

# GEMS Dubai Royal School

## British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection Dates: 30 January 2023 to 1 February 2023

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Age Group: 3 to 11

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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection report follows the English Department for Education (DfE) schedule for the inspection of British schools overseas. The inspection was carried out by three inspectors from Education Development Trust who spent three days at the school. Education Development Trust is a body approved by the British government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas and quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

Education Development Trust is one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies, providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally. Education Development Trust employs over 2,500 staff worldwide, all working on projects relating to educational quality.

**To be recognised by the Department for Education, a British School Overseas (BSO) must have an inspection report which shows that its performance against all the standards is at least satisfactory. This reflects the standards required for continuing registration as a school in England. Schools meeting the standards will have their inspection reports published on the Department's website and will be added to the register 'Get information about schools'.**

Inspectors report on the extent to which schools meet the relevant BSO standards. These were updated with effect from September 2017. The inspection follows closely the framework for the inspection of independent schools in England but, where appropriate, also takes account of compliance with local regulations.

**The DfE issued a policy update in October 2018. The Department confirmed that 'our policy is now to accredit schools in countries where to meet certain standards would be in breach of the host country laws, as long as there is evidence to substantiate this, and all other standards are met'.**

The standards are as follows:

1. The quality of education provided by the school (curriculum, teaching and assessment)
2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff
5. The premises and accommodation
6. The provision of information
7. The manner in which complaints are handled
8. The leadership and management of the school
9. The quality of provision for boarding.

The purposes of BSO inspections are to:

- help schools to improve the quality and effectiveness of pupils' education and of the care for their welfare
- provide rigorous and reliable inspection reports which help schools to recognise and celebrate their strengths and to identify and remedy any weaknesses
- inform parents and carers and the wider public of the quality of British schools overseas by placing reports in the public domain.

### Key for inspection grades

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>

### Proportions used in the report

90–100%	Vast/overwhelming majority or almost all
75–90%	Very large majority, most
65–74%	Large majority
51–64%	Majority
35–49%	Minority
20–34%	Small minority
4–19%	Very small minority, few
0–3%	Almost none/very few

## Information about the school

GEMS Royal Dubai School, Dubai is a privately owned school, one of a group of 49 schools owned by GEMS in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). It is a co-educational, international day school located in Al Mizhar, enrolling pupils from across Dubai into foundation stage 1 to Year 6.

There are 925 pupils aged between three and 11 years, with approximately 45% of the roll in key stage 2. There are 61 different nationalities, of which the largest ethnic group is Arab (45%). The school is small compared with others of its type.

There are 111 pupils (12%) with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and 264 pupils (28%) for whom English is not the principal language (EAL). It is an inclusive school that caters for the full range of abilities and needs. Children in the early years follow the new English early years framework. Pupils follow the English national curriculum, adapted to the Dubai context.

The structure of the leadership team has recently been reorganised to meet the strategic needs of the school. Three assistant headteachers were added to the existing structure at the start of the academic year, with a specific remit to develop the quality of teaching and learning, pastoral care and accountability across all phases of the school. Two assistant principals (Inclusion & Well-being and Arabic & Islamic) and a deputy principal support the strategic direction set by the new principal.

The school operated full remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic until September 2020. Analysis identified pupils' learning gaps. The school worked very hard to close all the learning gaps and this is evident in its internal and external data.

## Summary of the evidence base used by the inspection team

This BSO inspection was carried out by three Education Development Trust inspectors. The BSO registration and self-review documents were completed and the inspection dates were agreed upon with the school with 10 weeks' notice of the start date of the inspection. Inspectors had access to information about the school before the inspection.

Inspectors visited 52 lessons. An inspector and three senior leaders jointly observed eight lessons. Inspectors gave feedback to 11 teachers.

There were 32 meetings which took place with leaders, teachers, pupils, parents and members of the school's governing board.

Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in books and the work produced digitally. They analysed a wide range of documents relating to assessment, policies and operational and strategic plans. The school's safeguarding arrangements were inspected. The views of parents, pupils and staff were also considered in both the school's recent surveys and the BSO survey, which was sent to parents and teachers just prior to the inspection.

## Evaluation of the school

GEMS Dubai Royal School is an outstanding school and provides an outstanding quality of education for pupils from three to eleven years.

