

GFM School Development Plan Update



Parental Update

May 2025



The
GFM
Way

GEMS

مدرسة جيمس فاوندرز (المزهر)

Founders School

AL MIZHAR

A culture of continuous sustainable improvement

#WeAreGFM

Helping each other to Grow.

Helping each other to Flourish.

Help cultivate an ethos of Mindfulness.

GEMS Founders School Al Mizhar

<https://www.gemsfoundersschool-mizhar.com/en/>



GEMS

مدرسة جيمس فاوندرز (المزهر)

Founders School

AL MIZHAR



School Development Plan, an update on GFM's key priorities

May 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

Our vision at GFM is to help our *people to Grow, Flourish and be Mindful*. Our vision is enacted in line with our core pillars of **#TheGFMWay**:

- *Helping each other to Grow*
- *Helping each other to Flourish*
- *Cultivating an ethos of Mindfulness*

#TheGFMWay defines how we do things here at GFM. We are very clear about our vision of the culture and character that we expect from our students and staff alike, and this approach underpins everything that we do. Every member of the GFM community therefore has a responsibility to uphold, live, role model and demonstrate the following:



A culture of continuous sustainable improvement

Help each other to Grow

- High expectations, aspirations, excellence and a belief that all can succeed
- Innovation & risk taking
- Lead by example



The GFM Way

Help cultivate an ethos of Mindfulness

- Act to support each other to be successful
- Collaborate and work together in teams
- Trusting, caring & honest relationships

Help each other to Flourish

- Demonstrate respect for ourselves and every other member of the GFM community.
- Safe and inspiring learning environment
- Celebrate equality, diversity and inclusion

#TheGFMWay is a critical strategic priority as to build a culture of sustainable school improvement. In the spirit of **#TheGFMWay**, I am writing to parents (with termly updates to follow) to share our school action plan in a clear, understandable layperson's language.



What you see in the pages which follow are three areas of priority for the academic year. It encompasses GFM's Educational Excellence Plan – We promised, we delivered, ensuring impactful improvements in student outcomes and school performance:

- **Area of Improvement 1:** Embed recent improvements in Islamic Education and Arabic so that standards of teaching, learning and achievement are at least good across all phases.
- **Area of Improvement 2:** Develop further differentiated planning of learning to personalise provision more effectively for individual students in lessons – most notably for higher attainers.
- **Area of Improvement 3:** Improve further students' learning skills to optimise their achievements.

We remain firmly committed to ensuring that progress in the areas of improvement is clear for all to see. I encourage you to read this document carefully in order to fully appreciate the work which is going on in school, and to contact us if you require any further information. Our aim is now to start the journey in becoming an 'Outstanding' high performing school. We look forward to working with you closely during the years to come as we continue our mission in 'creating tomorrow's successful and caring citizens today'.

Best wishes

Akram Tarik

Principal / CEO



1. **Area of Improvement 1:** *Embed recent improvements in Islamic Education and Arabic so that standards of teaching, learning and achievement are at least good across all phases.*

Why is this an area of priority?

- Teaching and learning in Arabic A/B and Islamic studies have undergone significant improvements, underscoring the importance of maintaining high standards of excellence across all lessons at GFM.
- The focus is now to embed these recent improvements as a continued fundamental objective to ensure that every aspect of the curriculum and teaching meets the needs of all learners.
- The focus on Arabic B standards is of significance importance, in ensuring the learning experience and educational outcomes for students improve.

What are we doing?

- We will continue to develop the GEMS Arabic Literacy framework in FS ensuring a focus on speaking and reading and the development of extended sentences for our EYFS children.
- We will increase Islamic values throughout the curriculum and in all phases of the school.
- Teachers are receiving additional professional development on the four skills of Arabic Language, personalisation of learning and how to further develop student research skills within lessons and in the wider curriculum.
- The Arabic / Islamic Department will work closer with the English team, as to enhance the standards of teaching in Islamic Education and Arabic.

Progress to date:

Actions and Intentions	May	May Update against Actions
We will continue to develop the GEMS Arabic Literacy framework in FS ensuring a focus on speaking and reading and the development of extended sentences for our EYFS children	Actions completed and now embedding	Early Years: Most children in FS2 can now confidently read, recognize, and write 15 Arabic letters. Each day starts with a short activity to help them remember new words, and many can say 2–4 Arabic words for each letter. They are also learning to answer simple questions about themselves, like their name and age. In Year 1, most students are now able to read simple Arabic words and short sentences, showing good progress in both reading and understanding. Across both FS2 and Year 1, most children can write their names in Arabic the correct way (from right to left). Some are even starting to retell Arabic stories using formal Arabic. Primary school: We've introduced a new coaching system across the whole school to help teachers plan better and deliver even stronger lessons. This is based on cognitive science and research on how students learn. This has supported teachers in improving their skills in the classroom, including in Arabic and Islamic subjects. Leaders regularly visit lessons and give teachers helpful feedback. These visits show that teachers are feeling more confident and teaching is getting even better Secondary school:
We will increase Islamic values throughout the curriculum and in all phases of the school.		
Teachers are receiving additional professional development on the four skills of Arabic Language, personalisation of learning and how to further develop student research skills within lessons and in the wider curriculum.		
The Arabic / Islamic Department will work closer with the English team, as to enhance the standards of teaching in Islamic Education and Arabic.		



