

# **GEMS Royal Dubai School**

## **British Schools Overseas Inspection Report**

**Inspection Date 11 – 14 November 2013**

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**Age Group: 3-11  
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This inspection report follows the English Department for Education (DfE) Schedule for the inspection of British schools overseas. The inspection was carried out by three inspectors from CfBT Education Trust who spent three days at the school. CfBT is a body approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting schools in England and overseas and quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

CfBT Education Trust is one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies, providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally. CfBT 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 must have an inspection report which shows that their 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 registered on Edubase.

Inspectors report on the extent to which schools meet the relevant Standards for British Schools Overseas. 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 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 for parents, carers and others.
7. The school's procedures for handling complaints.
8. The quality of provision for boarding.
9. Leadership and management of the school.

The purposes of the 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 the wider public of the quality of British schools overseas by placing reports in the public domain.

The BSO inspection was combined with an inspection carried out with inspectors from Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB). The DSIB inspection evaluated the school's performance when measured against the quality indicators for schools in Dubai. The outcomes of the DSIB inspection are contained within a separate report which is available from the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) in Dubai or on the website at [www.khda.gov.ae](http://www.khda.gov.ae).

### **Key for inspection grades**

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

### **Proportions used in the report**

**90–100% Vast/overwhelming majority or almost all**

**75–90% Very large majority, most**

**65–74% Large majority**

**51–64% Majority**

**35–49% Minority**

**20–34% Small minority**

**4–19% Very small minority, few**

**0–3% Almost none/very few**

## **Information about the school**

GEMS Royal Dubai School is an English National Curriculum School situated in Al Mizhar. At the time of the inspection, there were 1050 children on roll from Early Years Foundation Stage One through to Year 6, aged from three to 11 years. There are 14 classes in the Early Years Foundation Stage, 14 classes in Key Stage 1 (Years 1 to 2) and 17 classes in Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6).

The school comprises children from over 70 different nationalities including 22% British and 15% Emirati Nationals. Approximately 70% of the pupils are non-native English speakers, although less than one fifth require additional support in speaking English as an additional language. One quarter of the pupils are identified as having a special educational need ranging from learning difficulties to mild behaviour challenges, dyslexia and dyscalculia.

The school follows the English National Curriculum with external validation provided through the Standards & Testing Agency. The school is a lead school for the GEMS network for digital learning with a resident digital learning coach and an innovative approach to the use of technology including the use of social media and the provision of the very latest in cutting-edge technology.

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

This BSO inspection was carried out by three CfBT Education Trust inspectors. On this combined inspection, there were also six DSIB inspectors. The two teams contributed to a shared evidence base. In total, inspectors visited 95 lessons and observed 86 different teachers. They held meetings with the Principal, senior staff and middle leaders as well as a representative of the GEMS corporate management team. Inspectors talked with pupils in formal interviews as well as in and out of lessons. They also observed the school's work and looked at various documentation including self-evaluation, improvement plans, policy documents, assessment data, safeguarding procedures and pupils' work. Inspectors examined the results of questionnaire surveys returned by 240 parents and spoke with a small group of parents during the inspection.

## Evaluation of the school

This school provides a good quality of education for its pupils. It combines the best of British educational standards and methodology with an awareness of the local cultural and regional context. Pupils' attainment and progress compare very favourably with standards reached in British independent schools with teaching, learning and assessment which are similar to, and better than, those commonly used in schools in the UK. The ethos of the school is typically British in terms of the promotion of democracy, respect, tolerance and freedom of expression.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), children make outstanding progress towards achieving the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning. Progress is particularly strong in spoken English from attainment on entry which is well-below that typically expected for children this age, many of whom speak English as a second language. The children quickly gain confidence and become more independent as they settle into the safe and welcoming environment provided by the school. Most children can read and identify their own name card. The most able can sequence a story using picture clues and children of average ability can retell the story and provide sensible answers, indicating a good level of comprehension.