The school meets all of the BSO Standards except those which it is precluded from meeting because of legislation in the UAE. These are explained later in the report. The requirements of the host country take precedence and no action points are, therefore, specified in relation to these unmet standards and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

- The quality of the curriculum provided by the school is outstanding (see Standard 1 below).
- The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding overall (see Standard 1 below).
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding (see Standard 2 below).
- The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are outstanding (see Standard 3 below).
- The standard for the suitability of the proprietor and staff is met (see Standard 4 below).
- The premises and accommodation meet the requirements of the standard (see Standard 5 below).
- The provision of information for parents meets the requirements of this standard (see Standard 6 below).

- The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the requirements of the standard (see Standard 7 below).
- The leadership and management of the school are outstanding (see Standard 8 below).

As a result of this inspection, undertaken during January 2023, the school has demonstrated that it meets the BSO Standards (2017 updated) except for those standards that cannot be achieved legally in the host country. The school's provision prepares pupils well to enter or re-enter the UK independent school system. This judgement is endorsed by the British government, quality assured by Ofsted, and is valid for a period of three years.

Attainment and progress in **English** are outstanding across all phases of the school, including for pupils with SEND and EAL. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls. In all phases most pupils exceed English curriculum expectations for their age and make rapid progress over time. Most children join the school in the foundation stage with low levels of English. Well-planned, challenging activities ensure that children become increasingly confident and proficient in using English to communicate.

Through the systematic development of children's phonic skills and exposure to high-quality literature, most children make rapid progress to achieve high levels of communication and language. Assessments in phonics are well above UK averages at the end of Year 1.

In the primary phase, pupils rapidly expand their understanding of English and acquire an abundant range of vocabulary. They confidently develop language skills such as predicting, reading, clarifying, questioning and summarising. As a result, most pupils can write accurately for different purposes.

By Year 6, pupils' attainment is well above UK expectations. The focus on the development of reading skills across the primary school has led to confident readers who are able to retrieve and interrogate information from texts. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils skilfully formulated a success criterion for an extract from *Stormbreaker* by identifying key features such as relative clauses, parenthesis and personification. Teachers successfully develop writing skills by helping pupils to imitate the language they need for a particular topic orally, before reading and analysing it and then writing their own version. As a result, pupils have a secure understanding of many of the strategies

writers use to gain effect. Most pupils use punctuation accurately in their writing. Although teachers give pupils ample opportunities to write in different contexts, the quality of handwriting and presentation is of a variable quality across the school.

In **mathematics**, the attainment and progress made by all pupils overall are outstanding and compare very favourably with the average for UK pupils. Across the primary phase boys and girls perform similarly. Pupils with SEND and EAL generally make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points as a result of the high quality of support and interventions.

Children across the early years make rapid progress, with the vast majority attaining above the expected levels across all mathematics aspects by the end of the Reception Year. This prepares them well for Year 1. Rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures are evident throughout lessons. At the end of the Reception Year, most children can apply their understanding by using manipulatives. They can count confidently and have developed a deep understanding of the numbers one to 10.

Pupils in key stage 1 make outstanding progress from their starting points. They rapidly develop their fluency, mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills. By the end of Year 2, they can add and subtract two-digit and one-digit numbers and in fractions can find the quantity of objects when using cubes or building bricks.

By the end of key stage 2, the vast majority of pupils attain levels above that typical of their age in England and continue to make outstanding progress. They are confident when presenting a mathematical justification and explaining their thinking and enjoy exploring more complex number problems. During the inspection, in a Year 6 class, most pupils could apply their understanding of common factors to find equal decimals and fractions.

In **science**, in all phases of the school pupils' achieve outstandingly well in comparison with expected standards in England. Highly effective planning and in-class support ensure that pupils with SEND and EAL make outstanding progress and achieve well from their starting points.

By the end of the early years, children confidently explore their environment and talk freely about the changes that they see and experience. Most children can describe how soil changes as water is added. They recognise the pips from citrus fruit as seeds that will grow if planted and watered.

At the end of key stage 1, attainment and progress, measured against English curriculum standards, is outstanding. Most pupils in Year 2 can interpret the data that they have collected about different objects and select those that cannot be squashed, stretched, or bent. A clear focus on improving pupils' practical experiences helps them to become increasingly adept at designing and carrying out fair tests. Most pupils in Year 3 can predict and then investigate experimentally whether people with longer femurs can jump further.

By the time they reach the upper key stage 2 they are confidently devising their own practical investigation methods to separate mixtures of several components and relating structures observed while dissecting an animal heart to the circulatory system in humans.

