



مجلس أبوظبي للتعليم
Abu Dhabi Education Council
Education First **التعليم أولاً**



New School Inspection Report

GEMS Winchester

Academic Year 2013 – 14

Iqraa

GEMS Winchester

Inspection Date	28 April – 1 May 2014
School ID#	230
Licensed Curriculum	English National Curriculum
Number of Students	675
Age Range	3 to 14 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Philomena Hogg
School Address	Corner of Al Falah and Muroor Road
Telephone Number	+971(0)2 632 6620
Fax Number	
Official Email (ADEC)	gems.winchester@adec.ac.ae
School Website	-----
Date of opening	September 2013

The overall effectiveness of the school

Inspectors considered the school in relation to 3 performance categories

Band A High performing (overall effectiveness grade 1, 2 or 3)

Band B Satisfactory (overall effectiveness grade 4 or 5)

Band C In need of significant improvement (overall effectiveness grade 6, 7 or 8)

The School was judged to be:	BAND C;	GRADE 6
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The main strengths of the school are:

- the clear direction and ethos established by the principal and her senior team
- the leadership team's effective use of self- evaluation to inform school development planning
- the rigorous performance management system to improve the quality of teaching and students' learning
- the effective provision for students' welfare, health and safety
- the positive relationships throughout the school within a harmonious community
- the successful implementation of strategies to improve behaviour in lessons and around the school
- the celebration of UAE culture, heritage and values in lessons and in assemblies
- the collaborative and cooperative relationships between students which contribute to the harmonious school environment.

The main areas for improvement are:

- the middle management structure with experience of English National Curriculum to develop and support curricular subjects
- curriculum resources to support students' learning and progress
- ICT resources to develop students' ICT skills
- teaching to provide for higher order challenge to extend students' thinking and independent learning skills
- increased provision in some lessons for special educational needs (SEN) and English as an additional language (EAL) students to aid their learning

- the development of teachers' planning from the successful 'I can' statements in order to set targets for learning.

Introduction

The school was inspected by 4 inspectors. They observed 74 lessons, conducted several meetings with senior staff, support staff, students and parents. They analysed test and assessment results and scrutinised students' work across the school. They considered the 289 responses to the parents' questionnaire and many of the school's policies and other documents. The leadership team were involved throughout the inspection process. The principal conducted one joint lesson observation with the lead inspector.

Description of the School

GEMS Winchester is a private, co-educational school for students from age 3 to 14 years. The school opened in September 2013 in the Al Falah district of Abu Dhabi city. The principal joined in August 2013. She is supported by the vice principal, appointed in September 2013, the Head of Secondary and the Foundation Coordinator, both appointed in January 2014 and the recently appointed Head of Primary. The school also has an Arabic Head of Faculty (HoF). The school follows the English National Curriculum (NC) with integrated Arabic, Islamic education and social studies. The school aims to provide every child with a school experience that is meaningful, to instil the desire to learn so that children develop a deep understanding and the skills for the 21st Century. It will encourage all students to 'be the best that you can'.

The school is part of the Gems group. It is a mid-market school with low fees. There is a clear admissions procedure. On registration students take an assessment in English. The fees range from AED 14,000 to AED 22,000. The school is housed in an ADEC ex-government school building for which the school has a lease for a further 2 or 3 years. A considerable refurbishment programme by Gems has resulted in a bright, clean and spacious building which is fit for purpose. Future plans include a new building, subject to approval.

There are 675 students on roll. Half of the current students come from closed villa schools. There are 148 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), 362 students in Years 1-6 and 165 students in Years 7-9. There are separate classes for boys and girls from Year 6 onwards. Of the total student numbers, 81.2% are Muslim and 49.5% of the students are Arabic. Students come from a wide range of countries including 17% from Egypt, 13% from India, 12% from Pakistan, 9% from Sudan, 7% from Jordan and 5% from Palestine. Many other nationalities are represented in small numbers.