By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's attainment is above that for children of a similar age in the UK with a greater percentage exceeding the expected levels. There are particular strengths in personal, social and emotional development as well as in the expressive arts and design. In personal, social and emotional development, children are beginning to appreciate the needs of others, mix easily and share their toys and equipment. Their growing levels of independence encourage children to make choices about activities and most children work together harmoniously, often for sustained periods.

Attainment and progress in English are good across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Pupils make outstanding progress in speaking and listening, and in reading. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 broadly matches the standards expected of pupils in England at this stage. At the end of Key Stage 2, in grammar and reading, pupils are performing at above the standards achieved by pupils in England. Attainment in writing in both key stages is lower than that achieved for speaking and listening and for reading. The school is aware of this and procedures to improve writing are being implemented, but have not yet had sufficient impact.

Pupils who are new to English make rapid progress in their acquisition of language skills. Pupils are skilful in applying their English skills to cross-curricular work. They are articulate and confident speakers and demonstrate their fluency in reading complex texts. Pupils in a Year 1 class made excellent use of the outstanding library facilities to choose books. They are engrossed in their reading and able to talk about their choices. Year 6 pupils order and re-order parts of an adventure story. They are confident speakers and able to clearly explain their actions and reasoning. They read the extracts with confidence and understanding, and the more able can suggest possibilities for re-ordering to make different, but sensible, stories.

Attainment and progress in mathematics are good across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. By the end of Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils at or above expected levels of attainment in mathematics is slightly higher than the UK average, although the proportion at the higher levels is below average. Pupils build rapidly on this foundation towards the end of Key Stage 2, with the majority reaching above-average levels of attainment. School data show that almost three quarters of pupils reach above expected levels, by the end of Key Stage 2. This represents good progress overall from their individual starting points.

This good progress in mathematics is confirmed by standards seen in lessons and in pupils' work. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 6 reach well-above average standards in their understanding of work on angles, area and perimeter. They confidently work together to tackle problems involving the area of complex shapes. Performance of Year 5 (international grade 4) pupils on the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) tests was significantly above the Dubai average and in line with other private schools teaching a UK curriculum. Development of knowledge, understanding and skills is additionally encouraged through whole-school participation in events such as 'World Maths Day' and the 'Middle East Maths Challenge' as well as through interactive teaching software focused on problem solving and linked to real-life examples.

In science, across the primary phase, attainment is good and progress is outstanding. In Key Stage 1, most pupils know what plants need to grow. They have an emerging understanding of scientific enquiry and they make predictions about what might happen in different conditions. They carry out investigations and record

their methods in pictorial form. They have a breadth of knowledge and understanding of the characteristics of living things and can classify types of animals. By the end of Year 2, most pupils can carry out a fair test with some help, and they are beginning to recognise and explain what makes these fair.

As pupils move through the primary years, their understanding of a fair test deepens and, by Year 6, most pupils can plan and carry out a scientific investigation following scientific methods and can record their findings using a variety of formats. They formulate their own questions and predictions. They understand the need for a control and variables, for example when measuring the effect of exercise on heart rate and when carrying out an investigation to prove Galileo's theory of friction and air. They are beginning to suggest improvements to their methodology.

Achievement in other subjects is usually of a high standard. In French, pupils make good progress in their understanding of the text and the acquisition of vocabulary but do not have enough opportunities to practise their speaking skills. Physical education lessons demonstrate high levels of attainment and progress. For example, in swimming lessons, pupils act as coaches for others, helping them to improve their style and efficiency. Art work is commendable because teachers are specialists in their subjects and have high expectations. They provide pupils with a range of media to develop their talents and discover their creativity.

The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and fully covers the Early Years Foundation Stage learning and development requirements and the National Curriculum content for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. As a result, pupils are able to enter, or re-enter, the UK educational system. There is a strong emphasis on spoken language and literacy through role play, talk partners, active debate and the use of guided reading and writing. Numeracy skills are developed through their application to real-life situations and problem solving. Pupils of all abilities and those new to speaking English have very good access to the curriculum through personalised programmes and the active use of technology.