In **other subjects**, the attainment and progress of all groups, including pupils with SEND and EAL are at least good.

In drama and creative art, pupils make good progress attaining good standards across the primary phase.

In physical education (PE), history and geography, attainment and progress are outstanding. Teachers of these subjects ensure that learning outcomes are aligned with wider school aims and the school's values. During the inspection, in a Year 3 PE lesson, Year 6 leaders were using effective peer assessment and verbal feedback to support younger students.

Pupils further develop learning skills through effective use of cross-curricular themes between subjects such as science, PE and art.

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

The standards relating to the quality of the education are met except for the standard in paragraph 2 (2) (d) (ii). This is not met because of the requirements of the host country relating to the UK Equality Act 2010.

The school's curriculum is outstanding. It is exceptionally well planned to ensure that there is a coherent pathway to prepare all pupils for the next stage in their learning.



The reading-centred curriculum allows an opportunity to reinforce an 'I can' approach for pupils.

Resources are carefully chosen and used effectively to ensure progression. For example, mathematics resources used in the early years are systematically adapted to enable pupils to develop independent numeracy skills as they progress up the school.

'Wider World' timetabled lessons in key stages 1 and 2 promote awareness of the world and the 'Global Citizens' project in Year 6 provides a focus on career opportunities. Career education is further enhanced by a variety of visiting speakers. Pupils enjoy local trips, for example to Expo 2020 and The Museum of the Future, where they learn about broadening their horizons and sustainability.

At the appropriate time of the year, visits to secondary-school bespoke visit days successfully aid the transition to secondary education.

Pupils with SEND and EAL receive the support that they need to learn effectively and, as a result, this is a fully inclusive school. Learning-support assistants and teaching assistants play a very important role in sustaining a culture that permeates every classroom. Through sensitive and intelligent support, they enable pupils to develop appropriate learning strategies. An outcome of such care is a classroom environment where all pupils are engaged in lessons.

All aspects of the curriculum are monitored and evaluated through weekly meetings which ensure that issues involving coverage and teaching of the curriculum are identified early and quickly resolved.

A wide and varied enrichment programme of more than 100 activities offers pupils further opportunities to learn and develop teamwork and collaboration skills as well as inculcating positive attitudes towards helping others. Participation in these activities is high.

Knowledge of Britain permeates the curriculum through the creation of imaginative activities: using iconic British buildings such as The Houses of Parliament as a stimulus for a construction challenge in early years; linking the story of Paddington Bear to the weather in England; the choice of materials for an umbrella in Year 1; choosing plants and animals native to the British Isles when planning learning about living things and their habitats in Year 5.

The school prepares pupils well for opportunities in British society and develops their understanding of democracy and democratic processes through, for example, age-appropriate opportunities to vote on a variety of occasions. For example, when electing student-council representatives, choosing which country to research ('Wider World' lessons) or by studying and then modelling how the House of Commons operates during a debate. Similarly, a range of creative activities developed by school staff, such as raising issues about racism through English Premier League football players, promotes tolerance and respect for other people. The curriculum is arranged so that pupils of all ages and all attainment levels are well prepared to enter or re-enter the British education system.

The well-being curriculum provides opportunities for exploring British values through, for example, an exploration of the difference between acceptance and agreement when considering ethical issues.

**The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.** The school meets this BSO standard. High-quality teaching enables pupils to acquire excellent knowledge, skills and understanding and to make outstanding progress. The excellent behaviour in lessons results in a strong commitment to learning as well as the development of collaborative and independent learning skills.

In early years, teachers create an inclusive and supportive environment. This helps children settle into school well and develops their confidence. Teachers provide opportunities for children to learn through active play and exploration. Relationships across the school between pupils and teachers are positive and respectful. Pupils are attentive, well-motivated and enthusiastic and are keen to participate actively in their learning. They enjoy opportunities to work collaboratively and learn through discussions with their peers. As a result, the learning environment is productive and pupils say that they enjoy learning. Classrooms environments are positive and there is a good standard of display material to stimulate learning and celebrate pupils' achievements.

Teachers ensure that the pace of lessons and the levels of challenge meet the needs of different groups of pupils including those with SEND and EAL. They model learning well and at the same time encourage pupils to find things out for themselves, which helps them to become more autonomous in their learning. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and are clear about the progression in knowledge, skills and

understanding pupils need to acquire to make good or better progress. Planning details learning activities and use of resources that are stimulating and well-tailored to the different needs of pupils, including those of the most able. Teachers challenge pupils in most lessons through effective questioning that encourages them to think more deeply and insistence on the use of appropriate vocabulary. For example, during a swimming lesson, Year 5 were challenged to think about bilateral breathing during their front-crawl stroke and how this equates to breathing on an odd number of strokes.

