

GEMS Wellington International School

British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

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Age Group: 3 – 18

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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 four inspectors from Education Development Trust who spent four 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 standards for British Schools Overseas. These were updated with effect from August 2023. 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

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

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 Wellington International School (WIS) is a privately owned, co-educational school that follows the British curriculum. It is located in the Al Sufouh area of Dubai. The school opened in 2005 and is one of four schools in the GEMS Wellington cluster

and one of 43 GEMS schools across the UAE. There are currently 2,914 pupils on roll, aged three to 18 years, making it larger than most other all-through schools in Dubai.

The school has a diverse community with 91 nationalities represented, with the largest group being Indian. As a non-selective school, it is fully committed to fostering diversity and inclusion. Most pupils speak a language other than English, and 491 have Intensive language support to help give them access the curriculum. The school provides extra learning support for 188 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school has identified 187 pupils with higher potential. Teachers ensure learning activities allow these pupils to reach their full potential.

Children in the early years follow the early years foundation stage curriculum. In key stages 1 to 3 pupils follow the English national curriculum, enhanced for breadth and personalisation. This leads to GCSE and BTEC courses in a growing range of subjects and personalised curriculum pathways. All learning is underpinned by high-performance learning (HPL). In the sixth form students can choose from three broad pathways to follow within the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP), ensuring personalisation. All students go on to attend universities worldwide, with a majority choosing the UK.

Summary of the evidence base used by the inspection team

This BSO inspection was carried out by four 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 95 lessons. Twenty-seven of the lessons visited were jointly observed by an inspector and a senior member of staff.

There were 28 meetings with leaders, teachers, pupils, parents and members of the school's governing board.

Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work. They analysed a wide range of documents relating to assessment, policies and strategic plans. They inspected the school's safeguarding arrangements. Inspectors also considered the views of parents, pupils and staff

expressed in the BSO survey, which was sent to parents and teachers just prior to the inspection.

Evaluation of the school

GEMS Wellington International School is an outstanding school and provides an outstanding quality of education for pupils from three to 18 years.

The school meets all of the BSO standards except those which it is precluded from meeting because of the host country's legislation. 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.

Attainment and progress in **English** across the school are outstanding. Almost all pupils with SEND make excellent progress from their starting points in reading and most pupils in writing.

The percentage of children achieving a Good Level of Development at the end of the Reception Year is well above English averages. A significant number of children arrive in the early years with English speaking and listening skills below what is typical for their age. The language-rich learning environment, focused time with their teacher and where necessary, specialist support contribute to their rapid progress.

Outcomes for the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 are above UK averages. The drive to improve writing outcomes and a strong focus on reading ensure that pupils can read and write confidently and independently. At the end of Year 1 pupils have developed their oral vocabulary and can apply an appropriate range of grammatical conventions. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are identified as 'Book Worms' to promote reading across the school.

In Year 6 most pupils' attainment and progress are better than UK national curriculum averages. Pupils read a range of genres and develop a wide range of vocabulary and technical subject-specific language. They punctuate and structure their writing appropriately, applying correct grammar and terminology.

By the end of key stage 3, pupils read fluently and have a rich vocabulary which they also apply to their writing. There is a focus this year on writing longer pieces.

At GCSE, pupils' achievements at the top grades in English language and literature are well above UK averages. On average, they achieve 0.8 grades higher than predicted

by their prior attainment in language. They are familiar with a variety of literature and their writing and discussions judiciously reflect a range of contexts and purposes.

At post-16, all International Baccalaureate (IB) students make excellent progress achieving on average over a grade higher than predicted by their prior attainment. The average grades for students at both higher (HL) and standard level (SL) are above UK and world averages. Pupils confidently analyse, interpret and compare texts and pieces of writing, developing their creative and evaluative writing skills.

In **mathematics**, pupils make outstanding progress from their starting points, achieving outstanding standards, well above UK and world averages. Three-year trends show standards maintained or slightly improved. Almost all pupils show good levels of confidence and have the skills to handle critical-thinking and problem-solving tasks.

