school.
- Well-planned cross-curricular links are a feature of learning in the FS. In other phases, there are references to learning in other subjects. The application of students' ICT skills in English and history, for example, enables students to access original source material. However, the application of these and other skills across subjects is inconsistent. There is scope to further develop such purposeful links to reinforce learning across subjects.
- The curriculum is carefully reviewed to ensure that it meets current requirements of the National Curriculum for England and reflects the school's aims and priorities. The curriculum is thoughtfully modified in the light of information about students' attainment and progress. The drive to improve the curriculum has resulted in numerous well-conceived initiatives to enhance learning. The impact of developments is not fully reflected in students' academic outcomes.

- UAE social studies features in all three phases of the school. It is integrated with other areas of learning in the FS. In the primary phase, social studies is taught as a cross-curricular theme, enhanced by special assemblies that are planned to foster cultural understanding. In addition, one discrete social studies lesson is taught every two weeks across the primary phase. From the start of the current school year, social studies is taught through weekly discrete lessons. Teaching provides a balance between the acquisition of facts and the development of skills. Assessment in social studies is aligned to the Ministry of Education standards.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum adaptation	Very good ↑	Good	Good

- In the FS, the curriculum is effectively modified to meet the needs of almost all children. Lesson plans, in most subjects, take account of students' differing attainment levels, but modifications to teaching are not always seen in practice. Well-constructed IEPs support students with SEND. However, curriculum planning in Islamic education does not take account of students' differing levels of knowledge and understanding.
- Students are provided with a good range of opportunities to develop their creative and innovative skills, particularly in the FS. However, the school recognises that there is scope to further develop these aspects in the curriculum. A wide variety of extra-curricular activities enables students to select one that is of interest or matches their needs. The curriculum is enhanced by educational visits to places of historic and cultural significance.
- The parents of Emirati students make valuable contributions to the school's work in promoting the understanding of all students about the traditions and values of the UAE. Displays around the school, and celebrations of National Day contribute to the school's effective provision in this area.

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

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

- The school has effective safeguarding procedures to protect students from all forms of bullying, including cyber bullying. These are communicated well to all staff, students and parents. Students are made aware of the need for safe Internet and social media use. All staff receive child protection training and any issues are dealt with swiftly. Students know what to do if they have a concern.
- The school environment is safe and hygienic. Students are supervised at all times within school and on school transport. All medicines and records are stored safely in the school clinic. Buses are well supervised and the site is secure. Despite constant reminders, a few parents do not follow the drop off and pick up procedures at the beginning and end of the school day.

- All equipment and security systems are well maintained. Detailed maintenance records are kept together with records of any incidents and subsequent action. Fire equipment checks are date registered. The preparation spaces in practical areas are secure and items are safely stored.
- The school premises, resources, and equipment are suitable for the learning needs of all students including those with SEND. Classrooms are enhanced by colourful displays that celebrate students' achievements. Very good use is made of space in the corridors. However, there is no barrier between outdoor play equipment and a general thoroughfare in the FS.
- The school successfully promotes healthy lifestyles within the curriculum. The need for health and wellbeing is integrated into almost all aspects of school life. The school nurses provide regular health checks and promote healthy living through advice on exercise and diet. Many students participate in the before, and after, school sports and other physical activities available to all.

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Care and support	Good	Good	Good

- Students are polite, courteous and welcoming in all parts of the school. The relationships they form with other students, with teachers and other adults, are strong and positive. Students are very well managed in lessons and in all year groups. As a result, learning is not interrupted and no time is lost.
- The school places great emphasis on the need for regular attendance and has effective systems in place to monitor students' attendance. Most students are punctual at the start of the school day and to lessons.
- Procedures for the identification of students with SEND are clearly stated in the school's inclusion policy. These procedures draw on information from parents and teachers and are effective in ensuring that those with additional needs are recognised. The identification of the more able and gifted and talented students is not sufficiently developed.
- The school's systems to support students with SEND are secure. A team of staff work closely with class teachers to enable appropriate support and modifications to be put in place for each student. Teachers are also aware of which students have particular gifts and talents. However, this awareness does not lead to consistently good curriculum modification and support in lessons.
- The wellbeing of students is central to the ethos of this inclusive school. Effective systems are in place to monitor the wellbeing, safeguarding and personal development of all students. The transition points in students' school careers are handled sensitively, enabling students to move to the next stages of their education with confidence. Guidance is provided to both students and their parents at times of transition.