Teachers have a wealth of assessment information about all pupils and understand their needs well. This information allows them to plan very effectively to ensure that they challenge pupils whatever their ability and that pupils are successful. Assessment is also used effectively to enable staff to conduct gap analysis and effectively track the progress of individual pupils. Regular pupils' progress meetings between teachers and leaders ensure that teachers understand and respond to the needs of individuals effectively.

Lessons are orderly and productive. Teachers use methods and a range of resources which lead to effective learning, notably digital platforms. Most pupils respond well to the written feedback from teachers, taking ownership of their learning. When teachers' written feedback in books is both constructive and personalised, it provides pupils with appropriate actions for development. Most pupils are given the opportunity to peer- or self-assess work based on success criteria.

Effective continuous professional development provides opportunities for teachers to enhance and deepen their understanding of subjects and pedagogy. All teachers are expected to participate in personalised learning to ensure that their knowledge remains in line with changes to the curriculum.

## **Standard 2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils**

The standards relating to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils are met except for the standard in paragraph 5 (b) (vi). This is not met because of the requirements of the host country relating to the UK Equality Act 2010.

The school's values policies, ethos and curriculum promote respect for the protected characteristics outlined in the UK Equality Act (2010) in relation to age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief. However, the school is unable to meet fully the requirements in respect of sex and sexual orientation, gender reassignment and marriage and civil partnership due to the laws of the UAE.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils do well in the supportive environment of the school and consequently grow in self-esteem. All members of the school community model, through the quality of relationships and interactions, the principles they wish to promote. The school is inclusive. Pupils appreciate the importance of treating all groups of people equally and with respect. Discussions with pupils and teachers and scrutiny of the school's curriculum in action confirm that the school pays due regard to the protected characteristics of race, religion, belief, disability, pregnancy and maternity and age (as laid out in the UK Equality Act 2010).

British values are actively promoted across the school community. The house system provides a common vision and sense of belonging to the school community. The school promotes British themes through the names of the four houses, reflecting the names of the UK royal residences (Balmoral, Windsor, Clarence and Sandringham). Pupils say they really enjoy working as part of a team, as well as the competitive nature of the house system.

The staff actively promote fundamental British values through the personal social, health and economic education and moral-education curriculum. The history curriculum is also planned to ensure that there is a British focus. Year 6 pupils study crime and punishment from the Tudor period to the Victorian age.

British values are also promoted through extensive pupil leadership opportunities which allow them to vote, enhancing their understanding of democracy. The democratically elected school-council members are empowered to make changes and other postholders, such as class representatives, eco leaders and well-being leaders take their responsibilities seriously.

The diversity of the school population is seen as a positive feature of the school and every opportunity is taken to celebrate it. The school ensures that all its pupils recognise and celebrate a wide range of religious and cultural events like Christmas,

Diwali, Eid and Chinese New Year as well as UAE days, World Book Day and National Flag Day. Pupils take pride in being members of an international community.

Behaviour is excellent. Pupils arrive punctually for the start of the day and for lessons. They settle down quickly, prepared for work, with minimal fuss. High standards of behaviour are achieved through effective restorative practice, which cultivates a culture where pupils reflect upon and modify their behaviour.

A wide range of extra-curricular activities, including cheerleading, basketball club, choir, debating club and multi sports are available to pupils and contribute to both their personal and wider academic development. The school strives to ensure that every care has been taken to provide each pupil with an opportunity to find something where they can excel. '#RDShineBright', created by the pupil leaders, gives all pupils the opportunity to showcase the best of what they do both in school and at home. The school's social media platform enables the community to share and celebrate pupils' achievements and efforts.

Student voice is captured through a variety of methods including regular health and well-being surveys, SLT meetings with the student council and its involvement in writing the school development plan.

The school has a strong commitment to developing pupils' social responsibility. Pupils are successfully encouraged to think about how they can make positive contributions to their community. They are successfully encouraged to think about those less fortunate than themselves. They undertake community projects and engage in volunteer activities such as Ramadan food donations, fundraising for the Breast Cancer Awareness campaign and beach clean ups. The Eco Committee ensures that the school community has opportunities to participate in projects that contribute to a sustainable future within the school, the UAE and globally. The school actively supports the Simply Bottles initiative and recently used recycled bottles to make t-shirts for school staff.

