



**British School  
Overseas**  
Inspected by Penta International

## **Inspection report**

# **Gems Founders School Al Mizhar**

**Dubai  
United Arab Emirates**

Date  
Inspection number

**21<sup>st</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2022  
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## 1. Purpose and scope of the inspection

The Department for Education has put in place a voluntary scheme for the inspection of British schools overseas, whereby schools are inspected against a common set of standards that British schools overseas can choose to adopt.

The inspection and this report follow the Department for Education (DFE) schedule for the inspection of British Schools overseas.

The purpose of the inspection is to provide information to parents, teachers, senior managers and the school's management on the overall effectiveness of the school, the standard of education it provides and its compatibility with independent schools in the United Kingdom. The inspection and report will cover the key areas of quality of the curriculum; quality of teaching and learning; the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students; their welfare, health and safety; the suitability of the proprietor and staff; the school's premises and accommodation (including boarding); and the school's complaints procedures. An essential part of the inspection is considering the extent to which the British character of the school is evident in its ethos, curriculum, teaching, care for students and students' achievements.

This inspection was completed by Penta International. Penta International is approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas. As one of the leading inspection providers, Penta International reports to the English Department for Education (DFE) on the extent to which schools meet the standards for British Schools Overseas.

During the inspection visit, over 120 lesson observations took place, as well as a series of learning walks. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Students' workbooks were scrutinised, and discussions were held with the senior staff, the management team, and a range of teachers, parents and groups of students. The inspection team were in school for three days.

The lead inspector was Colin Dyson. The team members were Andy Bray, Ciprian Ghisa, Julie Harris, Karen McGregor, Brett Neilson and Andre Nel.

## 2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

GEMS Founders School Al Mizhar (GFM) meets all the standards for British Schools Overseas.

### 3. Overall effectiveness of the school

The strong leadership from the principal, his team of leaders and managers ensure students achieve well in all aspects of their education and development. Strong relationships based on mutual trust and understanding are evident throughout the school. This results in GFM being a good school with some outstanding features.

The school has a clear stated focus on developing an innovative curriculum that fully supports students in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century to become highly effective citizens. Students and their teachers enjoy their school life.

#### 3.1 What the school does well.

There are many strengths at the school, including the following:

- The excellent health and wellbeing support for all students.
- The inclusive nature of the school supports all students to achieve.
- The light, bright newly built facilities.
- The wide range of student leadership opportunities.
- The students are a delight; motivated with highly positive attitudes.
- The way students support their peers without prompting.
- The integration of technology across the school.
- The excellent provision of information for parents and the open-door policy towards the wider community.
- The rigorous assessment and target setting and data collection that supports the implementation of effective intervention procedures.
- The Innovation Classes which provide high quality student led learning.
- The clear focus of all staff; both teaching and non-teaching to support the wellbeing of every student.
- The majority of teaching is good or better.
- The drive of the principal and leaders to create high quality learning opportunities for all.

## 3.2 Points for improvement

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following development points:

- As teachers become more confident ensure they are encouraged and supported to create memorable learning activities across the curriculum.
- As the school continues to grow rapidly, develop the physical facilities to allow creative and innovative teaching environments.
- Embed High Performance Learning (HPL) across the curriculum to enhance students learning outcomes.

## 4. The context of the school

Full name of School	GEMS Founders School, Al Mizhar				
Address	Al Mizhar Al Mizhar 1 Dubai United Arab Emirates				
Telephone Number/s	04 210 3555				
Fax Number	N/A				
Website Address	<a href="https://www.gemsfoundersschool-mizhar.com/en/">https://www.gemsfoundersschool-mizhar.com/en/</a>				
Key Email Address/s	<a href="mailto:Registrar_gfm@gemsedu.com">Registrar_gfm@gemsedu.com</a>				
Headteacher/principal	Akram Tarik				
Chair of Board of Governors/Proprietor	Ms Lilian Ramo Shatmajeian				
Age Range	3 – 16 years				
Total number of students	3,027	Boys	1,582	Girls	1,445
Numbers by age	0-2 years	0	12-16 years	574	
	3-5 years	804	17-18 years	0	
	6-11 years	1,649	18+ years	0	
Total number of part-time children	None				

GFM is a large, independent, non-selective school for students aged from 3 to 16 years and is located in the Al Mizhar district of Dubai. It is owned by GEMS Educational Management Systems who operate a number of schools across Dubai.