Almost all children in the early years make good progress. They develop conceptual understanding of shape and measure and acquire strong number and numerical-pattern skills. Children in the Reception Year can add and subtract single-digit numbers in their heads and could tell the teacher how many biscuits were left when the teacher covered a tray of biscuits with a towel and removed four.

Primary pupils deepen mathematical understanding through inquiry and investigation. By Year 3, pupils were clear about the rules for column addition and the importance of organising their work. By Year 6, they confidently compare fractions.

In Year 8, pupils demonstrate their level of understanding of volume by working backwards from a given volume to calculate the length of missing sides in prisms. In upper secondary, most maintain high progress rates with many accelerated to early-entry GCSE in Year 10. By Year 11, almost all can combine geometric and trigonometric knowledge in solving problems. At GCSE, on average pupils achieved almost one grade higher than predicted by their prior attainment with over half gaining an 8 or 9 top grade. By Year 12 almost all are prepared for the challenges of IB with strongly developed number, algebra, geometry, trigonometry and data-handling skills.

At post-16, students choose between Analysis and Approaches (AA) and Application and Interpretation (AI), with slightly better progress made in AA. By Year 13, most AI HL students can calculate probabilities using the binomial distribution and most AA HL students can find vector products. Average IB grades are above those predicted and above UK and world averages.

Standards in **science** are outstanding across the school. All groups make outstanding progress and reach standards that are well above those expected for their age and above those typically found in England.

In the early years, almost all children make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points. Staff actively foster curiosity and create a rich environment where children explore the natural world around them, make observations and understand processes and changes. Children are well prepared for the demands of the Year 1 curriculum.

In primary, pupils continue to make outstanding progress. In Year 2, pupils use practical scientific methods and skills confidently, expanding their knowledge and scientific understanding. In Year 6, pupils can present reasoned explanations, including explaining data in relation to predictions and hypotheses.

In secondary, pupils continue to make outstanding progress. Levels of attainment and progress at GCSE are high. In triple science, physics and chemistry they are around a grade higher than predicted and in biology half a grade higher. In physics and chemistry 96% of students were awarded the top grades, 9 to 8, as were 75% in biology. Girls outperformed boys significantly in GCSE biology.

In IB biology, physics and chemistry, students in the sixth form achieve outstanding examination results that are above IB UK and world averages. Overall, students achieve results around a grade higher than predicted. Girls outperform boys significantly in IB physics.

The three-year trend in attainment at GCSE and IB remains outstanding despite a small dip in the top grades in GCSE biology and SL chemistry in 2022 and 2023.

Pupils consistently demonstrate outstanding progress across a wide range of **other subjects** surpassing both UK and world averages. Overall, there is little disparity between the outcomes of different pupil groups, regardless of their starting points.

GCSE results have remained consistently strong for the past three years with approximately one third of all pupils gaining the highest grades of 8 and 9. In almost all GCSE subjects, on average pupils achieve grades that exceed their individual targets based on prior attainment.

IB results have also been consistently outstanding for the past three years, albeit with smaller numbers at the top grades. Nevertheless, around one fifth of all students achieved 40+ points which is high. Across almost all subjects, results exceed world

averages. In some subjects such as business, film and computer science, students make outstanding progress from GCSE.

In Years 5 and 6, pupils benefit from specialist teachers for music, performing arts and physical education (PE) giving them high-quality learning experiences. During key stage 3, pupils can explore their passions and interests through the newly developed elective curriculum. They can choose from a diverse range of subjects including sustainable design, computational thinking and entrepreneurship.

The highly personalised approach to learning ensures that pupils of all abilities and talents achieve their aspirations.

Summary of other judgements against the BSO standards:

- 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 October 2023, the school has demonstrated that it meets the BSO standards 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.