Teaching is good across the school. Most teachers know their subjects and their pupils very well, and understand how pupils learn best through play and practical activities. All teachers treat their pupils with respect and value them as individuals. They challenge pupils to aim high from their starting points, although this is inconsistent, especially in Arabic. Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress and give constructive feedback on how to improve their work. They use tests and ongoing assessment very thoroughly to plan lessons that meet pupils' individual needs. Pupils are also used to evaluating their own progress and that of their peers against the success criteria such as those contained in their 'learning journals' which detail curriculum content against National Curriculum levels.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils' knowledge of British heritage is actively supported by the school through lessons, displays and enrichment activities. The school promotes pupils' knowledge and understanding of life in the UK very well. A strongly positive ethos permeates all aspects of school life. Attitudes are outstanding. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils are polite, friendly, courteous and respectful towards adults and each other. Pupils willingly participate in lessons and the broader range of school activities on offer. Attendance is good; pupils enjoy school and want to come to school regularly.

The welfare, health and safety of pupils are outstanding. Policies, procedures and practices for health and safety and for safeguarding pupils are comprehensive and comply with the requirements of KHDA as well as reflecting the best of British practice. Relationships between pupils and teachers and amongst the pupils themselves are particular strengths, ensuring that pupils feel safe and supported. The premises and accommodation are outstanding. They support the learning needs of all pupils, reflecting the very best of practice which would be seen in the UK. Resources are plentiful and the library is very impressive. Facilities for science, technology, sports and the arts are excellent.

The quality of the leadership and management of the school is outstanding. The Principal, supported by his capable senior staff and enthusiastic middle leaders, has a clear vision for the school and the school's development. Leadership roles are very well considered and leaders have a clear understanding of their individual and collective responsibilities. Self-evaluation and improvement planning are good. The school knows itself well and priorities arising from self-evaluation, supported by external inspection, inform improvement planning. There is good capacity to improve.

Links with parents and the community are outstanding. The quality of governance is good and there are highly effective working relationships between governors and parents, although school policies, complaints procedures and academic performance are not provided via the school's website. The management of staffing, facilities and resources is outstanding. The majority of staff are British trained and qualified which enables them to teach the UK curriculum confidently and prepare pupils well in relation to the UK curriculum. Resources, including the provision of technology, are a particular strength and all subjects make use of a range of quality resources including up-to-date information and communications technology (ICT) equipment.

**As a result of this inspection, undertaken during November 2013, the school has demonstrated that it meets the Standards for British Schools Overseas. This judgement is endorsed by the British Government, quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and is valid for a period of three years.**



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

The curriculum is good. It is planned and organised to enrich the pupils' experience and to help them to succeed as positive, responsible people who can exercise independent judgment and cooperate with others while developing essential skills. It achieves these aspirations at a very high level. The curriculum is broad and balanced and fully covers the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum content for Key Stages 1 and 2. As a result, pupils are able to enter, or re-enter, the UK educational system with ease. The curriculum is not outstanding because, although the school had made improvements to the curriculum in Arabic, it does not yet fully meet local requirements.

There is a very good balance between developing subject knowledge and developing generic skills such as research and enquiry through cross-curricular links. These links are carefully planned and enable pupils to apply their knowledge and skills in different contexts. The curriculum provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop thinking skills, solve problems and apply skills in meaningful contexts to which they can relate. There is a strong emphasis on spoken language and literacy through role play, talk partners, active debate and the use of guided reading and writing. The 'accelerator reader programme' enhances the reading curriculum and contributes significantly to pupils' outstanding progress in reading in Key Stage 2. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special education needs and those new to speaking English have very good access to the curriculum through personalised programmes and the use of technology.

Personal, social and health education permeates the curriculum through discrete subjects, relevant topics and assemblies. Pupils' experiences are widened further through a comprehensive social studies' programme which celebrates cultural diversity. In addition, the creative curriculum provides pupils with a wealth of opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of different aspects of adult life. This understanding is supported through guest speakers, community events, leading assemblies and contributing to the school development plan. Numeracy skills are developed through their application to real-life situations and problem solving.

The curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage is imaginatively interpreted to meet the needs of young children from a range of nationalities and stages of development. The assiduous use of data to track pupils' performance helps ensure that all pupils make progress. The curriculum in the primary phase ensures continuity and progression of learning. It is adapted to meet the pupils' stage, rather than age, of development. Throughout the primary phase, pupils have ample opportunities to develop their thinking skills by asking questions, making hypotheses and predictions, investigating and evaluating their findings.



The curriculum is reviewed regularly and systematically to monitor the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding and to rectify any identified gaps. Recent reviews have led to improvements in the assessment and moderation of writing so that progression is more clearly identified. The digital curriculum has been improved and an interactive Arabic language programme has been implemented in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The curriculum is enriched through an outstanding programme of extra-curricular activities. Special celebrations at the end of topics enhance learning experiences for pupils and promote parental engagement. The combined effect of this outstandingly creative curriculum helps pupils to succeed as positive and responsible people in line with the aims of the school.

The quality of teaching is good overall and outstanding in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teaching improves throughout the primary phase. A minority of teaching in the primary phase is outstanding with a significant number of good lessons having some outstanding features. This is especially the case in science and mathematics and in some non-core subjects such as art and physical education. Most teachers know their subjects and their pupils very well and understand that pupils, and young children especially, learn best through play and practical activities. Teachers use assessment data to plan interesting and exciting activities which are usually well matched to the full range of abilities, cultural backgrounds, learning styles and stages of development.

Priority is given in most lessons to speaking, listening to and reading in English. Teachers usually challenge pupils to aim high from their starting points, although this is sometimes inconsistent, especially in Arabic. All teachers treat their pupils with respect and value them as individuals. They use a variety of strategies and resources, including technology, to engage and motivate pupils. Teachers' skills in questioning are very effective in most lessons as teachers assess pupils' understanding and promote higher order and creative thinking. Teachers allow time for pupils to reflect, consider and discuss their responses with their peers. Consequently, pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and highly developed learning skills. They are inspired with confidence.

Older pupils understand that taking risks is part of the learning process. For example, they have a very good understanding of making predictions in science which may be disproven after investigation. Even the youngest pupils grow in confidence as they try new things. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage develop their observational skills and their understanding of the concept of change, for example when making and baking pizzas. In most lessons, pupils collaborate very well and productively in mixed-ability groups to debate issues, solve problems and make connections between their learning and the real world. On occasions, this hampers the progress of more-able pupils who are not sufficiently challenged, for example in writing in English.

Teachers assess pupils' progress and give constructive feedback on how to improve. Pupils also evaluate their own progress and that of their peers against given success criteria such as that contained in their 'learning journals' which detail curriculum content against National Curriculum levels. With help, they assess their own progress towards their targets. Teachers' planning for subsequent lessons is adapted to reinforce and consolidate pupils' learning. At regular intervals, the leaders of each year group discuss the progress of groups and individuals and agree the best means of support and intervention to improve progress. Samples of pupils' work are regularly moderated within year groups, across phases and across the GEMS network of schools. Assessment procedures are now sufficiently accurate in measuring pupils' progress from their individual starting points and, especially, that of newcomers to the school.

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

Pupils' personal development and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Displays and school activities ensure that pupils' knowledge of public institutions and services in the United Arab Emirates is developing well. Pupils of all ages demonstrate a positive approach to their responsibilities as members of the school community. Older pupils act as excellent role models for younger children. They demonstrate initiative as members of the school council where, for example, they contribute to the pupils' section of the school development plan, lead weekly assemblies, and prepare weekly certificates. The appointment of champions in each subject provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop self-confidence, practise leadership skills and support other pupils in meeting their targets. One champion said that it had been a valuable learning experience and he had developed a better understanding of self-assessment as well as improving his communication skills.

Teachers model the desired behaviours they wish to instil in pupils by treating all members of the school community with respect. Pupils' achievements are celebrated and rewarded in class and school assemblies which boosts their self-esteem and helps them to recognise their own achievements and the achievements of others. Most pupils know what to do when conflict arises and how to resolve it, applying their critical-thinking skills and forming their own opinions as to what actions to take. They understand right from wrong and are keen advocates for fairness and justice. They report that there is no bullying but would know where to seek help should it occur. Attendance and punctuality are good. Pupils enjoy school and want to come.