		<p>All our Arabic and Islamic (MOE) teachers have been regularly taking part in special training sessions to improve their teaching. Most of them are also giving each other helpful feedback, which has created a great team spirit and a focus on learning and growing together. They've also been working closely with the English department to plan better lessons and share good ideas. When school leaders visit lessons, they've seen a 20% improvement in how lessons are delivered. More students now understand the goals of each lesson and are focused on their learning.</p> <p>Inclusion & Personalised Learning for Arabic & Islamic Students</p> <p>All of our Level 3 students (those who need extra support) have clear targets in Arabic and Islamic Studies. We're proud to share that over 90% of these students have already achieved their goals. Each child's target shows real progress, helping them move forward in their learning.</p>
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How you can support:

- Please attend any workshops / parent meetings as arranged by the Arabic and Islamic Team
- Read our weekly newsletters and discuss the content with your children.
- Encourage daily practice of Arabic language skills and Islamic teachings at home to reinforce classroom learning.
- Encourage your child to participate, work independently and respond to the teacher requirements within the newsletters.
- Engage with the school community and participate in cultural and religious events to deepen understanding and appreciation.
- Provide access to supplementary resources, such as books, educational apps, and online courses, to support and enhance their learning journey.
- Please continue to give us your feedback on how things are going by completing our live ongoing survey: <https://forms.office.com/r/UvBf1kJ1Mi>



2. Area of Improvement 2: *Develop further differentiated planning of learning to personalise provision more effectively for individual students in lessons – most notably for higher attainers.*

Why is this an area of priority?

- Learning tasks are not always differentiated enough to ensure sufficient challenge, especially for higher attaining students.
- Teachers can use assessment information further to track students' progress and personalise learning tasks.

What are we doing?

- Teachers will receive additional support and training from FS – Year 13 on planning, personalisation and the use of assessment data. This will focus on adaptive teaching and learning strategies.
- Schemes of learning will be reviewed and updated.
- The school will start tracking and checking the quality of work in books of High Ability students to ensure they are being challenged in their learning.
- We will introduce further Digital and AI Tools to provide all students with challenging tasks and research-oriented opportunities.
- Increase our BYOD Chromebook strategy to even more students to support the use of adaptive learning software.

Progress to date:

Actions and Intentions	May	May Update against Actions
Teachers will receive additional support and training from FS – Year 13 on planning, personalisation and the use of assessment data. This will focus on adaptive teaching and learning strategies.	Actions completed and now embedding	Early Years: Strengthening Questioning & Engagement Teachers in FS2 and Year 1 working together more closely. This is helping them to better meet the needs of all students in the classroom. As a result, lessons are more inclusive, engaging, and enjoyable for the children. Primary: Differentiation & Personalised Learning We've updated our lesson planning approach to make sure teaching is more flexible and meets the needs of every student. Teachers are being trained to adjust their lessons based on each subject and student ability, and subject leaders are helping to check the quality of planning. This has led to more thoughtful, inclusive, and high-quality lessons, giving teachers more confidence and helping all students learn more effectively. Secondary: Challenge & Personalisation for High Achievers All students in Key Stage 3 who use Accelerated Reader also have access to AI learning tools that help close any gaps in their reading and understanding. In Phase 3 (Years 7–9), all core subject teachers are using a program called Century Tech. This uses AI to give higher-achieving students work that matches their level and challenges them, helping them make real academic progress.
Schemes of learning will be reviewed and updated.		
The school will start tracking and checking the quality of work in books of High Ability students to ensure they are being challenged in their learning.		
We will introduce further Digital and AI Tools to provide all students with challenging tasks and research-oriented opportunities.		
Increase our BYOD Chromebook strategy to even more students to support the use of adaptive learning software.		





