



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



Inspection Report

GEMS Winchester School

Academic Year 2014 – 2015

إقرأ

GEMS Winchester School

Inspection Date	01 – 04 March 2015
School ID#	230
Licensed Curriculum	English National Curriculum
Number of Students	909
Age Range	3 to 14 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Nigel Cropley
School Address	PO Box 38778, Abu Dhabi
Telephone Number	+971 (0)2 403 5499
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Official Email (ADEC)	gems.winchester@adec.ac.ae
School Website	www.gemswinchesterschool-abudhabi.com
Date of last inspection	28 April – 1 May 2014

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 B;

GRADE 5

The main strengths of the school are:

- teachers provide a caring and respectful environment for learning
- students have positive attitudes to learning, respect each other and behave well
- parents are pleased with communications, the care their children receive and positively support the school
- students' attainment and progress are improving.

The main areas for improvement are:

- the quality of teaching and learning, so that a higher percentage of lessons promote good or better academic progress, particularly for the more able
 - focus leadership and management on systematically and rigorously evaluating the impact teaching has on students' learning and accelerating their progress.
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Introduction

The school was evaluated by 4 inspectors. They observed 74 lessons, conducted meetings with senior staff, heads of department, support staff, students and parents. They analysed test and assessment results, scrutinised students' work, analysed the 272 responses to the parents' questionnaire and considered many of the school's policies and other documents. Senior leaders were involved throughout the process and undertook 4 joint observations with inspectors.

Description of the School

GEMS Winchester School (WSA) opened in September 2013. Its vision is: 'to inspire a passion for lifelong learning. This will enable our students to choose their successful pathway and enable them to contribute to the local and global society'. The mission is: 'WSA will provide every child with a school experience that is meaningful. We will instil the desire to learn so that children develop a deep understanding and the skills necessary for the 21st Century. We will educate every child to accept responsibilities of citizenship and develop their leadership skills by encouraging them to demonstrate entrepreneurial attitudes. It will encourage all students to: Be the best you can'.

The student population is 909; from Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to Year 9. There are 203 students in FS, 469 in Years 1 to 5, 237 in Years 6 to 9. Of the student numbers, 52% are boys, 75% are Muslim and 38% are of Arabic heritage. Students come from different nationalities: 2% are Emirati, 22% Indian, 15% Pakistani, 13% Egyptian, 7% Philippines, 5% Sudanese, 5% Jordanian and smaller proportions from other nationalities make up the remaining 31% of the student population. The school has identified 9 students as having special educational needs (SEN), with most having moderate learning difficulties; 55 require English language support and 15 are identified as gifted and talented (G&T). Admission to from Year 1 to 9 is determined by screening and assessment. An additional 300 students joined the school this academic year because of the closure of other schools.

The school follows the English National Curriculum (ENC); the Ministry of Education (MOE) curriculum is used in Arabic, Islamic education and social studies. The school uses standardised tests to assess students' aptitudes and predict their levels at the end of a Key Stage (KS). In KS 1 and KS 2 the school uses Interactive Computer Assessment System (InCAS) and in KS 3 it uses the Cognitive Abilities Test: Fourth Edition (CAT4). It uses standard assessment tests (SAT's) to validate teacher assessments.

The principal has been in post since January 2015. The leadership team comprises: the principal, vice-principal (also the head of primary), head of secondary (also the teaching and learning coach), head of EYFS/Year1 and the head of Arabic. The school has 61 teachers and turnover of 68% last year was very high. Fees range from AED 14,000 to AED 22,000 which places the school in the medium to high categories.

The Effectiveness of the School

Evaluation of the school's overall effectiveness

GEMS Winchester School has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. All aspects of the school are now at least satisfactory. Personal development; care, protection, guidance and support and; buildings and premises are satisfactory and improving. The major improvement is in students' attainment and progress, which is now satisfactory. This is the result of a sustained focus to raise the levels of students whose attainment was below age-expected ENC standards. Students are now working at age-appropriate levels across the school. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in almost all lessons across EYFS and Years 4 to 9. There is unsatisfactory teaching and learning in a majority of Year 1 to 3 lessons.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new leadership team has quickly improved staff morale, created a clear focus on accelerating school improvement and enhanced the quality and variety of communications with parents.