Of the 70 students identified with special educational needs (SEN), 20 have specific learning difficulties, 29 have moderate learning difficulties, 7 have severe learning difficulties, 13 have behavioural concerns and 1 student is identified with a hearing impairment. The school has identified 44 students who need extra support with English as an additional language (EAL), over and above the effective provision in all lessons, in order for them to better access the curriculum. 28 students are identified as gifted and talented.

The Effectiveness of the School

While this report recognises the strengths and especially the leadership and management's satisfactory capacity to lead school development, the school cannot be judged satisfactory overall as students' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory. (Refer to Irtiqa'a Framework, 'Limiting Judgements' page 15.)

Students' attainment & progress

As a new school, no past examination data is available. All students are assessed on arrival to determine their starting points. Results show that the vast majority of students arrive with levels of attainment which are well below those expected for their age. Regular comprehensive school assessment procedures to track and monitor progress from starting points show that attainment levels are improving in all core subjects so that standards are rising from well below to below international and ADEC's expectations. These standards of attainment remain unsatisfactory. Students in some lessons in all years during the inspection were seen to be attaining standards broadly in line with International expectations, particularly in English speaking and listening.

Children's standards and progress in FS in basic literacy and numeracy skills is broadly in line with international expectations. Many children can sound out the letters in words and are beginning to read successfully. They can count, order and sequence numbers without help from an adult. They can do simple adding and subtracting calculations accurately. FS children have no opportunities for play outdoors as there is no climbing equipment.

In Key Stages 1 to 3 students make appropriate progress from their starting points in speaking, reading, writing and listening in English. They make appropriate progress in Islamic education and social studies, and in mathematics and science. Progress in Arabic speaking and listening is appropriate. It is slower in Arabic reading and writing, and in information, communication technology (ICT). Students make limited progress in higher order thinking skills and in independent learning. Progress was judged to be unsatisfactory in almost a third of the lessons seen.

Students' personal development

Students' personal development is a strength of the school. Students enjoy school. Their behaviour has significantly improved over time due to the effective implementation of the school's behaviour policy. A small number of boys behave less well in English curriculum lessons. Students demonstrate strong commitment to the values and heritage of the UAE. They show appropriate respect for the national flag and national anthem each day in assemblies. The school is a diverse,

multicultural community where students show respect, tolerance and acceptance of each other. Effort and success are celebrated. Students work well together and enjoy learning. New students are welcomed positively and have student 'buddies' who help them settle in. Students have many leadership opportunities, such as head of school, heads of house, sports leaders, student voice and peer mentors. This encourages and builds their self-confidence and self-esteem. Students say teachers support them well in their learning. Students enjoy opportunities to take part in a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. They work well in the library where they play word games, read and use the small number of laptops. Informative personal, social and health education lessons (PHSE), regular sports lessons and extra-curricular sport enhance students' understanding of the importance of healthy food and exercise. Students respect and enjoy their school environment.

The quality of teaching and learning.

The quality of teaching and learning is varied across the school. The quality of teaching is improving as staff try out new teaching styles and strategies acquired in professional development training. Teachers have appropriate subject knowledge. Relationships in lessons are positive. Most teachers plan lessons effectively, and share the learning objectives with students. Students use the 'I can' statements to challenge themselves and to think about their learning. For example, in an English lesson observed, students were successfully encouraged to extend their vocabulary by including adjectives in their writing. In an English writing lesson, students listened to a news report before writing their own report in a similar style. In mathematics, students are encouraged to set out work clearly, and in science to write their hypothesis, clear steps for experiments and conclusions. Students assess their own progress using the 'I can' statements at the end of each lesson. The success of these 'I can' statements is not developed into targets for learning so that students know what they need to do next in order to improve further.