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

Procedures for the welfare, health and safety of pupils are outstanding.

Royal Dubai School has rigorous procedures in place for safeguarding that conform fully to UK and UAE practices and requirements. These include child protection, online safety, health and safety and anti-bullying. Staff undertake annual safeguarding training with frequent refreshers. They know their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. Parents are fully aware of the safeguarding procedures and are clear about who the designated safeguarding leaders in school are. The vast majority of parents agree that their child feels safe at school and that the school prioritises the safety, care and welfare of their child.

Pupil subject leaders and buddies help those new to the school to settle in well. Considerable investment is devoted to training and developing these 'student leaders'. Pupils are directly involved in supporting the well-being of their peers through recruitment to 'The Support Squad'. Training for this role helps these pupils understand their limitations and they are clear about when to pass the matter to a duty teacher or to the full-time school counsellor. The school systematically records incidents and follow-up actions. Senior leaders review this information weekly.

Oversight and implementation of health and safety routines is extremely effective. Health and safety policies and procedures are in place and risk assessments are conducted as appropriate to ensure that activities are safe. The swimming pool on site is very carefully supervised.

Students are very aware of safeguarding matters, including those relating to online safety. They learn about how to keep themselves safe through timetabled well-being lessons, assemblies, presentations and frequent communications, including with their parents. All students interviewed know how to respond in the event of a concern, for example they know who the designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) are because they have been introduced and their role explained in assemblies and well-being lessons.

Posters displaying information about the first-aid team are prominently displayed and the clinic, triage space and isolation room are an excellent facility providing care and treatment if illness or injury occur. Appropriate training and fire, lockout and lockdown drills are conducted annually. Fire-safety standards are high. Fire-fighting equipment is checked and maintained quarterly. Fire-drill evacuation times are monitored and analysed to identify improvements.

Intelligent organisation of training for staff contributes to excellent safeguarding.

The positive-behaviour policy includes appropriate aims and expectations, details of roles, approaches, rewards and sanctions. There were no incidents of poor behaviour witnessed during the inspection visit. At 97%, attendance is higher than UK averages and punctuality has been improved through narrowing the expected period of arrival for pupils.

The anti-bullying policy promotes highly effective intervention strategies. The school uses restorative-justice techniques to resolve any issues between pupils. Appropriate cyber-bullying procedures are clear. Pupils know about these and online safety measures. Prominent notices communicate the identity of the DSLs.

Parents are reminded about these roles weekly and consider their children to be completely safe at school.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The school rigorously follows safer recruitment practices for all employees. All staff complete annual safeguarding training and know what procedures to follow to report concerns.

Two members of the senior leadership team have completed the safer recruitment training.

Arrangements to ensure the suitability of all staff are robust. The school keeps an up-to-date, comprehensive single central record of all staff working in the school, governors, school guests and outsourced companies. Visitors can enter the school wearing a lanyard only once checks have been made.

All required checks on current and new staff members are in line with UAE requirements and best practice in the UK. Staff are suitably qualified to enable outstanding learning and develop the national curriculum for England within the local context. All teaching staff hold a formal, recognised teaching qualification and almost all teachers have UK qualifications such as a post-graduate certificate in education with qualified-teacher status.

Two senior staff have completed the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH). Three middle leaders are currently completing their National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL). All early years teachers are early years trained.

Staff turnover is relatively low at 19%. Ten new teachers joined the school in September 2022. All new staff have settled well in the school. An in-depth induction programme ensures that all staff are at a suitable level with a minimum of two years or more experience in a UK school. Nine new teachers have already been appointed for the next academic year.

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

The requirements of this standard are met. The school building provides a bright, spacious and safe learning environment for all pupils and staff. Separate areas are allocated to each of the phases, providing appropriate facilities for each of the age groups.

The premises are contained within a secure perimeter wall with staffed entrance gates. All visitors are required to wear identity badges. The school's security patrolling system provides further security by ensuring that regular patrols are carried out across the entire premises every 24 hours.

There are sufficient entrances to allow adults and pupils to enter and leave, including in emergencies. Throughout the school, signage is very clear allowing pupils, parents and visitors to locate rooms and services easily and to remain safe while on site. Construction of a new, external lift is under way to further improve accessibility for all to the top floors of the building. A highly professional, efficient and skilled facilities-management team ensures that the school's premises remain of an excellent quality.