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The school is organised into two sections, primary (FS1-Y6) and secondary (Y7-Y11). The principal/CEO and vice principal oversee the whole school with a primary and secondary headteacher overseeing the primary and secondary schools. The schools are then further broken-down into key stages (KS), typically found in the UK.

Teachers are English speaking (with the exception of Arabic A and Islamic A staff). Those who have qualified out of the UK have been through an intensive recruitment and professional development programme. All staff complete UK equivalent health and safety training through GEMS U. The GFM senior leadership team (SLT) hold UK recognised leadership qualifications including NPQSL, NPQH, NPQEL and Penta training as inspectors. All SLT hold UK university degrees and all XLT have experience of headship in the UK and/or principal-ship in UAE.

GFM is an active member of BSME, gaining accreditation in 2019. Since September 2021, GFM has been the Network Lead School for the Teaching and Learning Community, leading many webinars and facilitating part of the BSME website.

## 4.1 British nature of the school

The school fully meets BSO standards.

The school's values, ethos and appearance are recognisably British.

- The organisational structure mirrors that found in British schools. It comprises a primary (FS1 to Y6) and secondary (Y7-11) phase with the Sixth Form (Y12) nearing completion to open in summer 22.
- The school follows a 3-term calendar similar to UK schools and in-line with other British schools in Dubai.
- Extensive safer recruitment practices and qualification ratification are established, that parallel those undertaken in British schools. The school implements an online Single Central Record system, which is directly linked to a number of criminal record checks (ICPC/ACCRO) alongside overseas Good Conduct Certification. This includes all supply staff, volunteers, and 3<sup>rd</sup> party contractors.
- The school promotes British values through its highly visible Mission Statement of, 'Creating tomorrow's successful and caring citizens today' as well as within its broad and balanced curriculum.
- Learning environments, corridor displays and public spaces celebrate and embed British values, replicating the ethos commonly found within UK schools.
- The school offers the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021 (EYFS) and the English National Curriculum from Year 1. GCSE's and IGCSE's are undertaken in KS4 with the implementation of 2-year A level programmes or iBTEC vocational pathways from summer 2022.
- Assessment tests and Teacher assessments are based on and benchmarked against UK national standards (Good Level of Development, Year 6 SATs, GL PT's)
- Extensive school policies and procedures exemplify the high priorities of welfare, health and safety of learners and effective communication.
- Student Leadership, responsibility and House System are established and prominently displayed around the school to support a balanced and 'whole-child' educational experience for all.

## 5. Standard 1 The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided is good with some outstanding features. The school fully meets the standards for BSO.

### 5.1 Curriculum

The curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good with outstanding elements.

It provides children with a range of play-based learning opportunities, covering all curriculum areas. The activities stimulate children's interest and motivate them to learn. The curriculum has a clear and appropriate focus on developing children's skills in speaking, reading, and writing. The teaching of phonics is well-planned and effective, and children achieve a good level in this area. The children's personal, social, and emotional needs are well-provided for in a caring environment, where children are encouraged to discuss their own feelings and show empathy for the feelings of others. Teachers and teaching assistants have a good understanding of the curriculum and how to implement it. Teachers plan together, thus ensuring consistency of provision across each year group and a clear progression in learning from Nursery to Reception. The plans are then adapted to meet the needs of the individual children in each class. In EYFS the staff have introduced effective assessment and tracking procedures which allow teachers to identify children who need additional help, and to provide it effectively.

The KS1 curriculum is good with some outstanding features. There is evidence of a broad and balanced curriculum with robust and detailed planning in place to support the learning of all abilities. Opportunities are routinely crafted to blend together both local (Year 1 topic of Space featuring Hazza Al Mansouri) and cultural topics (Year 2 study of Indian/British landmark comparisons) promoting engagement through the use of 'class experts' and real-life links. Language immersion is a strength. Speaking and listening is a key curriculum focus. Clearly structured phonics and progressive literacy skills are well planned for with students in Year 1 articulately expressing their knowledge of split diagraphs; they confidently apply these when reading unfamiliar texts. The majority of learning environments provide a rich resource, including 'Working Walls', promoting independent access across the curriculum. There is a developing approach to embedding High Performance Learning (HPL) attributes, further developing student resilience and curiosity. *Bring your Own Device* (BYOD) is clearly embedded within the curriculum; students in KS1 are articulate and independent in the use of a variety of apps. They confidently share their work online with their teachers with minimal adult support through the use of *Seesaw*.