		<p>Sixth Form: AI Integration & Digital Learning In Sixth Form (Key Stage 5), every student has access to a device and uses AI tools for research during scheduled lessons in our Innovation Lab. This helps prepare them for future study and independent learning.</p> <p>Inclusion: Personalisation & Assistive Technology In Primary, every student who was referred for extra support has received help quickly, making sure they get the right interventions at the right time. This means all children who need support are being included and cared for. Three trained coaches from the Primary Inclusion Team are also working closely with teachers to improve how we support all learners in the classroom. In Secondary, all teachers who work with our Flourish students are taking part in a special training programme focused on using proven teaching strategies. This helps improve the quality of teaching and ensures all students are supported to do their best.</p>
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How you can support:

- Please attend any workshops / parent meetings as arranged by the school.
- Read our weekly newsletters and discuss the content with your children. Parents should routinely check Evidence Me, SeeSaw and Google Classroom apps
- Please feel free to contact your child's teacher or Head of Inclusion to design a personalised learning plan that aligns with your child's interests and abilities, ensuring they are both challenged and supported.
- Encourage your child to read for pleasure.
- Foster a home environment that encourages curiosity and independent learning, providing resources and opportunities for exploration beyond the school curriculum.
- Encourage your child to participate, work independently and respond to the teacher requirements within the newsletters.
- Celebrate achievements and progress in personalised areas of learning to motivate continued growth and development, recognising both academic and creative accomplishments.
- Provide access to supplementary resources, such as books, educational apps, and online courses, to support and enhance their learning journey.
- Please continue to give us your feedback on how things are going by completing our live ongoing survey: <https://forms.office.com/r/UvBf1kJ1Mi>



3. Area of Improvement 3: *Improve further students' learning skills to optimise their achievements.*

Why is this an area of priority?

- We want our students to have further routine opportunities for group / collaborative practice, that leads to meaningful discussion and thinking.
- We want our students to develop skills further to use technology to support their learning.
- We want to reduce any passive engagement of some students and develop independent learning skills.

What are we doing?

- Provide more opportunities for students to undertake independent research.
- To improve teachers' questioning skills so that they can lead and manage more perceptive discussions and reflection in lessons.
- To ensure teachers always provide comprehensive and diagnostic feedback to students about their learning – both orally and when marking their work

Progress to date:

Actions and Intentions	May	May Update against Actions
Provide more opportunities for students to undertake independent research.	Completed and now embedding	Early Years: Building Strong Foundations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We've been working hard to help students across the school become more independent and confident in how they learn. Teachers now focus more on building important thinking and research skills in the classroom. This helps students take ownership of their learning and become better problem-solvers. • In Phase One (FS and Year 1), teachers have been trained in new approaches like play schemas and KAGAN buddies, and we've improved lesson planning to include better questioning techniques. Teaching assistants are also more involved in supporting learning. As a result, children are more engaged, and the quality of classroom talk and interaction has improved. • We've also introduced a clear way to track how students are developing these skills, helping teachers give more targeted support. A new learning skills chart—explained through stories—helps children understand and talk about how they learn best. Primary: Personalising Learning & Digital Integration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We've made great progress in helping our Year 5 and 6 students become confident, independent learners by using Chromebooks in their daily lessons. All students are now using technology more effectively, including AI tools, to help with research, problem-solving, and computing tasks. This is helping them become more skilled in digital learning and critical thinking. Our teachers have also received special training on new education technology tools like Magic School, Diffit, and Briskit. This training has led to more creative and engaging lessons, helping students learn in new and exciting ways. • To improve classroom talk and thinking, we've reintroduced special questioning techniques using the Kagan method and ABC Questioning Stems. Teachers now plan more focused discussions, and strategies like "pose, pause, pounce, bounce" are helping
To improve teachers' questioning skills so that they can lead and manage more perceptive discussions and reflection in lessons.		
To ensure teachers always provide comprehensive and diagnostic feedback to students about their learning – both orally and when marking their work		



		<p>students think more deeply, respond better, and learn from each other. Students are also becoming more responsible for their own learning. Through peer and self-assessment, they are learning to reflect on their work and improve it. In subjects like English and Discovery, students use personalised learning ladders to track their progress and next steps.</p> <p>Secondary: High Achievement & Independent Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Key Stage 3 students (Years 7–9) have completed a unit on Prompt Engineering, giving them important skills for using AI and improving their digital literacy. Students in Years 7–10 have also completed independent research projects, which they presented to teachers and classmates—helping build confidence, critical thinking, and communication skills. • To support high-achieving and gifted students, teachers have updated seating plans and homework tasks to include more independent research and stretch activities. • Teachers have been trained in using better questioning strategies to get students thinking more deeply, and lessons now focus more on critical thinking across all subjects. During lessons, many teachers now give live feedback and use visualisers to show students what great work looks like. • These improvements in teaching and learning are having a real impact: A Level predictions are looking strong, with more than half of all students expected to achieve Grade B or higher.
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How you can support:

- Please attend any workshops / parent meetings as arranged by the school.
- Read our weekly newsletters and discuss the content with your children. Parents should routinely check Evidence Me, SeeSaw and Google Classroom apps.
- Support your child's critical thinking and problem-solving abilities by engaging in discussions and activities that challenge them to think deeply and find solutions independently.
- Encourage your child to read for pleasure.
- Encourage the development of organisational and time management skills by helping them establish a routine and dedicated study space.
- Please continue to give us your feedback on how things are going by completing our live ongoing survey: <https://forms.office.com/r/UvBf1kJ1Mi>



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