

INSPECTION REPORT

GEMS Wellington Primary School

Report published in April 2013

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT GEMS Wellington Primary School

Location	Al Satwa
Type of school	Private
Website	www.gemswps.com
Telephone	04-3433266
Address	PO Box 114652, Satwa, Dubai
Principal	Leo Spaans
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Year Groups	3-11 / Foundation Stage to Year 6
Attendance	Outstanding
Number of students on roll	1,060
Largest nationality group of Students	British
Number of Emirati students	20 (2%)
Date of the inspection	12th to 14th November 2012

Contents

The context of the school.....	3
Overall school performance 2012-2013.....	3
Key strengths	4
Recommendations	4
Progress since the last inspection	5
Trend of overall performance.....	5
How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?.....	6
How good is the students' personal and social development?	7
How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?	7
How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students?	8
How well does the school protect and support students?.....	8
How good are the leadership and management of the school?	8
How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?.....	9
How well does the school provide for Emirati students?.....	9
How good is the students' personal and social development?	10
How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?	10
How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students?	12
How well does the school protect and support students?.....	12
How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?.....	13
How good are the leadership and management of the school?	13
What are the views of parents, teachers and students?.....	15
What happens next?	16
How to contact us	16

The context of the school

Gems Wellington Primary School is a private school situated in Al Satwa. The school provided education for students from the Foundation Stage to Year 6, aged from three to 11 years.

The school followed the National Curriculum for England. The school was organised in two phases; Early Years (Foundation Stage) and primary.

At the time of the inspection there were 1,060 students on roll, including 20 Emirati students. The other students were from 72 different nationalities. Attendance levels in the last academic session were outstanding. There were 87 teachers on the staff, almost all of whom had a teaching qualification. They were supported by 48 teaching assistants, 14 specialist learning support assistants and the leadership team.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Good

Key strengths

- Children's outstanding progress in key areas of learning in the Foundation Stage;
- The students' outstanding behaviour and excellent relationships with each other and their teachers;
- The teachers' excellent contribution to promoting the ethos of the school and to ensuring the high quality of care and support enjoyed by all students;
- The school's outstanding relationships with parents which strongly supported the education of the students;
- The outstanding leadership of the principal and the senior leaders in ensuring an excellent curriculum and a fully shared commitment to school improvement by all staff.

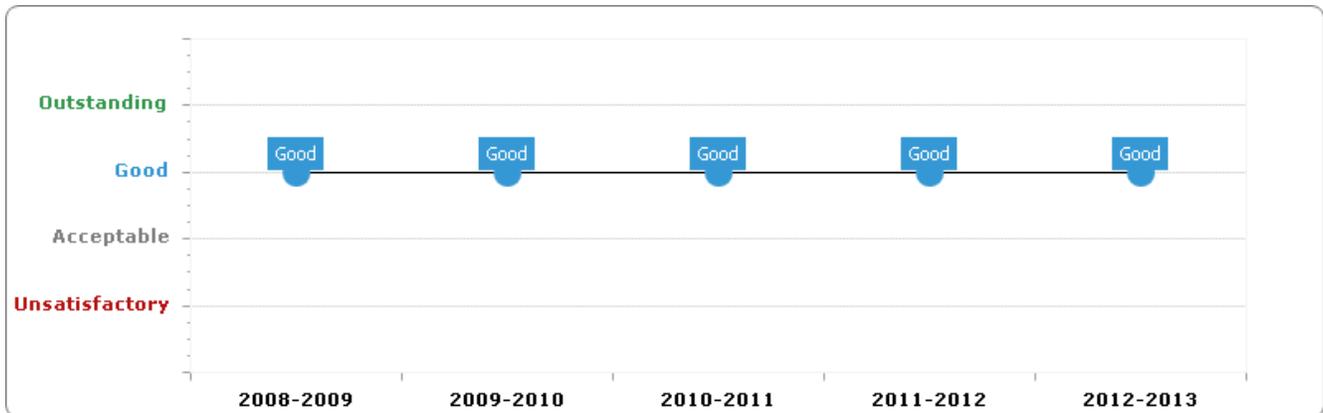
Recommendations

- Continue the acceleration of progress in Arabic as an additional language and raise attainment in Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language;
- Extend the best practice in teaching to continue to improve students' progress.