All toileting and washing amenities are maintained to a very high standard of cleanliness. Drinking water fountains are provided at regular intervals in each corridor and outside learning spaces for pupils, staff and visitors. Only cold water is available at these for safety purposes.

The school is well resourced to meet the needs of the curriculum. This includes providing showers for pupils to use after swimming. The school has acoustic panelling for music rooms, studios, PE halls and multi-purpose areas, where learning takes place.



Sound insulation and acoustics allow for effective teaching and communication throughout the school without disturbing other areas.

There is a designated inclusion hub area with a therapy and a sensory room, which is easily accessible on the ground floor. Daily checks of equipment, facilities and premises mean that any concerns are resolved effectively and efficiently leading to a safe and secure learning environment.

The school building is modern, clean and very well cared for by all. Learning environment and classrooms enable the enriched and broad curriculum to be taught effectively. Well-resourced, outdoor spaces promote learning through play, further enhancing curriculum opportunities through continuous provision.

Internal spaces include artificial and natural light to enable learning and enrichment during and after school. External lighting is provided from the perimeter entrance to the entrance of the building. This allows access to and egress from the school for all pupils, including those with SEND in safety and comfort.

## **Standard 6. The provision of information for parents, carers and others**

The school meets the requirements of this BSO standard.

Parents describe an open-door access policy to all staff, including members of the senior leadership team, and greatly value the ease with which they can book appointments to raise concerns or talk through any issues. The 'review-preview' weekly publication is particularly highly regarded as it is a highly effective and efficient way to help parents engage with their child's learning. Social media are used highly effectively to support two-way communication between home and school. Parent volunteers act as joint moderators of content in conjunction with a member of staff.

Parents say that the both the informal and formal range of communication methods are extremely well managed to encourage parents to choose the appropriate forum through which to communicate with the school.

The school is very keen to collect and respond to the views of parents, who told inspectors that every new initiative prompts a post-event survey. Changes and innovations are well managed and feedback received is acted upon. For example, the

school was very responsive in amending the way that an online communication system was used to enable parents to see work being done in school.

Formal written reports are welcomed by parents who feel that their child's strengths and areas for development are perfectly described.

Information about school life, such as the admissions procedure and parent handbook in addition to behaviour, safeguarding and curriculum policy documents, is available through the website and also routinely communicated to parents, including following amendment. Parents see these as 'living' documents and understand their importance because they welcome the foundation that they provide for the school.

Parents hold the school and its staff in extremely high regard. They say that a British culture permeates all aspects of the school with high standards of uniform, behaviour, discipline and balance of activities, academic and recreational, being important reasons affecting parents' choice of school for their child. 'There are lots of things under the surface that reinforce British culture here' was typical of parents' comments. Parents report that a particular strength of the school is the focus on reading and its benefits. Other typical comments were: 'Reading is very important across the school and the focus is a major help for my child' and 'Our children's spoken English is very sophisticated, even in comparison with relations who are educated in the UK; their English is better.'

## **Standard 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints**

The school meets the requirements of the standard.

The complaints policy is available on the website and is updated annually. It complies with all requirements. The school takes informal concerns seriously and aims to resolve them before they become formal complaints.

The procedure outlines how complaints are resolved within defined timescales. Complaints can also be made to the GEMS Education School Support Center.

Records of all complaints are retained for reference. There have been six official complaints in 2021/2022. These were dealt with fairly and in a timely manner to the satisfaction of parents.

The overwhelming majority of parents say that they can approach the front-of-house staff in person to voice concerns. The school has a range of forums for parents to make suggestions, such as the regular coffee mornings and net-promoter-score survey.

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

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The leadership fulfils its responsibilities in ensuring that the BSO standards are fully met and that the areas for improvement identified during the previous BSO inspection have been addressed.

The new principal arrived in September 2022 and has a clear and ambitious vision with a three-year plan. The vision has been co-created with parents, staff and pupils, and moves the school forward very effectively. The majority of parents agree that the school has high expectations of their child. The leadership team has recently been reorganised to meet the strategic needs of the school, ensuring a clear and well-structured approach to teaching, learning and assessment for learning.

Senior leaders have undertaken a range of strategic leadership training and qualifications including NPQH, NPQSL and inspection training to ensure accurate self-evaluation and school improvement.