Throughout KS2 the curriculum content is varied, covers the English National Curriculum and has been adjusted to cater for the local requirements. Content and materials were pitched at an age appropriate standard in most lessons and subjects. Key connections are made between subjects, for example in Year 5, students were annotating a persuasive text in English which linked to their topic work about similarities and differences between the UK and the UAE. English lessons are carefully planned to incorporate high quality, example texts with rich vocabulary which the students analyse. Frequent opportunities for active learning through drama and debating are planned into these lessons providing a cross-curricular approach. Technology is used effectively across KS2 with 'Bring Your Own Device' (BYOD) integrated into most lessons with purpose. This includes in specialist lessons where an online assessment tool was being used in Arabic A. Some students found it challenging to fully access the learning; the school has clearly developed methods to support those students and these approaches are becoming embedded in some classrooms but not all.

The school provides a comprehensive curriculum in KS3 and 4, aligned with the National Curriculum for England, and enhanced by the provision for Arabic and Islamic Studies in the National context. The school has recently introduced High Performance Learning as a vehicle for developing learning skills and attitudes and at KS3 has added Global Perspectives from the IGCSE curriculum. The curriculum is further enhanced by the extensive use of technology for planning and facilitation of lessons. The curriculum is sometimes adapted to meet the needs of individual students, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and the gifted and talented students.

GFM currently offers a wide range of timetabled subjects in KS4 and is planning to offer more as the school continues expansion. By widening the range of academic options available the school will be able to provide further opportunities for students to develop talents, interests, and aspirations. Currently GCSE subjects offered include computing, economics, geography, history, PE, psychology, sociology, travel and tourism, music and drama. The school is planning to start offering BTEC subjects in September 2022 including Sport, IT, Business and Applied Science.

Provision for KS5 has already been mapped out for September 2022. It has been designed to allow academic provision for science, financial, arts and technology routes. The inclusion of vocational courses in both KSs 4 and 5 will provide an alternative pathway for different groups of students. Level 3 BTECs will also be available in sport and IT to meet further needs.

Student and parental support for curricular choices is currently given through the Director of Aspirations who leads on careers and option choices. At all stages student voice is taken into consideration when looking at future curriculum design. This is carried out through surveys with both students and parents.

The director of aspirations further leads in areas including input to the form time programme, 'future pathway' meetings with students, aspiration week, university talks and visits and support for parents and students regarding equivalency requirements.

## 5.2 Teaching and assessment

Teaching and assessment are at least good.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), effective teaching means that children enjoy their learning and make good or better progress. They focus well on tasks and activities and make independent choices. The good standard of behaviour and calm atmosphere in most classrooms, facilitates the good level of engagement shown by children. Classroom routines such as snack time and tidy-up time encourage children to be independent and responsible. This independence is then transferred to their learning. Children are well-supported by teachers and teaching assistants, both during independent and adult-directed tasks. Children with additional learning needs are identified and tasks provided to meet these needs, allowing each child to make progress. Teachers are very aware of each child's individual areas of strength, areas where they need additional support and the next steps in their learning. Questioning is used very effectively by adults to help children learn from their mistakes and consolidate or extend their learning. The range of activities provided is generally good, although due to the restrictions imposed due to COVID-19, some classes lack regular access to adequate outdoor space. The school has plans to address this issue once restrictions are lifted. Daily plans are detailed and based on a good understanding of the curriculum. Learning would be further improved by allowing more opportunities to adapt the planning to the interests of the children.

The quality of the teaching and assessment in KS2 is good. Some lessons had outstanding elements, and some were satisfactory. Students demonstrated good prior knowledge in all lessons; in the lessons with outstanding features, students were recalling this information themselves without the need for prompting from the teacher.

A focus on developing the English language both written and orally is having a good impact. Opportunities for students to discuss their ideas and thoughts were frequently used through 'shoulder partners' and this provided an effective means of confidence, verbally, throughout KS2. All students participated in these activities and teachers selected students at random to answer the given questions.