Progress since the last inspection

- Steps taken to address one of the recommendations from the last inspection to accelerate progress and raise attainment and progress in Islamic Education and Arabic were beginning to lead to notable improvements.
- The other recommendation, to enhance further teaching and learning in the key subjects and ensure that students make the best possible progress had been addressed but, as the school acknowledged, raising teaching standards across the primary phase continued to be a focus.
- The school had sustained its effectiveness in almost all areas and had improved from good to outstanding in several respects.

Trend of overall performance



How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Islamic Education		
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Good
Arabic as a first language		
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Good
Arabic as an additional language		
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable
English		
Attainment	Outstanding	Good
Progress	Outstanding	Good
Mathematics		
Attainment	Good	Good
Progress	Outstanding	Good
Science		
Attainment	Good	Good
Progress	Outstanding	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Attitudes and behaviour	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Good
Quality of students' learning	Outstanding	Good
Assessment	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students?

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Health and Safety	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of Support	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	Whole school
Quality of leadership	Outstanding
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Outstanding
Partnerships with parents and the community	Outstanding
Governance	Good
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?

Attainment in Islamic Education and Arabic was acceptable. It was good at both phases in English, mathematics and science with English in the Foundation Stage being outstanding. In Islamic Education, most students were able to explain the meanings of the required verses and had an acceptable knowledge of the prophets. In Arabic as a first language, most students had an age-appropriate knowledge of Arabic grammar and could identify the main ideas in a text. They could speak using standard Arabic, but were not independently fluent and articulate. In Arabic as an additional language, most students understood spoken words and phrases such as greetings and they could write simple words and sentences correctly. Most children in the Foundation Stage and the majority of students in primary attained above expected levels in English. However, writing skills were more variable and were weaker overall. By the end of the primary phase in mathematics most students could calculate areas of rectangles and almost all, their perimeters. In science, the majority of students had a good knowledge of scientific facts and could discuss basic scientific issues.

Progress in Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language was good and acceptable in Arabic as an additional language. In English, mathematics and science progress was outstanding in the Foundation Stage and good in primary. In Islamic Education the majority of students had improved their recitation skills and their understanding of Islamic concepts. In Arabic as a first language the majority of students had improved their writing skills, but reading for interest was still limited. In Arabic as an additional language most students had made acceptable progress, especially in their listening skills. In English in the Foundation Stage, there was strong development in listening, speaking, and reading. Upper primary, students were articulate and confident. In mathematics in the Foundation Stage the most rapid progress was in manipulating number and, in primary, progress was better in Key Stage 2 where pace and challenge were stronger. In science, by the end of primary, students had become confident in the skills of predicting, observing carefully and drawing conclusions. Students with special educational needs made good progress in English, mathematics and science, and at least acceptable progress in the key subjects.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school provide for Emirati students?

Emirati students' attainment was acceptable in all key subjects and their progress was acceptable in Arabic and English, but good in Islamic Education, mathematics and science. Attainment was only acceptable in Arabic because students did not practise Arabic enough in the daily lives. The good progress they made in mathematics and science resulted from their greater understanding of the concepts in these subjects and a lesser reliance on English skills.

Attendance was excellent. Students engaged very well in lessons and by the end of the primary phase were taking the lead in some discussions. Reports to parents were comprehensive, combining grades for attainment and progress with guidance for development. The school worked closely with parents and students on the transition to secondary schools and gave strong support and guidance. Emirati parents were closely involved with the school and stated that their opinions were sought and valued.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Attitudes, behaviour, relationships and attendance were outstanding. Students eagerly took up an extensive range of leadership positions and frequently showed initiative. Their responsible views, mainly channeled through their School Council, had significant influence on school life. Students showed excellent self-discipline and their very positive attitudes and relationships enabled them to work well with staff and fellow students. Students followed healthy lifestyles and understood the importance of diet and fitness. Students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness were good. Students showed respect for Islamic values but had limited awareness of how these values influenced Dubai life. Students enthusiastically celebrated national and cultural events. They had a good understanding of how Dubai had developed and what had influenced its success, but this was restricted to very recent history. Students had a good appreciation of their own and other cultures, illustrated by their management of a highly successful International Fair. Students' community and environmental responsibility was good in the Foundation Stage and outstanding in primary. Students raised significant sums for charities and older students, in particular, led many initiatives in the community. Students had a strong work ethic and were very resourceful and creative in developing projects. Through excellent Eco-Council initiatives, they supported sustainability and conservation. At home, students challenged their parents' understanding on environmental issues and led the way in conserving resources.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