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 **curriculum** is outstanding. Curriculum policies and plans encourage respect for other people paying particular regard to the protected characteristics of age, disability, religion, or belief, pregnancy, and maternity and race as set out in the Equality Act 2010. The school cannot meet the protected characteristics of gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership and sex and sexual orientation because they are precluded under UAE law.

The school ensures success within an inclusive landscape of mutual respect by planning an innovative curriculum within the laws of the UAE. The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides memorable learning experiences for all groups of pupils particularly when using resources available in the local community and environment. The way the curriculum is organised is one of the drivers behind the strong rates of progress that pupils make.

The curriculum fully meets the requirements of the framework for the early years and the national curriculum for England. The school offers a highly personalised curriculum that provides progression, challenges pupils of all abilities and engages them in learning. In Years 5 and 6, some subjects are taught with a specialist approach to support a seamless transition between key stages 2 and 3. A newly developed key stage 3 curriculum promotes innovation and challenge through a choice of subjects such as coding and design technology. Through a rich and diverse curriculum, pupils develop into confident learners pursuing 'excellence' in areas. The school is unable to provide relationships and sex education due to the local context but the GrowWell curriculum does cover age-appropriate emotional awareness.

In a seamless transition from Year 9, the school offers 24 GCSE/IGCSE courses at key stage 4, including photography, economics, enterprise and astronomy, along with BTEC at levels 1 and 2. There are 29 personalised interventions in its 'WISdom' project

providing key targeted support for pupils with SEND and/or EAL. The school's curriculum responds extremely well to individual needs and aspirations.

In the sixth form, there are alternative pathways within the IBDP at HL and SL and the IB Career Related Programme (IBCP), as well as the course programme. Additional pathways such as Award scheme, development and accreditation network (ASDAN) provide a highly supportive curriculum to meet pupils' individual needs.

The school recognises the importance of holistic development and aims to cultivate well-rounded globally minded citizens. The promotion of the skills identified by the IB Learner Profile and HPL are evident throughout the school.

Britishness is skilfully woven through the curriculum providing a strong foundation for pupils to seamlessly enter the English educational system at any stage. Pupils learn, for example, about the Anglo Saxons and Vikings, the British empire and the monarchy. Year 11 pupils debate politics and the immigration policy in the UK. Tutor time and the 'GroWell' curriculum play an important role in promoting Britishness in addition to personal development.

The Explore, Enrich, Excite (EEE) programme significantly supports pupils' learning with opportunities to extend or supplement their academic studies. Older pupils take leading roles in many of these programmes. Residency programmes, involving expert practitioners in the performing arts, enhance pupils' experiences and provide professional development for teachers.

Pupils and parents confirm that the transition to and from UK schools are smooth. A dedicated careers-and-university counsellor assists IB and secondary pupils with university choices, pathways and applications. Most Year 13 students go on to UK universities in the UK and in Dubai. Lower-school pupils have career themed days.

Middle and senior leaders carefully monitor the curriculum and review plans annually. Parents' and pupils' views have a direct impact on the changes that have been made this year, such as the introduction of new subjects including entrepreneurship and sustainable design in the key stage 3 curriculum.

The quality of **teaching, learning and assessment** is outstanding across the school.

Teaching is highly effective and consistent using high-quality questioning. Teaching methods directly address the curriculum-linked learning objectives and focus on pupils acquiring skills and understanding. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and a deep understanding of their pupils' strengths and weaknesses. They use learning assistants and learning-support assistants to meet the needs of high-potential pupils, and those with identified needs, including SEND and EAL. They routinely make

personalised modifications to allow those pupils with the greatest need access to the curriculum. Teachers set demanding tasks at different levels to stretch and challenge all pupils, resulting in strong progress for almost all pupils from their starting points.