Students' attainment & progress

Students' attainment and progress are satisfactory. InCAS and SAT test data, combined with teacher assessments, indicate that attainment is broadly in line with international standards. Attainment and progress are satisfactory in most lessons, with students working at age-appropriate levels. Progress is better in higher year group classes in all subjects. There is inconsistency in Years 1 to 3.

Attainment and progress are satisfactory in English, mathematics, science, Arabic, Islamic education, social studies and information, communication and technology (ICT). Attainment and progress in EYFS is satisfactory. Many children's command of English is low on entering the EYFS. Students make better than satisfactory progress in the acquisition of speaking and listening skills in English. By Year 3, they are able to speak in short sentences and are fluent speakers by Year 9. They have sufficient opportunities to investigate and explore to develop their thinking skills.

In Arabic, the development of writing skills lags behind that of speaking, listening and reading. This is because there are not enough opportunities in lessons for students to write. They make better progress in Arabic in the higher grades and the least progress in grades 1 and 2. In social studies, students develop a reasonable knowledge and understanding of the geography, history and culture of the region. They are able to link this effectively to their own lives. In Islamic education, students acquire a satisfactory understanding of the required concepts and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammed (PBUH). They do not consistently and accurately apply the correct recitation rules when reading verses from the Holy Qur'an.

Students make satisfactory gains in mathematics. For example, students in grades 4 - 6 can identify and describe the properties of 3 dimensional shapes, identify equivalent fractions and find terms in a sequence. They have a solid understanding of symmetry and work well to create their own designs. Skills in science develop well in the higher grades because students gain a range of practical investigative skills. By Grade 8 in science, most students are able to organise their investigations, can organise substances, measure temperature, record their results and analyse and formulate a conclusion.

Students' acquisition of the basic skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing, numeracy, thinking and the use of ICT are satisfactory. SEN students make satisfactory progress. Support in a few lessons is insufficiently targeted. More able students make unsatisfactory progress in many lessons. The work is often too easy and provides insufficient challenge to develop their higher order skills.

Teachers undertake regular continuous assessments to monitor students' progress. These assessments are used well to identify underachieving students and make plans to help them improve. Assessment for learning is not used well in some lessons to identify students' starting points and plan differentiated activities to accelerate their progress.

Students' personal development

Students' personal development is satisfactory and improving. They have positive attitudes to learning and show respect for other students and teachers. They have good relationships with adults, feel safe and secure and enjoy coming to a friendly school. In lower primary classes, some students lose focus because learning does not always actively engage or challenge them effectively.

The UAE values, heritage and traditions are successfully promoted through the curriculum, celebrations of religious festivals, national day and assemblies. Students demonstrate appreciation of the UAE culture and heritage. They show respect for fellow students from a wide range of international backgrounds.

Students have some opportunities for leadership roles. The student council, representing Years 3 to 9 has a membership of 30, including the head boy and girl. Other opportunities include house leaders and older students mentoring younger students. There are limited opportunities for students to take on classroom leadership roles.

Living safe and healthy lives is promoted well through the delivery of the curriculum, assemblies and presentations from external organisations. Attendance is above average at 94%.

The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. It is secure in EYFS and Years 4 to 9, with almost all lessons being satisfactory or better. It is unsatisfactory in over half the lessons observed in Years 1 to 3. Classroom relationships are positive and supportive. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. Learning objectives are clear and activities are planned well, particularly in EYFS and upper year groups. Students are generally interested and enthusiastic learners. In some lessons, teaching assistants are not deployed effectively to support learning.

In the more effective lessons, which were mainly in English, mathematics and science, teachers ensure students understand the learning objectives and actively involve them in their own learning. In these lessons, students work well collaboratively and independently and the pace of learning is high. They have opportunities to develop their high order thinking and 21st Century skills. In the least effective lessons, examples of which were observed in all the core subjects, teachers often dominate and students are inactive for long periods. In some lessons, there is insufficient support and challenge for different groups of students and they are sometimes given work they already know. In Years 1 to 3, ineffective routines, insecure behaviour management and lack of activity based learning often slow the pace.