## Inclusion

### Provision and outcomes for students with SEND

Good

- The leadership of inclusion is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. The new leader is ensuring that the monitoring procedures are robust and that all staff have an accurate understanding of the department's aims and procedures. The establishment, in the first instance, of a performance management structure with associated monitoring has been essential in the drive to bring about consistency of approach
- Students with particular needs are identified very early in their school careers. Information is gathered from a variety of sources with much input from parents. These procedures are effective in accurately identifying students' needs. Work to develop class teachers' awareness of the range of barriers to students' learning and how these can best be overcome is developing.
- Parents speak very positively about the support provided by the inclusion department for their children. Lines of communication are open and parents feel that they can raise issues about their children's learning at any time. The close liaison between the inclusion staff and parents is well established and has a very positive impact on students' progress.
- Students' IEPs are detailed, accurate and indicate what curriculum modifications are required. Students are involved in the construction of their IEPs. All teachers are aware of students' individual targets. The school is developing a model of inclusion to enable students with SEND to make consistently good progress in all subjects. Progress is at least good when students receive support from the inclusion department specialists.
- Systems to measure and students' progress are effective. Inclusion staff track progress from individual starting points towards the students' particular targets. Evidence in lessons and in students' work during the inspection shows that students with SEND make good progress.

## 6. Leadership and management

### The effectiveness of leadership

Good

- The new principal, with the support of other senior leaders, has set a clear vision for the school, which is shared by the governing board, staff, students and most parents. Both new and established staff, demonstrate a good understanding of students' differing needs. There is an increasing commitment to UAE national and Emirate priorities as part of the school's drive for improvement.
- Leaders, at all levels, demonstrate a secure knowledge of the National Curriculum for England. They are developing assessment procedures that relate to the expectations of the amended curriculum. Most leaders understand what constitutes good and better teaching. Lesson observations are used to identify teachers' professional development needs. However, a minority feel that professional development is focused more on whole school rather than individual development needs.

- Leadership responsibility is distributed to staff at all levels. Because a number of staff are new to leadership roles, their effectiveness in driving improvement in their areas of responsibility is inconsistent. Relationships between staff across the school are courteous and professional. While morale is generally positive, a minority of staff feel there is scope for improving communication, particularly as lines of responsibility are not always clear.
- Staff are responding very positively to initiatives, many of which are innovative, to enhance provision and in particular teaching and learning. Leaders across the school are aware of the need for recent developments to be firmly embedded for their full impact to be seen on student outcomes. Nevertheless, the willingness to share new ideas and good practice is strengthening the school's capacity for continued improvement.
- The principal has established positive working relationships with the senior and middle leaders. Concerted action has been taken to address the recommendations of the last inspection, particularly with regard to Arabic and Islamic education. While significant improvement is seen in Arabic as a first language, discontinuity in leadership and staffing has limited the school's capacity to improve Islamic education and Arabic as an additional language.

<b>School self-evaluation and improvement planning</b>	<b>Good</b>
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- Information gathered from a range of sources forms the basis of school improvement planning. There is evidence that action already taken is improving the school, for example in the quality of provision and outcomes in the FS. The school's self-evaluation is overgenerous in a number of aspects because the time needed for changes to become embedded has been under-estimated.
- Checks on the quality of teaching and learning by senior leaders are effectively managed. This monitoring guides the review process and the identification of teachers' professional development needs. Middle leaders are becoming more engaged in the monitoring of teaching and accountable for its impact on student outcomes. The professional development provided for staff is closely linked to the school's improvement priorities.
- The school improvement plan provides a clear overview of the current improvement priorities. The plan specifies the action to be taken to improve provision and takes account of UAE national priorities. However, the information on students' attainment and progress has not always been evaluated accurately enough to provide a secure basis for improvement planning.
- Progress in tackling the recommendations in the last inspection report has been hindered by the large number of staff changes in the course of the year. Since taking up their appointments, the new senior leadership team have set about tackling these recommendations and they feature as priorities in the school improvement plan. It is too early to evaluate the full impact of the action being taken.