Pupils have a strong understanding of the different cultures represented in the school. They describe, in detail, their countries of origin and enjoy the benefits of living in a culturally diverse community. The school actively supports pupils' knowledge of the values of Islam and the history of the United Arab Emirates. Pupils understand the different backgrounds and the major traditions represented in the school and can name major festivals. They show empathy to other as evidenced in

their charitable contributions and their fundraising projects to support a school in Kenya. During the inspection, an Emirati pupil was deeply moved by the recent typhoon in the Philippines and immediately started making plans to raise funds to help the victims in the days immediately following the disaster.

Pupils are very aware of local and global environmental issues. Almost all pupils see themselves as 'eco-warriors' and contribute to the various recycling initiatives in the school. There is a strong conservation element in the science curriculum and pupils have developed a very good understanding of environmental issues. Several pupils commented on Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum's quote that 'My grandfather rode a camel, my father rode a camel, I drive a Mercedes, my son drives a Land Rover, his son will drive a Land Rover, but his son will ride a camel.' They fully understood the implications of his remarks and appreciated that natural resources are finite and needed to be preserved.

The school promotes pupils' knowledge and understanding of modern British life in relation to social issues and the values of tolerance, democracy, and respect for freedom of expression. These values are at the heart of school life and are reinforced on a daily basis. For example, on Remembrance Day, pupils of different nationalities and religions, including the very youngest, observed the two minute silence and behaved with reverence and respect.

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

The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are outstanding. All staff take very seriously their duty of care for the pupils. Policies and procedures for health and safety and for safeguarding pupils are comprehensive and comply with the requirements of KHDA as well as reflecting the best of British practice. They are monitored, regularly reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure their ongoing effectiveness and make sure they are aligned with guidance from the British Government.

Relationships between pupils and teachers and amongst the pupils themselves are built on mutual trust and respect. Almost all pupils enjoy school because they feel valued and are treated as individuals. They make good friends and so grow in confidence and self-esteem. They are free from bullying and know who to speak to should they have a problem. Discrimination is not tolerated and equality of opportunity is promoted in line with schools in the UK. Older pupils are very good role models for the younger ones. Safeguarding is actively promoted and all staff have received training for child protection. High levels of supervision prevail at all times and especially during swimming sessions.

The positive approach to managing behaviour is very effective and pupils are self-disciplined and conduct themselves well when moving around the school. Newcomers settle quickly and even the youngest children know the expectations for behaviour and follow well-rehearsed routines within just a few weeks of starting school. Surveys of pupils' views confirm that they feel safe and secure at all times. Almost all parents confirm that their children are safe in school and when they travel on the school buses.

Risk assessments are carried out and records of accidents indicate that these are rare and invariably of a minor nature. Evacuation plans are effectively rehearsed and evaluated. The school nurse is effective in monitoring health and in promoting healthy lifestyles. The cafeteria offers healthy snacks and meals and food is stored and served appropriately. Pupils with ongoing health issues have an individual care plan. There are sufficient adults with paediatric first aid qualifications and poolside emergency certificates. A qualified counsellor provides support for pupils' emotional well-being.

The approach to safeguarding is robust and the school keeps detailed records of all checks completed in respect of staff and volunteers who currently work at the school or who have worked at the school since the date of the last inspection. Safeguarding procedures are extremely effective with a policy which is a model of best practice in terms of guidance and clarity. Staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities. All staff are provided with regular updates. The Vice-Principal of the school is the designated officer and she is committed to her role and determined to model good practice. Parents and volunteers sign a self-disclaimer and all of them are suitably supervised so that they are not alone with pupils out of the sight of staff.

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

All teaching staff, including volunteers, have appropriate checks carried out to confirm their identity, previous employment and professional references. GEMS corporate support services support the school well in ensuring that all the required checks are in place including a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for all UK citizens and equivalent police checks for other nationalities. Scrutiny of records confirms that staff have the right to work in Dubai and that they are suitable to work with children. Volunteers are carefully checked and supervised at all times.