A strong continuous professional development programme, promotes a whole school approach to instruction and improved learning opportunities. New phase leaders provide in-house training and teachers comment positively on its effectiveness. As a result, a variety of strategies to stimulate learning is in evidence in many lessons. This is leading to greater opportunities for students to have ownership of their own learning, particularly in the higher age groups. The use of assessment for learning to create differentiated activities is inconsistent, with higher achieving students often being insufficiently challenged. There is evidence of high quality development of students' 21st Century skills in some lessons. It is not consistently embedded across the school.

Assessment practices are not consistently used to drive planning and learning. In the EYFS, an effective system for monitoring progress is in place. In-class assessments of children's learning are not fully developed in other phases. Some teachers set challenging learning targets that successfully guide students' in how to improve. This practice is not consistent.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The implementation of a broad and balanced curriculum provides a satisfactory programme for meeting students' needs. They are working at age-appropriate levels aligned to ENC standards. The curriculum provides effective support in developing the English language skills of the many students who arrive with limited English. The implementation of the MoE curriculum for the subjects taught in Arabic provides satisfactory continuity and support for learning.

The core curriculum is enriched by personal, social and health education (PSHE), ICT and physical education. From Year 3 onwards, specialist taught art, music and French successfully broadens students' learning opportunities. The curriculum provides satisfactory support and access for SEN students. It does not provide sufficiently challenging opportunities to meet the higher aspirations of those who are gifted and talented.

Students have access to a satisfactory range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. These include enrichment classes for students who find learning Arabic difficult and those who need more help to master reading and mathematics skills. The school has established effective links with a university in Abu Dhabi, a robotics centre, civil defence and community police to enhance students' knowledge and experiences.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

Protection, care and guidance provide satisfactory and improving support for students. The positive ethos throughout the school creates a warm and reassuring environment where students feel safe and well cared for. Class teachers for younger students, form tutors for older students and the school counsellor provide good support for students' pastoral and academic needs. Satisfactory procedures are in place for monitoring students' progress. They are used well to identify and support students whose attainment is below expected levels. They are not used effectively to challenge more able students.

There are well established routines and behaviour management strategies in EYFS and Years 4 to 9. The inconsistency in reinforcing these strategies in many lessons in Years 1 to 3 leads to some students making unsatisfactory progress. The school has a child protection policy in place and all staff fully understand their

responsibilities. There are separate prayer rooms for boys and girls. The clinic is supported by a licensed nurse and provides appropriate healthcare for students.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The buildings and facilities provide a satisfactory and improving environment. The school is spacious, well maintained, clean and safe. All classrooms are of a good size and enable students to learn in a variety of ways. The 2 science laboratories are satisfactory in providing hands-on practical learning experiences. The well-equipped ICT room enables students to adequately develop their 21st Century technology skills.

The very large sports hall is used well to create opportunities for students to experience a variety of activities. The very large open-air covered area provides students with a good space to relax and play. The library facility is small for the number and age range of students. Security is good. The main entrance gate is guarded and all visitors rigorously checked. The school carries out regular maintenance checks of all major equipment. It undertakes regular evacuation practices.

The school's resources to support its aims

Improvements in resources since the last inspection are evident in most classrooms. As a result, resources provide satisfactory support for meeting the school's aims and adequately stimulate students' learning. There are a sufficient number of qualified teachers to cover curriculum needs. A small number of teachers, although suitably qualified, do not have sufficient expertise to teach their subjects convincingly, particularly in lower-primary classes. Some teaching assistants work well in actively supporting students' learning. Their deployment in some classes is less effective.

ICT resources have increased since the last inspection, and provide greater opportunities to develop students' technology skills. The ICT room is well resourced with modern equipment; 4 banks of laptops on trolleys create useful opportunities in other areas of learning. ICT is not regularly used in the classroom by teachers to support and stimulate learning. In EYFS, children have opportunities to investigate and explore through an adequate range of resources, including access to iPads. The resources in science are sufficient. The library does not have a sufficient number or quality of books.