Teachers have good relationships with their classes, which contributes to calm and orderly classrooms and well-behaved pupils. Classroom-management skills are strong. In a Year 4 boys' rugby lesson, the teacher's rapport with the pupils allowed the group to excel in developing their defensive skills. Teachers creatively use resources and facilities, including outdoor spaces like the extensive outdoor-play and learning area in the foundation stage. They resourcefully transform corridor areas into learning zones.

Pupils demonstrate strong learning skills including self-motivation, persistence and responsibility. They are generally eager to learn and engage fully in class discussions. They demonstrate strong research, inquiry and investigative skills. They work effectively in pairs or small groups, offering each other support. They are skilled in using technology when opportunities arise. For example, Year 13 pupils use graphic-display calculators to handle statistics problems.

Leaders have introduced 80-minute lessons this year to cut down movement in this busy school. The feedback has been positive, particularly from the older pupils who were interviewed by inspectors. They report that it allows greater depth of learning and more room for questioning.

The school holds the status of HPL world-class school. The high-performance culture and philosophy are visible around the school. Pupils clearly display a performance mindset, seeing their potential as limitless. They challenge themselves and strive to do better through perseverance and determination.

Teachers effectively monitor class progress through regular and effective checks on understanding, adjusting teaching if necessary. They use the data they have on individual pupils to plan activities to ensure that all have suitable challenges from the range of tasks available. More formal assessments are well constructed to match curriculum standards and to test pupils' knowledge and skills. Accurate marking and appropriate moderation systems are in place to ensure reliability. Feedback in lessons is supportive and developmental ensuring at least good progress. In IB French, for example, the cycle of drafting, feedback, reflection and redrafting effectively raised complex writing skills and the use of idioms to near native-speaker levels, with students moving from as low as level 3 to level 7 in their writing. In books, self, peer and teacher assessment are all evident.

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.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

The school promotes and nurtures a positive learning environment. The school encourages respect for others and pays due regard to the protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010. It is unable to promote all of the protected characteristics due to the laws of the UAE. Those precluded are marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, sex and sexual orientation. The WIS values of empathy, integrity and fortitude underpin the school's culture and the experiences of pupils. As a result, they feel safe, valued and respected. A typical comment from pupils was, 'WIS always looks out for every pupil, and it is always there to support you.' It is a safe space for all pupils. The way that staff engage with the pupils is exemplary and, as a result, pupils are highly confident and keen to succeed.

The school encourages pupils to make the right choices by teaching and modelling exemplary behaviour and by promoting and rewarding positive behaviour. Pupils support each other's learning very effectively. The GroWell programme in tutor time empowers pupils to reflect and learn from their mistakes and to understand what they and others value, knowing the impact it has on them and others emotionally and socially. The programme 'My hidden chimp' encourages pupils from Years 1 to 4 to learn how to be self-aware through 'talking about feelings'. Pupils benefit from an exceptionally dedicated and committed counselling team. Proactive use of restorative justice nurtures relationships.

Pupils are extremely proud to be part of the school. The school has a constant drive to celebrate pupils' achievements in assemblies with 'tutor group of the week' or 'student of the week'. This contributes to high levels of self-esteem. Pupils are empowered to 'have a voice' through a vast number of student leadership roles within the school. The senior student-leadership team represents the voices and concerns of its peers and enhances communication channels between all stakeholders.

Pupils' views are systematically collected and analysed with weekly student-council meetings and bi-termly departmental surveys. Weekly GroWell well-being surveys

ensure systematic checks on how pupils are feeling. The ChooseWell programme empowers pupils to enhance their well-being.

Pupils have an extensive knowledge of UK public institutions such as Parliament, the National Health Service and the monarchy. They know UK universities extremely well. They enjoy debates in their politics lessons on UK immigration policy. In history they explore the impact of the Victorians, while in economics, they examine the role of the government in providing key services through the welfare state in the UK.

British values are actively promoted. The house system 'Diamond, Emerald, Onyx, Ruby' provides a shared vision and sense of belonging. House awards are given to pupils who consistently represent their house through the school's values of 'integrity, empathy and fortitude'.