In a minority of lessons the low level of challenge and the lack of higher order thinking skills or independent learning results in some lack of engagement. As a result their progress slows. Progress in Arabic is slow because students have insufficient opportunities to practice speaking, for example by talking in pairs to support their writing. There is too little emphasis on the improvement of writing skills. Teachers do not always provide students with the key vocabulary and structures they need before they begin to write.

Teachers do not always monitor the progress of their students closely. In some lessons there is limited provision for SEN and EAL students. Marking of work is

variable and not all teachers give students helpful comments on how to improve their work. On occasion, teachers do not use the most appropriate facilities and resources to teach effectively. For example, ICT is sometimes taught in a classroom rather than the available ICT room.

In EYFS teaching is appropriate for the needs and age of the children. There is a strong focus on teaching basic skills in literacy, including teaching sounds and blending letters (phonics). The practical use of simple resources enhances children's learning and develops their thinking skills. In a science lesson children enjoyed experimenting to see which objects sank or floated. Children correctly recorded their results and were able to discuss them. Regular physical exercise (PE) lessons in the well-equipped gymnasium develop children's gross motor skills. Teaching assistants are under-used. Often they are used only to set out equipment.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The school follows the English curriculum in addition to Arabic, Islamic education and social studies. The school has arranged classes appropriately for Arabic and non-Arabic students and for Muslim and non-Muslim students. Students study the core subjects of English, mathematics, three sciences and ICT. In addition they have French, history, art and PE lessons in Key Stages 2 and 3.

The school has begun thorough and effective assessment procedures in line with English National Curriculum (NC) requirements and student attainment and progress is measured using NC levels. In the Foundation Stage (FS) the school follows the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) profile. Teachers assess what children can do by observing them working on a daily basis. Evidence is then recorded in children's progress files. In Key Stage 1 (years 1-2), Key Stage 2 (years 3-6) and Key Stage 3 (years 7-9) continuous assessment is based on a series of 'I can statements' linked to NC levels again on a daily basis. Formal assessments take place twice a year. In addition marks are awarded from tests in Arabic, Islamic education and social studies.

The curriculum effectively promotes an increasing understanding of UAE values, culture and traditions. UAE values and traditions are integrated into teaching in several subjects and are effectively promoted in daily assemblies.

The EYFS curriculum is planned effectively and enriched by a wide ranging and effective use of activities to engage children. There is no outdoor area for children to play. Regular PE lessons provide an effective substitute.

The curriculum is based mostly on the school's own materials which encourage innovative teaching. The lack of an English language programme with a structured

progression means planning and learning is haphazard. ICT lessons do not develop students' key skills. Strategies for promoting students' higher order thinking skills and independent learning are not routinely planned. Art and PE lessons enhance the curriculum effectively for all students. Science and mathematics are a strong feature of the curriculum with practical activities enhancing students' learning. The curriculum does not provide enough active learning opportunities to engage the attention of some boys.

The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. Sports clubs such as football, cricket, basketball cookery and chess are particularly popular. In Key Stage 3 students have effective guidance on preparing them for the next stage of their education. The school has links with other Gems schools and local companies to extend students' knowledge and understanding of the wider world.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The protection, care, guidance and support provided is a strength of the school. Students are well cared for and supported. All appropriate checks have been carried out and recorded in the single central register. Relationships between students and with staff are highly positive. The school works effectively with parents to encourage positive behaviour and attitudes to learning. Parents have opportunities to work with their children in the school library. The school rigorously monitors attendance. Any absenteeism is followed up swiftly. Attendance and punctuality have improved. Attendance is above average at 94%.

The medical centre stores medicines safely and carefully monitors the health of students with medical needs. Students report few incidents of bullying or intimidation and say that teachers deal with any incidents swiftly. Students say that there is no corporal punishment. School transport and students' daily arrival and departure are well supervised. Students have appropriate opportunities to pray. Students say they feel safe and happy at school, and parents agree.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The old building is safe and clean. The Gems organisation has made the necessary improvements and the building is mostly fit for purpose. Classrooms are light and spacious. Classroom walls display colourful examples of students' work. Students take advantage of the shaded outdoor play area to play together in small groups. This area is effectively supervised. EYFS children have no outdoor play or climbing equipment. Some unsafe areas of the playground are cordoned off to protect students from harm.