The school makes a satisfactory level of checks to ensure that transport meets safety and reliability requirements. There are hygienic and healthy processes for storage, preparation and consumption of food.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal, vice-principal and head of secondary have been in post for two months or less. They are in the early stages of initiating the school's improvement agenda. The school is calm and safe and runs well on a daily basis. There is a caring culture that supports students academically and socially. The GEMS organisation provides support and challenge and holds senior leaders to account effectively for meeting their goals. Their representative has regular review meetings with senior leaders to check progress in meeting key performance indicators.

The major focus of the new leadership team has been to raise staff morale and improve the attainment and progress of students. They have successfully targeted underachievement, resulting in satisfactory attainment levels in most year groups. Staff morale appears high and teachers are positive about the support offered by senior leaders. The middle leadership group have subject responsibility across the full age-range. They monitor lesson plans, review data and sample students' work. Senior and middle leaders undertake regular lesson observations. They are insufficiently focussed on the effectiveness of students' learning. There is some inconsistency in their effectiveness in making accurate judgements about the quality of classroom provision. The monitoring of the quality of learning in Years 1 to 3 is not appropriately focussed to identify key trends and intensify improvement strategies. The school has adequate processes for analysing data and identifying and planning improvements for students who achieve below expected levels. This has resulted in students' attainment and progress improving since the last inspection.

The school development plan (SDP) provides a clear focus for continuous improvement. It is well structured and targets the 8 performance standards of the self-evaluation form (SEF) to drive the improvement agenda. It is an effective working document with some measurable outcomes. They are not consistently in evidence in some development areas. The SEF is realistic and reasonably accurate. It provides useful background information and reasoning behind the judgements made. It demonstrates that senior leaders are aware of the strengths and areas for improvement. It does not provide consistent measureable evidence to support the judgements.

Parents indicate that the range and quality of communications with and from the school have improved since January. Contact with parents is regular, with weekly and more detailed monthly overviews available on the school's website. They receive useful termly academic updates, with mid-term progress meetings with teachers. The school operates an open door policy for parents and collects their

views through surveys. The Parents Relations' executive acts as a useful point of contact for complaints or queries. In the parent survey conducted for this inspection, a minority of parents indicated that they are not kept well informed about their child's progress and have concerns about the quality of teaching.

Progress since the last inspection

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Most significant is the improvement of students' attainment and progress to satisfactory levels. A middle management structure is in place and their professional development is a key focus for the senior team. A variety and range of learning activities are in evidence in many classrooms, but are not consistently effectively in accelerating students' progress. The provision for SEN and students who have English as an additional language is satisfactory. The development of students' 21st Century skills has improved in some lessons. Classroom and ICT resources have been enhanced and are being used well in some lessons to improve attainment levels.

The senior leadership team demonstrate a satisfactory and improving capacity to achieve further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that a greater proportion of lessons secure at least good progress made by students through:
 - i. the effective use of assessment for learning to create differentiated learning activities consistently aligned to students' starting points
 - ii. creating greater challenge in lessons for higher achieving students
 - iii. setting meaningful and challenging student targets to accelerate progress
 - iv. providing more opportunities for students to develop 21st Century skills, and significantly increasing activity and investigation based learning
 - v. using teaching assistants more effectively to support students' learning, in particular to support evaluation of children's progress from clear starting points in the lower primary grades
 - vi. improving teachers' in- class assessments in EYFS.
2. Improve the quality of the professional leadership and focus for supporting and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - i. concentrating lesson observations on the effectiveness of students' learning and linking professional development to the identified outcomes
 - ii. using focussed lesson observations to identify trends and measure the effectiveness of improvement initiatives
 - iii. ensuring lesson planning addresses all elements of the identified teaching and learning priorities.

Inspection Grades

Performance Standard	Band A High performing			Band B Satisfactory		Band C In need of significant improvement		
	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								