Classroom environments also show ambitious vocabulary which have been added to by the students over the length of a unit of work. Assessment for learning through frequent and deep questioning was a strength of many lessons across KS2. In several classes, teachers made adjustments to the next stage of a lesson depending upon the confidence of the students based on their prior knowledge and their responses to initial questions. In a few instances, teachers grouped several students to work together at the front of the class for additional, teacher support and this was often at the decision of the student rather than the teacher. Students demonstrate a positive growth mindset: on several occasions when an incorrect answer was given

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by a student, the teacher or their peers would respectfully correct them, and the student would graciously and positively welcome the additional knowledge they were being supported with.

The quality of teaching and assessment in KS3 is frequently good but it is variable across the cohort of teachers. In the best lessons, students were highly engaged and motivated throughout the lesson. Detailed planning included references to learning support (in the form of universal measures for learning), HPL goals, links to British and Emirati life and challenges which effectively stretched more able learners. The high expectations of the teacher were matched by excellent questioning and good pace throughout. The quality of learning is evidenced in the books of learners and high-quality feedback supports further learning.

In lessons, where learning was inadequate, the level of expectation was much too low for the group and there was little or no engagement or motivation for learners to exert themselves. Questioning was limited and tasks were very closed, lacking in creativity or challenge for the students. In these lessons, books reflected the low expectations of teachers, with basic feedback given and inconsistent marking. Supportive improvement processes are in place and aim to ensure that the quality of teaching can be improved over time to consistently good or better. Questioning techniques are used to explore prior knowledge and provoke thought, enquiry, and curiosity, but are inconsistently developed across the cohort of teachers. Evidence exists of meta-thinking and student engagement with how they learn best, and a school aim is that this will be further developed as the HPL programme is embedded in school-wide practice.

In KS 4, expectations are generally high with regards to both behaviour and learning. Classroom management is very good and the level of student engagement with their learning is good especially in mathematics and English. The teachers have solid subject knowledge, and they use a range of very good quality resources taking advantage of the excellent technologies available in all classrooms. In the best of the lessons, the lessons are very well structured, activities reflect the steps to success, very good questioning is visible, and differentiation is evidenced through relevant challenge tasks. In many lessons, teaching is mostly teacher led, with a very high pace, which does not always allow the teacher to check on the levels of understanding of all students. Self-assessment is used effectively, but there were many missed opportunities for peer-assessment. Students are provided with generally positive feed-back and with instructions on how to make progress. EAL is well supported by clear word lists for different subjects and by constant clarification of concepts. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and are very confident. They have a good understanding of the English national curriculum as well as secondary and post-16 public examinations. They have a strong understanding of how students learn most effectively. Teachers do their utmost to help students succeed academically, creatively, and personally. Lessons are planned with clear objectives and teachers share success criteria at the start of learning. Teachers

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mostly use a range of good-quality, age-appropriate resources such as practical equipment, video clips and digital technology to stimulate students' curiosity. Teachers use a wide range of styles and strategies to motivate students and meet their needs consistently. Teachers know their students extremely well and have high expectations of them. There seems to be a strong and productive relationship between teachers and students. Students' learning skills are mostly reinforced effectively and developed by quite a broad range of subjects offered. Students are encouraged to think for themselves, take responsibility for their learning, work independently and collaboratively, and reflect on their learning. Accurate assessments are done that informs students how to improve.

School data suggests the school's first cohort of Year 11 students appear to be on track to achieve above average outcomes at GCSE level. In Year 11 students are actively engaged and the use of questioning by teachers encourages students to think deeply and elaborate their ideas. Most teachers teaching Year 11 are doing revision and giving feedback on the recently completed mock exams. Standards in mathematics in Year 11 are above average, and students have very good subject knowledge. Lessons in English and mathematics are set. Lessons move at a very fast pace and some students do not seem to keep up. There is inconsistency in the marking of books and feedback given to students. Peer and self-assessment are encouraged but not consistent across all classes and subject areas. Target sheets are pasted in the front of most notebooks although most are not completed.

Most teachers praise students' effort which encourages them to participate with enthusiasm, promotes excellent behaviour and results mostly in a very positive atmosphere for learning. Lessons in KS4 ran smoothly.

## 5.3 Standards achieved by students

Standards achieved by the students across the school are good.