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

The premises and accommodation are outstanding. They are purpose-built and support the learning needs of all pupils following a twenty-first century, UK-based curriculum. The learning spaces, both indoors and outdoors, are sufficient in size and number for the number of pupils on roll. The facilities have been upgraded and extended as the school population has increased. Classrooms are bright, airy and orderly and displays contribute to an attractive and interactive learning environment.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have easy access to shaded outdoor learning areas to enable free-flow and choice in the curriculum. Furniture and fittings are suited to the size and age of the pupils and allow for flexibility in classroom organisation and learning styles. Resources are plentiful and of a high quality to enhance learning. All classrooms have projectors and interactive whiteboards. The library stock is very impressive and offers a wide range of reading materials to suit all tastes and to support learning in all subjects. There is ample storage space. Facilities for science, technology, sports and the arts are excellent and used to maximum effect. Washrooms are sufficient for the number of pupils. They are regularly cleaned and provide suitable washing facilities.

All areas are maintained to a high standard and are clean and hygienic. Pupils are proud of their surroundings and play their part by keeping it litter free and tidy. Site security is well-managed. There is sufficient access to facilitate efficient evacuation in an emergency and systems, procedures and equipment are checked regularly and maintained in safe working order. Appropriate signage points to emergency exits are in place. Facilities for pupils who are sick are appropriate and the school nurse is very effective. Easy access would be difficult if there were to be any pupils with a physical disability on the school's roll.

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

The school provides parents with excellent information through the website, through documentation when they join the school and via regular updates and newsletters. Information regarding the school, including contact details, is also provided on the school website. This also has details of the corporate body which oversees the school, including contact details. Particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year and the complaints' procedure adopted by the school are available on request but not on the website.

The school employs a dedicated parental relations executive (PRE) who is solely focused on building the link between parents and school. She provides exceptional support and guidance for parents on all aspects of school life. She is also responsible for providing particulars of educational and welfare provision for disabled pupils and those with learning difficulties and for pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school additionally employs a dedicated Arabic and Islamic liaison officer, who is also available to both parents and staff as a resource and key link to these departments.

All parents are provided with an annual written report on the progress and attainment of their child. The document covers all subjects and includes detailed statements on children's work as well as National Curriculum levels and targets for improvement. Parents comment very favourably on the high quality of the information they received on joining the school. They are well aware of who to contact should the need arise and give many examples of how successful communication is with the school.

Parents are particularly impressed with how quickly staff members respond if they raise a query or a concern.

The prospectus offers much detail on facilities and resources as well as the school curriculum. It gives considerable emphasis to how parents can be involved in the life of the school including the Friends of the Royal Dubai School (FORDS) which organises an extensive range of social events and fundraising activities as well as actively supporting the school through their involvement in classes and trips out. The prospectus is supplemented by regular information updates and very detailed newsletters. All key information documents are clearly written and are available as hard copy, written in both Arabic and English, in order to make them accessible to all parents.

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

The school meets all of the requirements for this standard. The school has secure procedures for dealing with complaints that meet both local requirements and reflect best practice in the UK. The school has a detailed complaints' policy on procedure that is transparent, open and effective, having regard to local circumstances. If parents are not satisfied with the response to a written complaint, there is provision to escalate the complaint for consideration by an independent person to the school's management. Parents are kept well informed about the process through school documents and parental liaison staff. The school's records indicate that complaints are rare and almost all concerns are dealt with informally. At their meeting with inspectors, parents confirmed that any concerns or complaints made to the school are dealt with promptly and fairly.