The quality of teaching was outstanding in the Foundation Stage and good in primary. Teachers were hard-working and reflective practitioners. In the Foundation Stage, they had a good understanding of how young children learn best. In the majority of lessons, teachers clearly built understanding from one activity to the next. The majority of the teachers had good subject knowledge and effectively linked learning objectives to success criteria. Almost all teachers planned well and used a wide range of activities and resources.

Teachers had strong relationships with their students and knew them well. Teaching assistants were well trained and strongly supported class teachers. Nearly all teachers used information and communications technology well and class management was good. In the better lessons, teachers used questioning in order to develop higher order thinking skills and to challenge the more able students. The majority of teachers provided opportunities for students to investigate independently. The quality of teaching was good in other subjects. Detailed planning and encouraging students to assess their own progress were hallmarks of these lessons.

The quality of learning was outstanding in the Foundation Stage and good in primary. Almost all students were enthusiastic and fully engaged in the learning activities. They were confident to share their learning with others. Most students had good information and communications technology skills and were able to use them confidently in their learning. In the better lessons, students had good collaborative skills allowing them to support and learn from each other. They were increasingly self-reliant, knowing how best to deal with minor obstacles and how to improve further. They could think critically, building on previous learning and making connections with other areas of the curriculum. The majority of students knew how well they were doing and what to do to improve; they assumed a responsibility for their own learning.

Assessment was outstanding across the school. Most systems were thorough, although procedures were at an early stage in Islamic Education and Arabic. The tracking of student progress on an individual level was very effective. Baseline tests were used for all students joining the school. Attainment data in the key subject areas was analysed by senior staff, subject leaders and class teachers in order to monitor individual progress. The data was used to set targets and next steps in learning. Progress towards these targets was shared with the students and their parents through reports and parent conferences. The student tracking system had not been established sufficiently long enough to provide accurate overviews of progress across subjects or between year groups. Most teachers gave constructive written feedback. Teachers of younger children used familiar symbols to give feedback. The majority of students in primary were challenged to assess their own learning and that of their peers.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students?

The curriculum quality was outstanding. It had been carefully planned to ensure the breadth and balance, continuity and progression of learning. It was adapted to meet the needs of all students, notably those students with special educational needs. Regular revision of the curriculum took into account the interests of the students and suggestions made by parents resulting in interesting and relevant topics and links across all subjects. The curriculum also ensured a high quality of support for students' personal development. There were good opportunities for independent learning and research but fewer opportunities to develop higher order thinking. Transition arrangements between different phases of the school ensured that most students were well prepared for the next stage of education and the school clearly worked hard to develop and improve the transition arrangements. For example, recent changes had been implemented to meet more effectively the needs of children moving from the Foundation Stage to Year 1. Enrichment of the curriculum was strong through visitors to the school, excursions, competitions, sporting events, festivals and the good range and quality of extra-curricular activities.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

The school's arrangements for students' health, safety and security were outstanding. The careful supervision of students was reinforced by security systems, including the monitoring of school visitors. Fire drills and school bus safety were excellently managed. The cleanliness and maintenance of the buildings and the grounds were outstanding. The arrangements for the Year 4 camp taking place during the inspection clearly illustrated the rigorous safety procedures for activities and trips. Healthy living was strongly promoted in the curriculum in partnership with parents and with support from the excellent medical centre.

Support for students was excellent. There was a strong focus upon promoting students' personal and social development. Records were accurately and securely kept and attendance and punctuality were well monitored. Child protection procedures were well known by staff.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?