Students across all year groups make consistently good progress, which is illustrated in the internal assessments as well as in the standardized progress tests results. They make good progress during lessons. Their very good behaviour and attitude towards learning allow them to develop a wide range of skills across all subjects. Students throughout the school display high level of English, they are eloquent and confident in their communication abilities. Student progress is very rigorously monitored across all the academic departments and in all key stages. Baseline and regular internal assessments and mock test sessions are supported by external assessments such as GL progress tests. A very broad range of data is collected and translated into effective individual development or intervention plans allowing the students to make progress or to close the gaps in their learning. Consistent and effective learning support is offered to students on three different levels, in line with the vision and mission of the school which has inclusion of all students as one of the most important goals. Evidence shows that 95% of Level 3 students met or exceeded their IEP targets in 2020-2021 academic year.

The students are working to reach high aspirational target grades set at the beginning of each academic year. Consistent self-assessment is evidenced in most of the lessons across the school. The results in the progress tests have improved since their initial introduction, despite the difficulties and challenges raised by the COVID 19 pandemic.

In primary, the progress tests at the end of 2020-2021 academic year indicate that: in English, 96% of students made expected progress and 61% made better than expected progress; in mathematics, 92% of students made expected progress and 59% made better than expected progress; in science, 96% of students made expected progress and 80% made better than expected progress. Year 6 end of Summer SATs Data demonstrates the cohort is above UK curriculum standards.

Students continue to make good progress across the secondary school. The progress tests at the end of 2020-2021 academic year indicate that in KS3: 69% of students made expected progress in English (compared to 64% in the previous year); 87% of students made expected progress in mathematics (compared to 54% in the previous year); 93% of students made expected progress in science (compared to 55% in the previous year). Currently, the students in Year 11 are preparing for their first IGCSE exams, as they are the first year-group to sit in these international examinations in the history of the school. Their progress is very carefully monitored. The results in the most recent mock examination session show that 79% of students have increased by 1 or more whole GCSE grades since their baseline, with 39% of students currently attaining 1 or more whole GCSE grades higher than their aspirational GCSE target.

The school successfully enables students to develop their personal skills and qualities. They meet high expectations of behaviour, attendance and positive attitudes towards learning as well as towards each other. As a result, by the time they will leave the school, they will have the necessary skills to move successfully to the next stages of their lives, to face the challenges of the contemporary world.

## 6. *Standard 2* Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development of students

The spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of the students at GFM is excellent and fully meets the BSO standard.

Students have a very positive attitude to their school in general and this is evidenced through the PASS assessments. They are well-behaved, polite and show respect and empathy for others. Students are frequently encouraged to support each other, both within and outside lessons. Students willingly support each other with their learning and students are comfortable asking each other for help. They listen in a considerate manner to their peers and their teachers.

A student support programme called “Match a friend” has been introduced in response to a need identified by students following their isolation during the pandemic. There has been a very good response to this programme across the school, with 130 students volunteering to take part. Students have easy access to a school counsellor and are encouraged to ask for support for themselves or express concerns they may have for others.

An appreciation of and respect for, their own and other cultures is encouraged through regular and varied opportunities to find out about different cultural traditions. Lessons focusing on this area are included within the school’s programmes of study. The school organises a range of community days such as UAE National Day, International Day, and Innovation India Day. Regular assemblies are held across the school which provide opportunities for further reinforcement of the values of respect and tolerance. Assembly themes such as the International Day of Peace and World Religion Day are covered throughout the school. Families are encouraged to support others through charity collections, such as Ramadan charity boxes.

The school runs an innovation club, focusing on computational thinking for children from KS2 upwards and the projects focus on awareness of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and British values. KS4 students are offered the subject Global Perspectives as part of their curriculum offer.

A wide variety of opportunities are provided for students to take on roles of responsibility and many are willing to do this. Three hundred students from KS2 to KS4 applied to be members of the school council and approximately one hundred students were selected to represent their peers. The school council members are divided into committees which meet regularly to discuss areas such as health and wellbeing, sporting opportunities and assessment. The youngest students are taught to be responsible for both school and their own materials. For example, each child in EYFS decides when they want to eat their morning snack and records that they have done so on a chart. They also tidy up quickly when asked and independently access many of the resources they need.

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The school provides an excellent range of opportunities for the students' voices to be heard, such as student surveys regarding requests for additional school clubs and subject preferences in KS4 and 5. A house system is in place from Year 1 upwards. Older students are invited to apply for the positions of house leaders and house points are awarded for both academic and non-academic reasons.

A wide range of student reward systems are in place, such as attendance certificates and certificates for engagement in learning and academic achievement. These systems contribute towards the generally positive attitude towards their school and their learning seen amongst the students. Students commented positively about the rewards and are proud to receive a reward.