The school actively promotes democracy, the rule of law, respect and tolerance and individual liberty. Pupils vote to choose members of the student council, house captains, trips, immersion days and new learning topics. They are actively involved in the well-being of their younger peers. The well-being ambassadors collaborate closely with the school's counsellors on wellness projects. Year 12 students who are trained as 'mental first aiders' provide peer support, acting as a pillar of strength during challenging times.

Pupils are proud of the 91 different nationalities represented in the school, building mutual respect for each other's opinions and ideas. The school celebrates key cultural events such as International Day, Winter Festival, the King's coronation and Remembrance Day.

The school's wider provision of careers information and guidance is highly effective for pupils of all ages. Pupils are proud of their school. A typical comment was, 'It is our collective and cooperative efforts that make our school as extraordinary as it is today.'

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

The school meets the requirements of this BSO standard and the regulatory requirements and cultural obligations of the UAE. The school's care for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is outstanding.

Safeguarding is a strong feature of the school and conforms to UAE laws and those of the UK where they are not in conflict with UAE laws. The whole-school designated safeguarding lead (DSL) oversees a team of 13, including DSL leads for the lower,

middle and upper schools and their deputies, three counsellors and the school attendance officer. The GEMS corporate head of safeguarding and child protection provides an external layer of support. The school effectively uses an online case-management platform to record, escalate and review safeguarding actions. There are comprehensive policies, processes and procedures in place ensuring a strong safeguarding culture in the school. All staff fully understand their responsibilities in regard to safeguarding, reporting any concerns, however minor, on the dedicated online system. All staff, governors and parents who have a volunteer role in the school have received the regulatory training online and face to face. Pupils, parents and staff say they feel safe and secure because they understand the school's safeguarding procedures. Pupils know who to go to if they have a concern. They develop an understanding of how to keep themselves safe through tutor time, lessons and assemblies. Relationships are highly positive and mutually respectful.

Premises and equipment are checked regularly by the premises manager to ensure that they are safe. There is an effective health and safety policy in place, as well as written risk assessments. Chemicals and cleaning materials are safely stored with restricted access. Water purity is regularly checked, including that of the swimming pool. The school complies with UAE fire regulations. All procedures are well rehearsed, monitored, recorded and reviewed on a regular basis. There are monthly checks of fire-related apparatus with termly fire practice and an annual practice with Civil Defence. Specialist staff deal with any repairs immediately.

The transport arrangements for school buses and pick up and drop offs are well managed with a rigorous system of timings and locations that everyone must adhere to. Comprehensive risk assessments are carried out for activities and school trips. Staff receive training or one-to-one guidance on how to carry out effective risk assessments.

Nurses and a doctor are available on site along with two clinics that provide competent first aid. The systems for handling medication and the recording of medical incidents are robust. Ten percent of staff are first aid trained and 20% fire trained. All security systems are well managed and rigorously implemented with coloured lanyards for visitors to the school including parents for pick up.

Behaviour is exemplary and supported by a well-developed behaviour policy and anti-bullying policy. Any bullying incidents are thoroughly investigated and resolved. New pupils, at whatever time they join, settle into school quickly with the help of buddies and kind peers. The school has a strong commitment to ensure all pupils, including those who may be vulnerable, thrive in a safe, secure and nurturing environment.

Attendance is consistently good across the school at 93% last year and 95% for term one this year, which is above post-COVID averages for England.

Standard 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets the requirements of this standard. The school actively conducts rigorous checks on teachers, outsourced companies and all employed by GEMS such as security guards and cleaners. Prior to interview every teacher has an online screening call. Checks such as, identity, qualifications, suitability to work with children, the right to work, police checks and medical fitness are in place. Additionally, the school verifies two references for each candidate by phone call and completes a social-media check. The single central register of checks is securely accessible only to the Human Resources (HR) manager, assistant and principal. It undergoes annual verification by the GEMS corporate office.