There are clear accountability plans and procedures to sustain and improve all aspects of the school's work related to the BSO standards. BSO standards are standard items on the local advisory board and are reviewed three times a year. Clear financial policies have supported the new direction of the school. Governors have fully empowered the new principal to bring about improvement and to ensure that the school remains outstanding. The performance management of the school principal is rigorous with a monthly line management meeting and a termly performance management review. The board is confident in the leadership team and respects its separate responsibilities.

Leaders at all levels including governors communicate relentlessly the school's vision, its priorities and the four values 'empathy, compassion, helpfulness and respect'. They consistently display high expectations and set very challenging targets for improvement. They systematically benchmark the performance of the school against other schools in the cluster and draw on best practice to accelerate further students' progress. As staff are deployed across the cluster, two senior leaders are currently on

secondment at the school to share best and next practice. The governors are extremely knowledgeable about the school and support and challenge leaders appropriately. Leaders and governors have successfully created a culture of the highest aspiration for pupils and their teachers.

The school's vision and strategic aims are clear and effectively communicated to all stakeholders. Leaders and teachers communicate regularly with parents, with monthly newsletters, regular reports, coffee mornings, surveys and regular opportunities for them to share their voice. This contributes towards creating a happy school community. As a result of the staff well-being surveys in November 2022, school leaders produced a 'you said, we did' response. The new principal introduced a 'teaching assistant of the month award' and a 'staff creche'. Parents say that their children are very happy to come to the school. The school gathers the views of pupils through regular surveys and discussions. Pupils say that they are proud to be part of a British school.

Most of the staff agree that they are proud to work at the school. They say that they are well supported with professional development. While a minority of staff are still adapting to the fast-paced change, the vast majority of staff approve of the transformational leadership of the new principal.

GEMS Royal Dubai School is an inclusive school that promotes equality and diversity. All staff are appointed through a rigorous screening, selection and interview process and have clear job roles and responsibilities. Staff performance management and appraisal are fully in place to support professional growth. Feedback is relentlessly focused on having a positive impact on student learning and progress.

Leadership of early years is strong providing a secure basis for purposeful learning.

Staff receive regular training to understand the risks and potential dangers pupils may face. Clear processes are in place for them to report concerns. Parents and pupils have responded positively to the enhancement of safeguarding procedures such as the introduction of personalised parent lanyards. A vast majority of parents agree that their child feels and is safe at school.

Self-evaluation is sharp and accurate. There is a strong correlation between the self-evaluation, the strategic plan and the subject action plans. The leadership team undertakes a regular cycle of review and rigorous self-assessment to accelerate pupils' progress as part of its drive for the highest standards of teaching, learning and

care. For example, recent reviews have picked up some inconsistencies in the quality of handwriting and presentation.

## Early Years Foundation Stage provision

Children in the early years make outstanding progress. Most of the children who start school in the early years speak very little English. However, they are provided with a wide range of opportunities to develop their skills. As a result, their confidence grows rapidly. By the end of their time in the early years, most attain at least the level expected in the UK and a majority do even better.

The play-based curriculum with a balance of child-initiated and adult-guided activities develops both children's knowledge and learning skills, laying the foundations for their journey through the school.

Teachers plan half-termly learning journeys based on talking about texts to enable development in the prime and specific areas of learning. These are enhanced with immersive continuous provision which enables children to build their confidence and independence. Parents are fully informed of their child's progress through online platforms as well as being able to attend workshops to help them to support their child's learning.

Children have very positive attitudes to their learning. They behave well, take responsibility in choosing activities and engage well in their learning. Almost all concentrate for sustained periods. Leadership of early years is highly effective and provides a secure basis for teachers to ensure that learning is purposeful. Teachers structure lessons with carefully managed levels of reinforcement and challenge so that children take risks and can explore their natural world with curiosity.

Children with SEND are fully included and their needs met in all classes. Pupils in the early years are very well prepared to continue their learning in Year 1.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

GEMS Royal Dubai School meets all of the required standards except those that would be in breach of the host country laws.

It cannot fully meet the standards set out below that relate to the UK Equality Act 2010.

2(2)(d)(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation as set out in the Equality Act 2010;

5(b)(vi) encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act.

## What the school could do to improve further

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

The quality of handwriting and presentation is inconsistent. Leaders should ensure that teachers help pupils to increase the fluency, legibility and consistency of their handwriting.