Students have a good understanding of right and wrong, and a clear understanding of school rules and expectations. School council members have a role in promoting good behaviour within the school. Students have very positive attitudes to learning and are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning and develop the values, attributes, and attitudes of effective learners. They are self-confident and willing and able to learn from their mistakes. Students contribute very actively to school life outside the classroom and are given many opportunities to do so. The recently implemented High Performance Learner passport encourages students to participate in a range of extra-curricular activities, which often also involve their family members. A wide range of school clubs is offered to students and the uptake is very good. Students can represent their school in external competitions by participating in school sports teams, opportunities are offered for students of different abilities to participate. They are also encouraged to enter a variety of other curriculum-linked competitions.

The school offers good support to students and their families to help them make decisions about their futures. The Director of Aspirations runs a programme of activities for students in Years 7 to 11 to support them in their decision making and is organising a programme of internships for Year 10 and 11 students. Families appreciate the support the school offers in this area.

## 7. *Standard 3* The welfare, health and safety of the students

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of the students is outstanding.

The school makes outstanding provision for the health, safety, and welfare of all students and for their protection, including online security. Arrangements are excellent and ensure that all students, staff, and visitors are exceptionally well cared for. Students in all phases feel safe, known, cared for, and valued. The school has adapted the UK safeguarding regulations to ensure that Dubai health and safety protocols are fully incorporated. Safeguarding policy and child-protection procedures are robust and reviewed for effectiveness. Child protection training is offered to all staff. A highly skilled safeguarding team, including the full-time doctors and qualified nurses, ensures early intervention so that students are well supported and cared for. Safeguarding team meetings are held regularly to ensure that everyone can make their suggestions. There is a strong underpinning culture and ethos to ensure that students are safe at all times. All staff understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

The school has a new robust system, Go for Schools, to address attendance and punctuality. Attendance rates are extremely high, 96.4%, maintained even during remote and blended learning during the pandemic. This ensures that students are both safe and able to maintain maximum progress. The school has a very effective health-and-safety team that responds quickly to identified risks and is supported by an external team from within GEMS. The medical team conducts all the required checks in school and helps to ensure that the school is fully compliant with UAE guidelines on COVID-19 management and the UAE vaccination programme for students and staff. Following distance learning, and prior to students' return to the classroom, the school shared with parents the Dubai authorities' requirements on how to safely reopen schools. This outlined the use of masks, social distancing, and safe-capacity rules.

Students living with medical conditions and those recently diagnosed are identified and records are kept up to date. All food sold on site is provided by an outside catering company. All food sold is clearly labelled in order for staff and students with allergies to know what they can have. Regular checks are done by local authorities to ensure compliance with all regulations. Parents load money on to an electronic card which students use to purchase food.

Health and safety policies are rigorous and regularly reviewed. Security levels around the school are very high. Fire regulations are met in full and there are regular fire practices. Several evacuation points, clearly labelled, are situated around the premises. There are 8 Evac Chairs placed around the building to evacuate physical disabled students or staff who won't be able to use the lifts. Evacuation and Lockdown policies are regularly revised as the school continues to grow. Lockdown regulations are strictly enforced in line with UK and UAE regulations. Doors can't be locked, and staff are asked to block the doors with furniture during

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a lockdown. Several staff are trained in fire safety, risk assessment and first aid. More than 20% members of staff are trained first aiders and 74 Fire Marshals are in place. Rigorous risk assessments have been undertaken to ensure the safe arrival and departure of students with a lot of staff being on duty.

Staff are on duty in the mornings, during breaks and dismissal. All staff wear florescent vests with their names and titles to help make them clearly visible. The school has several security guards who monitor access to the premises. More than 200 CCTV cameras are in place.

## 8. *Standard 4* The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The suitability of the proprietor and staff at GFM meets in full the requirements of the BSO standards.

Leaders and managers, supported by corporate human-resources staff, ensure that all required checks on staff are completed. Vetting procedures prior to staff recruitment are thorough and comply with ministry visa requirements as well as the BSO standards. Leaders follow up references rigorously. They make sure all staff are suitable to work with children and well qualified for the posts to which they are appointed. Provision for safeguarding of students is of a very high standard. The school employs safer recruitment processes to ensure all staff are suitable to work with children. The school checks the employment history of all staff, including seeking police checks of the suitability of applicants to work with children. Interview procedures are rigorous and led by senior leaders in partnership with GEMS Education. There is no evidence that any member of staff or volunteer carries out work at school in contravention of local, overseas, or British disqualification, prohibition, or restriction.