To ensure comprehensive records, the school maintains digital records of training, particularly related to safeguarding. All staff and governors receive both online and face-to-face safeguarding training, which is also available in Arabic. Senior leaders have all completed safer recruitment training.

Most teachers possess UK qualifications or have previous experience of teaching the English national curriculum. This year staff turnover has significantly improved. This is attributed in part to a focus on positive staff well-being and investment in professional development. Recently recruited staff confirm that induction is thorough and appropriate. Professional-development opportunities are plentiful and have a positive impact on pupils' learning.

Standard 5. The premises and accommodation

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The school campus is safe and secure with access closely controlled. Its purpose-built premises are being systematically upgraded and refurbished. Several additional specialist areas to support the curriculum have been developed as part of this process including another food and design technology room. The renovation work completed so far has caused minimal interruptions to learning while significantly improving both the look and the effectiveness of the environment.

Classrooms are of a good size. Specialist areas are thoughtfully designed. All indoor and outdoor facilities are well maintained. Outdoor play and teaching spaces are stimulating and engaging. School signage clearly indicates evacuation routes, first-aid provision and fire-safety equipment.

Classrooms are bright, welcoming and equipped with large high-quality interactive boards. Associated software packages allow students to have an effective learning experience. The specialist areas have more than sufficient resources to support fully the delivery of the curriculum. The combined primary and secondary library complex is a central area for learning with computer rooms allowing classes to use subject-specific software packages in their studies. The design-technology and science laboratories, food rooms, performing arts and PE spaces are all resourced to a high standard to support learning.

The dining area serves a dual role as it is used as a learning space outside of lunchtimes. Corridors are creatively and effectively used as learning spaces both for year-level classes in foundation stage and primary and as subject bases in secondary. The Falcon Centre provides post-16 students with their own domain, in which much of their learning takes place. The Infinity Zone offers counselling areas and a space for students who need more individualised support for learning.

Overall, learning spaces are used efficiently and add significantly to student outcomes. Meeting spaces, offices and reception areas are plentiful and allow for the effective day-to-day running of the school.

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

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

Parents are provided with a wide range of information on their child's performance both online through the school's own system, face to face and in writing. This includes parents' evenings once a term in primary and twice a year in secondary. Parents are provided with a written update on their child's performance and an opportunity to meet their child's teacher. Reports sent to parents are high quality, providing detailed information about progress and areas for development. Pupil-led conferences take place once a term, where pupils share their work with parents in school.

Parents highly appreciate maintaining contact with the school, and the school promptly and efficiently addresses any issues they raise, typically through the parent

relations executive (PRE). Parents say that any issue raised will be responded to within 24 hours, but in reality it is faster than that. There is a strong Parents' Association which is encouraged by the school as part of its ethos of 'parents as partners'. The GEMS app facilitates transactions with the school and provides up-to-date information. There is high visibility and access to staff and teachers, which parents value. For example, senior staff are outside at drop-off and pick-up times.

Parents believe their child is safe at school and that the focus on safeguarding is a strength. Safeguarding training is offered to parents who wish it and is compulsory for parents attending the school as volunteers. The school website is comprehensive and contains all relevant information about the school, including an extensive list of key policies, including for example the policy for admissions, inclusion, behaviour and complaints, inspection reports, academic performance information and handbooks for parents tailored for lower, middle and upper schools. This information is supported by regular emails to parents with significant updates.

In interviews and the few responses to the questionnaire sent to parents by inspectors, parents said that the school makes a real contribution to their child's growth, confidence and happiness. Evidence from the inspection endorses their views. Parents felt there was the right balance between academic excellence and extra-curricular activities. They are impressed, and inspectors agree, that there is a wide range of extra-curricular activities which provide greater breadth and depth to pupils' learning and personal development. The school also surveys parents each year formally, responding positively to any issues, but takes feedback at any time.

Parents value the personal recognition of pupils' achievements and the confidence that this instils in them.