## Partnerships with parents and the community

Good

- The school provides many opportunities for parents to be involved in the life of the school and they report how pleased they are to be able to support their children's work. The parent association plays a significant role, arranging and supporting a range of events to extend school and community cohesion. A minority of parents feel that not all phase leaders are visible enough and their views are not listened to.
- There is a range of ways for parents to learn about what is happening in the school, in particular through the learning platform and the principal's weekly blog. They receive regular feedback on their children's academic progress and personal development. A very positive aspect is the way in which parents can access students' class and subject teachers.
- Assessment information is reported to parents six times a year. In addition, there are a number of consultation evenings. End of year reports provide detailed information. Students contribute to the reports and are fully involved in reviews of their work and the progress they are making. In the FS, children's records of progress through their learning journeys are exemplary.
- Sporting competitions with other schools and fundraising for charitable causes play an important role in the life of the school. This work is continually being developed. Links have been established with a number of local schools, and this is raising the profile of the school in the wider community of Dubai.

## Governance

Good

- Through the system of school governance, senior staff from GEMS work very closely with the school. In order to widen representation and strengthen support for the school's development, they are in the process of establishing a local advisory board, which includes parents and community members. Through regular visits, governors have a very good knowledge of the school and its performance.
- Governors regularly monitor the work of the school. They demonstrate a high level of commitment to the progress of all students, for which they hold the school's leaders accountable. They have taken decisive action to improve leadership in the school. Positive and productive relationships between the school and the owners enable the school to benefit from the wide experience and skills it offers.
- The governing board has a positive influence on the school's leadership and direction. They understand the school well and both support and challenge the school leaders. They are positioned well to ensure that emerging needs are identified quickly and that funding, where needed, is available. They are also directly available to parents. They appraise the performance of the principal and ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

**Management, staffing, facilities and resources**




Very good

- The day-to-day management of the school is effective and the school runs very smoothly. Systems to promote students' safety at drop off and pick up times are well organised, although not followed by a few parents. Information boards and monitors ensure that staff and students are aware of events and information. They are fully aware of the school's routines and procedures.
- The school is staffed with suitably qualified teachers and competent teaching assistants. Following the recent changes in senior leadership and staffing, a number of new initiatives are in the process of being embedded. The professional development programme is aligned well to the school's priorities and the new initiatives, but not always sufficiently personalised for teachers' individual development needs.
- The school premises provide spacious classrooms and an excellent range of specialist facilities. Facilities for the performing arts and physical education are of particularly high quality. Children in the FS benefit from an environment that is beneficial to active learning. However, improvements are needed to the outside learning area in FS2 because it also serves as a walkway for students and parents.
- All classrooms are very well resourced. Each is equipped with interactive boards that are used very well to stimulate students' learning. Of particular note are the excellent resources for digital learning. A good supply of books in the library and a plentiful supply of learning materials are available to support and extend learning at all phases.

## The views of parents, teachers and senior students

### The views of parents, teachers and senior 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	
 <b>Parents*</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	154
	<b>2015-2016</b>	248
 <b>Teachers</b>	60	
 <b>Students</b>	100	

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

- Almost all parents and most students who responded to the survey are satisfied with the quality of education the school provides. Parents think that their children are kept safe, well taught and enjoy school.
- Virtually all parents said that their children are well behaved and respectful. They feel that the school provides a good range of resources to support learning and that their children are developing the skills needed to use modern technology. While most feel that the school promotes literacy and a love of reading in English well, a large minority feel that this is not the case in Arabic. Most students feel that they are well supported and that there is always someone there to help them if ever the need arises.
- Most students, who responded to the survey feel that their views are listened to and that they make a meaningful contribution to the life of the school. They feel that their teachers are helpful and always want them to do their best. A minority of parents express concerns about school leadership and the approachability of leaders and staff. A minority feel that the school does not do enough to develop an understanding of the importance of Islamic values in Dubai society.
- Teacher responses were mostly positive and almost all are satisfied with the quality of education and the support for students' well-being the school provides. Most enjoy working at the school. A minority indicated concerns about school leadership and opportunities for professional development.

### What happens next?

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

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

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

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau  
Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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