The governance of the school incorporates wide representation from all stakeholders. This includes the owners, GEMS Education, who provide corporate governance in terms of education, safeguarding, inclusion, HR, finance, legal, IT, and procurement support. GEMS internal cluster support visits provide opportunities for evaluation at all levels, leading to improved school standards. Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural opportunities are identified and planned into the whole-school and PSHE curriculum, encouraging students to become positive members of the community. Proprietors and governors are actively involved in the school having monthly meetings, lesson observations and walk-through sessions

## 9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are excellent. The school meets all the requirements for this standard.

The premises at GFM are very new and purpose built for the school. Plans are already in place for the expansion of the campus and the accommodation of new classes and facilities for the year 12 and 13 classes which open in September 2022. Classroom sizes comply with local building regulations; however, the school should look carefully at how some classroom spaces are being used with large classes of big students in KS3. Classes have ample light and air conditioning systems ensure the circulation of air throughout the building.

Entrances and exits provide access for all, including anyone with limited mobility. Lifts within the building allow access to all floors and in the event of an emergency evacuation, Evac Chairs are situated at every staircase. Security is provided onsite by a team of guards, supervised by a security manager, who is accountable to the operations manager. The site is secure and there have been no breaches of the security system. Camera systems ensure that surveillance of any part of the school is possible during the day. Evacuation procedures have been tested each term. The first evacuation this academic year was done in stages and the second was done during form lessons at the start of the day when all students were in their registration class groups. The school plans to do another evacuation at a time of the day when students are in different teaching groups and with specialist teachers to ensure that their systems are robust enough. The school evaluates each evacuation and makes plans to improve the efficiency of the process.

Equipment and resources in the school are still quite new and are well cared for. There are ample storage facilities, and all hazardous chemicals are kept under lock and key, with specific arrangements in place to ensure their safe disposal. Displays and decoration enhance the learning environment effectively. Specialist facilities for PE, music and art are fit for purpose and the science and IT laboratories have appropriate facilities.

Washrooms are separated for staff and students, and there are male and female washrooms as well as disabled facilities on every floor in both sections. Provision for drinking water meets the standards for local compliance and the school reacted quickly to the Covid-19 pandemic by installing contact free water coolers and encouraging students to bring their own water bottles to school. The cafeteria provides meals for students and meets the safety standards of the Municipal health authority. The clinical facility provides a suitable environment for treating sick and injured students or staff and is regularly inspected by the Health Authority.

The school has provided evidence of its compliance with all mandatory maintenance and facilities audits including those for fire equipment and water quality.

## 10. Standard 6

### The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information provided by the school to parents is excellent. It fully meets the BSO standard.

A wealth of information is available on an extensive school website which provide parents, carers and others with detail including:

- School address, email, and telephone number.
- Detailed biographies of the Executive, Senior and Associate Leadership Teams.
- Local Advisory Board.
- A broad range of key parental policies including admissions and behaviour.

The school's vision and mission are prominently displayed both on the website and physically within the school building.

Parents spoke highly about the communication they receive from GFM and were happy with the method in which it is provided. The Head Boy and Girl identified that it is still an improving process as they look to streamline some of the information over the coming months, demonstrating a strong student voice across the school. Parents stated that they are happy with the school reports which provide them with details on their child's current attainment and progress. A report is issued at the end of each of the first two terms, with a more comprehensive end of year report containing detailed written summaries across all subjects. The school will soon be extending the use of their Go4Schools system to trial other modules including access for parents on their child's current attainment.

Provision of information for parents is a 2-way process; parents are routinely invited to participate in surveys and feedback using a system called 'Pulse' and a large percentage of parents contribute. The school takes pride in listening to parental feedback and responding in the best interests of all.

As students' progress through school, their use of technology increases. Parents report that they have a good understanding of curriculum content – including homework – that their child is completing due to the ease of access through Teams and Seesaw. Further development of this through Go4Schools will be rolled out soon.

Parents receive guidance to enable them to support their child's learning. During remote learning, webinars were shared with parents and where learning gaps are identified, Heads of Department develop further support videos. These have been welcomed by parents. Parents spoke highly of the 'open door policy' and the ease of accessibility of teaching staff and Senior Leaders and how this further enhances the flow of information between school and parents.