The school's health and safety team keep accurate maintenance records. They ensure that fire-fighting and electrical equipment is tested and safe. Evacuation procedures are followed rigorously with detailed records. First aid procedures are followed carefully. The security of the building is rigorous. A lift provides access to some classrooms and specialist facilities for students with physical disabilities. Procedures for the hygienic serving and consumption of food are followed stringently in the canteen.

The school's resources to support its aims

The school has an adequate number of appropriately qualified teachers. They have regular access to effective professional development training. The recent appointment of the librarian has made a positive impact on developing students' language skills both in Arabic and English. Resources in the library remain insufficient. Resources in classrooms, particularly in cycle 1, are inadequate and insufficient in number and variety to support the ambitious plans for the curriculum. There are insufficient English language books to supplement curriculum delivery. Teachers make effective use of the materials they have. Resources for active language learning, and for exploration and investigation in science and mathematics are not sufficient. ICT resources do not fully meet the needs of students in developing of 21st century skills such as research and independent learning. There are no ICT resources in classrooms for students' use. Interactive whiteboards in classrooms are used effectively to extend language learning. PE resources give plentiful opportunities for students to develop skills in sport.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The principal and her senior team have successfully and rapidly established the clear direction and working ethos of the school. They have implemented effective strategies to improve students' behaviour. The leadership team have identified the correct priorities for improvement through the use of self-evaluation form. The school development plan rightly focuses on improving the quality of teaching and learning. The rigorous performance management system has already improved the quality of teaching. The principal rightly acknowledges that more training is needed to develop teaching further, particularly in setting targets for different groups of pupils and checking their progress in lessons. A development of the 'I can' statements into student targets will support this. At present there is no middle management structure to support the senior leadership in checking the quality of teaching and the impact of new initiatives.

Highly effective arrangements for students' welfare, health and safety are in place and are followed rigorously. The school works effectively with parents. In

discussions and from parental questionnaires the vast majority of parents say they are happy with the school and that their children are safe and well looked after. Parents receive termly reports on their children's progress. The school has a clear complaints procedure in place. Teaching staff feel well supported and say that all procedures regarding their employment in the school are in place and followed correctly. The school has effective links with outside organisations to enhance students' learning.

Capacity for further development

The principal and her team demonstrate a strong capacity to develop further. The leadership and management of the school have made a highly positive start in implementing clear policies and procedures to ensure the smooth running of the school and an improving quality of education.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - i. creating a middle management structure to develop and support core subjects
 - ii. including appropriate activities to ensure students are actively involved in their learning, particularly for boys
 - iii. providing more challenge in some lessons to develop higher order thinking skills and independent learning
 - iv. using the 'I can' statements to set targets for students' next steps in learning
 - v. providing more support in lessons for students with special educational needs or who have English as an additional language
 - vi. developing the use of pair work for language acquisition
 - vii. providing students with key vocabulary and structures before they write so that they can build on previous knowledge.
2. Improve the quality of the curriculum by:
 - i. providing resources and textbooks for core subjects to enhance students' learning
 - ii. providing further ICT resources to build essential 21st century skills.

Inspection Grades

	Band A High performing			Band B Satisfactory		Band C In need of significant improvement		
Performance Standard	Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory & Improving	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Very unsatisfactory	Poor
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Standard 1: Students' attainment and progress								
Standard 2: Students' personal development								
Standard 3: The quality of teaching and learning								
Standard 4: The meeting of students' needs through the curriculum								
Standard 5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students								
Standard 6: The quality of the school's buildings and premises								
Standard 7: The school's resources to support its aims								
Standard 8: The effectiveness of leadership and management								
Summary Evaluation: The school's overall effectiveness								