## **Standard 8. The quality of provision for boarding**

Not applicable

## **Standard 9. Leadership and management of the school**

The quality of leadership of the school is outstanding. The Principal, supported by his capable senior staff and enthusiastic middle leaders has a clear vision for the school's development. Leadership was identified in the last DSIB report as a key strength with strong capacity for making further improvements. Further improvements have been forthcoming but have yet to fully impact on outcomes. Senior leaders are highly qualified and experienced. Leadership roles are very well considered so that leaders at all levels understand their role in promoting high levels of academic and personal development. Leaders at all levels have a clear understanding of their



individual and collective responsibilities. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has been particularly successful in raising achievement and improving teaching.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning are good. The school knows itself well and priorities arising from self-evaluation supported by external inspection inform improvement planning and comprehensive school and department development plans. There is a good system for reviewing school effectiveness which includes contributions from middle leaders so that their action plans contribute to the overall school improvement priorities. Regular reviews of staff performance making use of a range of indicators, including achievement of pupils and quality of teaching, are used well to identify individual and whole-school training needs.

Lesson observations are undertaken regularly to give the school a secure benchmark for improvement and to identify professional development needs which are mostly provided for within the school through peer observation and support. The new method of evaluating the quality of lessons has given a much greater emphasis to the importance of learning and this, in turn, has improved the focus of what happens in lessons. The school's use of information on pupils' progress had improved but is not yet refined enough to chart individual pupils' progress to see what value the school adds during their time at the school.

Links with parents and the community are outstanding. Parents like the 'family' feel of the school and liaison between home and school is supported well through the parental relations executive and an Arabic and Islamic liaison officer. Consultation arrangements ensure that parents' views help the school to improve. Links with other GEMS schools are beneficial. Links with the local and wider community are reflected in the school's broad curriculum. Information for parents is of excellent quality and is readily available to them. The school responds rapidly to any queries or concerns.

The quality of governance is good. Governors play an influential role in the school's development and they regularly monitor the school's activities, although their checking of the school's self-evaluation is not sharp enough. Financial management and accountability are strong. Governors know the school well and provide the school with support and challenge in equal measures. There are highly effective working relationships with the school and its Principal. The views of parents are regularly sought and acted upon, although governance does not include a wide representation of stakeholders on the board.

The management of staffing, facilities and resources is outstanding. Roles are explicit and procedures well established. Rigorous staff selection ensured that capable staff are appointed and are supported well through performance review and training. Staff, such as the year-group leaders, are very well deployed for maximum impact on important areas. The majority of staff are British trained and qualified which enables them to teach the UK curriculum with confidence. They prepare pupils

well in relation to the UK curriculum and this allows pupils to enter or re-enter the UK education system with ease.

High-quality management procedures ensure that the school functions smoothly. Resources, including the provision of technology, are a particular strength. The premises are extremely well presented and continue to be upgraded and maintained. The school's vibrant learning atmosphere is supported by extensive displays of pupils' work. All subjects draw on a wide range of high-quality resources including up-to-date ICT equipment and an emphasis on the very latest technology. The school has a wide range of facilities including a dance studio, a swimming pool and extensive sporting facilities.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

Royal Dubai School fully meets the requirements for British Schools Overseas.

## **What the school could do to improve further**

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

- Continue to raise the quality of teaching and assessment to the level of the best.

## 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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### The quality of provision for boarding

Not applicable				
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### Leadership and management

Overall effectiveness of leadership and management	✓			
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## School details

<b>Name of school</b>	<b>GEMS Royal Dubai School</b>
<b>Type of school</b>	<b>International School</b>
<b>Date school opened</b>	<b>September 2005</b>
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	<b>3 – 11</b>
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	<b>935</b>
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	<b>FS1 AED 31438    FS2 – Grade 6 AED 39639</b>
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>
<b>Address of school</b>	<b>PO Box 121310 Dubai UAE</b>
<b>Telephone number</b>	<b>04 288 6499</b>
<b>Email address</b>	<b>principal_rds@gemsedu.com</b>
<b>Head teacher</b>	<b>Kevin Loft</b>
<b>Proprietor</b>	<b>GEMS Education</b>

## **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 CfBT

**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.

**CfBT Education Trust** – CfBT is 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 CfBT 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 CfBT Education 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 CfBT Education 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. CfBT 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

CfBT 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.

CfBT 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. CfBT Education Trust has been successful in bidding for the recent tender to manage inspection services on behalf of the office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted). CfBT is currently responsible for delivering inspection services in schools (both maintained and independent), the learning and skills sector and initial training education.

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