## 11. Standard 7

### The school's procedure for handling complaints

GEMS Founders meets the BSO standard fully.

Complaints are rare, but the school has a detailed written policy and appropriate procedures in place. These reflect good practice from the UK. Complaints received are acknowledged immediately upon receipt if received during term time and as soon as possible during holiday periods. The school aims to treat all complaints seriously and sensitively. Following resolution of a complaint, the school keeps a written record of the complaint and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing.

The school reserves the right to keep additional records which may contain the following information:

- date when the issue was raised
- name of parent
- name of student
- description of the issue
- records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- witness statements (if appropriate)
- name of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)

If a complaint pertains to child protection or safeguarding issues, it will be immediately referred to the school's designated safeguarding lead for urgent review. If a complaint is received about a headteacher, the principal or the director of education, it is hoped that the matter is resolved informally. Any complaint that cannot be resolved at the school level will be referred to GEMS Corporate Office and an independent investigation team will provide support and suggestions to the Leadership team in order to find solutions.

## 12. Standard 8 Leadership and management of the school

The leadership and management of the school are excellent at all levels.

The school meets all the requirements of the standard. The leadership fulfils its responsibilities in ensuring that the BSO standards are consistently met. Leaders are proactive, reflective, and driven to constantly improve. The principal is a qualified, highly trained, and experienced educator. Recently appointed, the principal has quickly devised a clear route map to ensure that all students realise their full academic potential and that their personal development is well supported. The principal leads the school effectively. The principal is supported by a senior leadership team they are dedicated, energetic, hardworking, and ambitious for the school. The school has many layers in its organisational structure with clear whole school responsibilities, key stages and subject responsibilities.

The vision and core values, commitment to excellence and the positive school ethos are reflected in all leaders, staff, and students, creating a collaborative atmosphere across the whole school. There is a real sense of common purpose and aspiration for the future. All leaders are excellent role models with high levels of respect for their students. The principal and head of primary know the school very well. They use a range of information on which to evaluate the school's performance. Technology is used well to store data on student's achievements academically and their character development. The senior leadership team is diligent and demonstrates commitment in executing their wide remit of responsibilities. Middle leaders complete large volumes of managerial tasks efficiently and to a high standard. The school's leadership has successfully secured high-quality teaching and improvements in assessment to provide an engaging and interesting range of curriculum subjects. This enables students of all ages enrolled at the school to make good progress. Recognised as high quality, leaders have ensured that the school has adapted teaching and learning to provide a highly successful programme of online lessons and virtual schooling during the time of Covid restrictions

The board of governors sets the strategic vision for the whole school in line with its aims. The principal and chairperson have an excellent working relationship. The board meets regularly and successfully holds leaders to account while providing strategic guidance. The separate responsibilities of the governors and the school's professional leadership are understood and respected. Governors are highly focused on continuous improvement and guarding against complacency. They value the well-being of students above anything; for example, their focus on the development of the whole child with regard to equality, developing respect, responsibility, participation and independence is key to their aspiration to be one of the best schools in the world.

GEMS Education is very ambitious for the school and does extensive work dedicated to ensuring the school's commercial and academic success and the positioning of the school in providing one of the best affordable British styles of education in Dubai.

School development plans and actions are relevant and targeted to have influence on identified areas of priority. The school's leaders articulate and share a clear vision of outstanding teaching and learning at the school. The school strives to ensure all teaching is good or better and provides a wide range of support to encourage high levels of professional development opportunities.

The senior leadership team is diligent and demonstrates commitment in executing their wide remit of responsibilities. It completes large volumes of managerial tasks efficiently and to a high standard. The principal and governors are supporting new leaders in gaining a deeper understanding of leadership at the senior level as they become more experienced in their roles. The school's organisational structure makes appropriate distinctions between the roles given to each senior leader. The whole school team are passionate about developing and assisting every student to reach their potential both academically and personally, by providing a caring and supportive learning environment. Collectively, the leadership and management teams demonstrate a strong commitment to all aspects of safeguarding and wellbeing across the whole school.

The designated safeguarding leader and team are passionate and knowledgeable, and they have been proactive in enhancing their expertise. Leadership that cares for vulnerable students is strong promotes equality, tackles discrimination, and embraces diversity, which contributes to the extremely caring atmosphere in which students are happy and highly successful. It nurtures, inspires, and cares for every one of its students.