Standard 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

Parents have access to the complaints policy on the school website. The school invites parents to use a QR code in the student diary to gain access to the policy and sign to acknowledge that they have read all the school policies. The complaints policy is updated annually and outlines a clear staged procedure to ensure that complaints are promptly handled by the appropriate staff member.

The school actively encourages open communication with parents and encourages their feedback. It has established strong relationships with parents through the PRE. The school maintains records of all complaints and their resolution on a GEMS portal, enabling it to monitor trends and evaluate and improve its practices.

Since the last inspection, there have been two formal complaints into which the school conducted thorough investigations with full transparency to the satisfaction of the parents involved. The parents inspectors spoke to express their satisfaction with the timely resolution of their concerns. The school regularly conducts focus groups and surveys to gather parents' views, consistently working towards improving its satisfaction rates.

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.

The school has an innovative leadership structure, which has been remodelled since the last inspection to refocus expertise in subjects and key stages. The structure now better aligns with the school's vision and development priorities. Leaders at all levels maintain high expectations of student culture, learning and curriculum strategy. All lead by example, encouraging innovation and ideas and clearly demonstrating the school's capacity for even further improvement. The early years department has strong leadership resulting in highly effective provision.

Recently the school updated its values, vision and mission, which have been well communicated to all stakeholders. These values, including integrity, empathy and fortitude are already well understood by the whole school community. Leaders are now focused on successfully implementing and thoroughly evaluating their ambitious vision. Their aim is to instil these values in every pupil's life, both now and in the future.

The school serves as a hub for leadership development and benefits from the support of the Wellington cluster of schools. There are extensive, personalised and wide-ranging professional-development opportunities, including accredited courses that enhance teachers' career prospects. These opportunities are well attended and appreciated. The school's induction process is of high quality and begins immediately after appointment. The middle leaders to whom inspectors spoke felt incredibly well supported. They record their own professional development and opportunities to deliver training in their 'padlet' (learning journal) giving them ownership of their own

development. The school strongly believes in recruiting from within, offering numerous career-progression opportunities.

All teachers who responded to the BSO survey expressed their pride in working at the school. This was evident in the high quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. Leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching and learning and encourage the sharing of ideas and innovative practice. This in turn informs teachers' self-evaluation and personal targets.

The school-development plan closely aligns with the 2026 vision and is based on accurate self-evaluation. Regular evaluation has a key role in driving the school forward. Subject and phase action plans are ambitious and have a strong impact on learning outcomes. All staff are held rigorously to account. Leaders complete ongoing monitoring evaluation reviews to analyse individual and group progress, identifying next steps for improvement.

Governance has two levels. GEMS Education provides corporate governance and takes responsibility for finance, resourcing, operations, HR and safeguarding oversight. It ensures regulatory and legal compliance through external-audit reports.

The local advisory board (LAB) acts as a critical friend, holding leaders accountable for school improvement and empowering them to do what is best for the school. The working-party model allows the LAB to conduct in-depth scrutiny. Highly skilled professionals, parents and representatives of GEMS Education are proud to be part of the LAB and feel valued. The safeguarding lead on the LAB works closely with the school, ensuring highly effective safeguarding practices and providing an extra layer of external legal support.

There is a clear understanding and respect for the distinct responsibilities of the governors and school leaders. Governors actively seek the views of parents and pupils through regular surveys and meetings. For example, the head boy and girl have presented new initiatives to the LAB, fostering an inclusive, decision-making process. The chief education officer at GEMS appraises the school's chief executive officer against a range of key performance indicators and in turn she appraises the school principal.

The positive promotion of equality, inclusion and diversity is evident in the positive culture of the school. Pupils express their freedom to voice their opinions on an equal platform. Both parents and pupils appreciate the school's diverse international community. WIS is an innovative and stimulating place to learn and to work.