## Summary of inspection judgements

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
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### The quality of education

Overall quality of education	x			
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	x			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs	x			
How well pupils make progress in their learning	x			

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	x			
The behaviour of pupils	x			

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	x			
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### Leadership and management

Overall effectiveness of leadership and management	x			
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### The quality of provision for boarding

N/A				
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## School Details

<b>Name of school</b>	GEMS Royal Dubai School
<b>Type of school</b>	Private
<b>Date school opened</b>	2005
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 - 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	mixed
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	925
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	N/A
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	AED38331 – AED 48301
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	N/A
<b>Address of school</b>	Street 11 A Al Mizhar 1 Dubai
<b>Telephone number</b>	+971 04 2886499
<b>Email address</b>	j.steel_rds@gemsedu.com
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jan Steel
<b>Proprietor</b>	GEMS education



## GLOSSARY

**Achievement** – Progress made by a pupil taking his/her individual circumstances and starting point into account.

**Accreditation** – The system whereby a school or similar organisation is assessed against agreed standards and if deemed as having achieved the standards required is provided with some form of official certification or recognition.

**Accreditation Board** – The body responsible for the strategic direction, operation and conduct of the accreditation service provided by Education Development Trust

**Assessment** – The process of finding out how well pupils have learnt what they have been taught. It is a continuous process that occurs throughout the school year, using a variety of forms for different purposes.

**Attainment** – The level pupils reach, usually measured by reference to benchmarks, such as test and examination results.

**British Schools Overseas Inspection (BSO)** – Inspection framework and standards defined by the DfE for British schools overseas to opt to be inspected against.

**Education Development Trust** – Formerly CfBT Education Trust, we are one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally.

**Central Support Team** – Personnel based in Education Development Trust Head Office who are responsible for the administration of the various educational services provided to international schools.

**Combined or Joint Visit** – a BSO Inspection visit combined with an ISQM accreditation or re-accreditation visit conducted (or DSIB inspection in Dubai) at the request of the school. This will be carried out concurrently with reference to both frameworks and sets of standards. Some of the standards

against which the school will be inspected are common, but some of the BSO standards relate to the British nature of the school.

**Cycle of Inspection** – The period of three years between BSO inspection visits.

**Curriculum** – The educational programmes or courses of study taught by a school including subjects and activities inside and outside the classroom, as well as extra-curricular enrichment programmes.

**Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB)** – All private schools in Dubai are required by the Knowledge and Human Development Authority to be inspected by the Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB). A joint DSIB/BSO inspection may be requested through the KHDA's strategic partner Education Development Trust.

**Leadership** – Leadership at any level (for example principals/headteachers, governors, board members, team/subject leaders) involves setting direction, empowering staff to work effectively, creating a suitable environment for learning, and setting an example to others. It entails different skills from management.

**Learning** – Pupils' gains in knowledge, skills and understanding.

**Management** – The practical business of running a school, department or aspect of a school's work in an efficient and useful way.

**Ofsted** – The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills is the non-ministerial government department of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools in England and is responsible for school inspections in England.

**Progress** – The gains in learning made between two points in time. A pupil can be described as having made insufficient progress, satisfactory, good, or outstanding progress in relation to his/her starting point.

**School self-evaluation** – The identification by the staff of a school of its strengths and weaknesses across the key aspects of its performance. Effective self-evaluation focuses specifically on the impact of the school's work on the outcomes for pupils.

**Standards** –

- (1) The levels of knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils and a school demonstrates at a particular point in time.
- (2) The evaluation requirements to be used in the inspection of British Schools Overseas.

**Teaching** – All activities undertaken by the teacher aimed at enhancing pupils' learning.

With 40 years' experience of delivering education services worldwide Education Development Trust exists solely to provide education for public benefit.

Teaching and learning are the essence of what we do and we have more than 2,500 staff around the world designing and delivering services. Education Development Trust staff support educational reform, teach, advise, research and train. As one of the top 30 charities in the UK, we work for and with individuals and communities in order to help them reach their potential.

Education Development Trust has built a reputation for providing high quality educational support and inspection services to national organisations such as Ofsted, the Teacher Training Agency and to schools in the north of England. Our main aim is to improve schools through high quality school inspections. We have strong values and a clear vision to deliver a world class inspection service that will directly contribute to improving the quality of teaching, learning and care of all children and young people in settings, schools and colleges. Education Development Trust first delivered inspections on behalf of Ofsted in 1993. Since then we have developed our experience and expertise in the field of school evaluation and improvement to become one of the UK's first major providers of inspection services.

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