Students with special educational needs received a high quality of support. The admissions policy was highly inclusive and students with special educational needs were fully integrated into the school. Excellent systems and procedures identified learning needs which were included in individual education plans. These were regularly reviewed, including parental discussions, to monitor and celebrate progress. Students individual needs were well known to all relevant staff, reflected in teachers use of differentiated tasks in lessons. Learning support assistants were well trained and provided excellent care and support. The school had established positive relationships with a range of outside support agencies. These complemented the school's support, contributing to the good academic and outstanding social and personal development made by students with special needs. Parents were involved at all stages and given advice and training for working with their children at home. Parents and students also received excellent support during the transition from primary to secondary school.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership was excellent. Leaders, at all levels, shared the school's vision for improvement. The commitment to distributed leadership underpinned the significant growth in the school roll, reflected this year in the appointment of a new tier of phase leaders. Clear communication, awareness by all staff and students of what was required of them supported further development. This, complemented by improvements since the last inspection, indicated strong capacity for further improvement.

Self-evaluation was outstanding. The commonality of the self-review systems ensured consistency across phases and subjects. As well as reviewing against the last report, the school used evidence from a range of sources to assess progress. Lesson observation, staff appraisal, individual student progress, parent and student surveys and meetings were all analysed. This had led to the successful identification of areas for development. Development and action plans targeted key priorities. The school's good progress since the last inspection was underpinned by excellent analysis, even though subject leaders' interpretation of student progress data needed further support.

The school's partnership with parents was outstanding. The school had sought new ways of engaging with parents and parents confirmed how welcome they were in the school. Parents were fully informed about their children's progress. Communication with parents was of a high order with newsletters, meetings, electronic mailing, a website and, most significantly, the class blogs, which parents confirmed were much appreciated.

Reports were highly informative, combining subject grades with written guidance for further improvement. Links with the local community strongly support students' learning. Student's benefited from the links the school had developed with other schools, local community organisations and businesses.

Governance was good. The leadership team benefited from the good support of the management board. It was also able to draw on the professional development programmes of its network of schools. The management board regularly monitored the school's development and met with senior leaders to discuss progress and areas for development. This was particularly supportive as the school developed its new building and facilities which were opened at the beginning of the academic year. Stakeholder representation and involvement in key management issues was not developed to a high level.

The management of staffing, facilities and resources was excellent. The school enjoyed a high level of administration and, even though the school had expanded its student numbers, the ratio of staff to students was very good. Well-qualified staff members were well deployed and valued the opportunities for further training. Students' benefited from the high quality of displays in the school which illustrated and supported their learning. Since the last inspection the school had developed a new teaching wing and new facilities for science, arts and sport. In addition, the library had invested in an extensive stock of books for Islamic Education and Arabic.

[View judgements](#)

What are the views of parents, teachers and students?

Before the inspection, the views of parents, teachers and senior secondary students were surveyed. Key messages from each group were considered during the inspection and these helped to form judgements. A summary of the survey statistics and comments from those who responded to the survey follows:

Responses to the surveys			
Responses received	Number		Percentage
Parents	This year	220	29%
	Last year	220	26%
Teachers	73		87%
Students	There were no senior students in the school		

*The percentage of responses from parents is based on the number of families.

Just over a quarter of parents responded to the survey, a slightly higher rate than last year. Almost all the teachers responded to their surveys. Almost all parents indicated broad satisfaction with the quality of education at the school and believed that progress was good in Islamic Education, English, mathematics and science. A minority of parents indicated that progress was less than good in Arabic as a first language and a few reported that progress was not as good in Arabic as an additional language. This was confirmed in written responses. Almost all parents agreed that their children enjoyed life at the school, that teaching and learning were good and that reports were helpful. Almost all confirmed that the school was well led and that parental opinions were well heeded by the school. Almost all parents indicated that their children felt safe at school and received good care. A minority of parents felt that their children could be more involved in community projects in Dubai. Parents and teachers were positive about the education at the school and very pleased with leadership of the school.

What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an updated action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the most recent report. This plan should address:

- Recommendations from DSIB;
- Areas identified by the school as requiring improvement;
- Other external reports or sources of information that comment on the work of the school;
- Priorities arising from the school's unique characteristics.

The next inspection will report on the progress made by the school.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

How to contact us

If you have a concern or wish to comment on any aspect of this report you should contact:
inspection@khda.gov.ae

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