EYFS provision

Early years provision is outstanding. At the end of the Reception Year 82% of children achieve a Good Level of Development, which is well above the English average.

The curriculum follows the English early years foundation stage. Teachers and leaders closely monitor children's progress using a combination of the early learning goals and the school's own tracking systems. Assessments are made to carefully evaluate individual children's starting points and teaching is adapted accordingly.

In English children benefit from focused time with their teacher to help develop their writing. Phonics is a particular strength.

In science, children use their senses to explore natural materials. They confidently talk about what they saw and what they smelt using key vocabulary such as spicy, sweet, flowery or disgusting.

In a Reception maths lesson, children could recognise the pattern of numbers on a die. Some children were already grasping mental maths and were able to complete additions of $50 + 50$ and $5 + 5$.

Early years leaders are highly effective and committed to maintaining outstanding standards. Leaders closely monitor the quality of teaching using robust systems. Well-qualified, carefully deployed staff are supported by frequent and effective professional development.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. The development of each child is carefully monitored. Staff respond quickly, sensitively and effectively to areas of academic or pastoral need.

Recent improvements to the inside environment have significantly increased the size and potential for collaborative and cross-curricular learning. All areas are equipped with well-organised, high-quality resources that support high levels of learning.

Teachers communicate regularly with parents in a wide variety of ways. The frequent opportunities to become involved with their children's learning ensure that parent partnerships are excellent. Children are well prepared for their transition into Year 1.

Post-16 provision

There are currently 266 students in the sixth form including 20 new students. Year 11 retention is 71% while retention from Years 12 to 13 is 100%. Attendance is 95%, matching the school's overall average this term.

Students can pursue three broad pathways at IB. All have opportunities to continue to develop their English and mathematical skills. All courses are successful in helping students achieve their goals. In addition, post-16 students contribute to the wider school community through initiatives such as the Creativity, activity, service (CAS) programme, running EEE clubs and the 'Big Brother, Big Sister' programme supporting younger pupils dealing with social issues. Internship opportunities are highly valued.

Students feel well prepared for university life with support from GEMS alumni, who provide information about specific universities and courses. Year 13 students can participate in a pre-university course that teaches essential life skills such as cooking, financial education and personal boundaries. The school provides an excellent university-guidance programme, including options interviews, taster sessions and scheduled meetings with the careers counsellor. Sixth-form leaders, tutors and teachers are highly knowledgeable and provide personalised guidance throughout the university-application process. Almost all students go to university either directly or after a gap year with many choosing the UK universities.

Students appreciate their caring and supportive teachers who help them develop essential skills and achieve academic success. The personalised approach is highly valued. Students have a strong work ethic and positive attitudes towards learning, leading to exceptional outcomes. In interviews with inspectors, students spoke of feeling empowered to voice their opinions in a safe environment.

The skilled sixth form leadership team takes a holistic approach to students' academic and personal well-being. They actively participate in safeguarding, having completed advanced safeguarding training. The team has also completed the appropriate IB training in excess of requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

GEMS Wellington International 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 point for development:

The school has recently updated its vision and mission statement to better align with its core values. Leaders have communicated these effectively to all stakeholders. They should now ensure the successful implementation and thorough evaluation of this ambitious vision in order to instil these values deeply into the lives of pupils.

Summary of inspection judgements

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
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The quality of education

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

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
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Leadership and management

Overall effectiveness of leadership and management	✓			
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School Details

Name of school	GEMS Wellington International School
Type of school	Private for profit
Date school opened	September 2005
Age range of pupils	3-18 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	2914
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	n/a
Annual fees (day pupils)	AED 45,259 (FS)- 98,465 (Y13)
Annual fees (boarders)	n/a
Address of school	Sheikh Zayed Road Al Sufouh 1 Dubai PO Box 37486
Telephone number	+971 (4) 307 3000
Email address	Principal_wis@gemwedu.com
Headteacher	Maryssa O'Connor -Principal/CEO
Proprietor	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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