

Gems Wellington International School

British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

20 January – 23 January 2014

Lead Inspector

Mike Hewlett

Team Members

Margaret Houston
Sally Iane

Age Group: 3-18

Report published: March 2014

Report Reference no: 1014

Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection report follows the English Department for Education (DfE) Schedule for the inspection of British schools overseas. The inspection was carried out by three inspectors from CfBT Education Trust who spent four 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 DSIB (Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau). 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 KHDA (Knowledge and Human Development Authority) in Dubai.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1 Outstanding

Grade 2 Good

Grade 3 Satisfactory

Grade 4 Inadequate

Proportions used in the report

90–100%	Vast/overwhelming majority or almost all
75–90%	Very large majority, most
65–74%	Large majority
51–64%	Majority
35–49%	Minority
20–34%	Small minority
4–19%	Very small minority, few
0–3%	Almost none/very few

Information about the school

Established in 2005, GEMS Wellington International School is a private, multicultural day school. At the time of the inspection, there were 2376 pupils on roll aged from three to 18 years. The school has identified that 200 pupils have some form of special educational need, including those with particular gifts and talents.

The school comprises pupils of 91 different nationalities and provides a rich cultural diversity. The majority of pupils have United Kingdom (UK) backgrounds and 46 pupils are Emirati nationals. The teachers are well qualified with the majority being UK trained. The school states that 'central to everything we do....is a focus on the development of the independent, flexible learner who is fully prepared for advanced study and work with the ever changing demands of the twenty-first century'.

The school follows the English National Curriculum, supplemented by the International Primary Curriculum and adapted to meet the needs of its international pupils. Pupils are presented for GSCE examinations at the end of the secondary phase (Key Stage 4) and for the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (at the end of the post-16 phase (Key Stage 5)).

In 2013, almost all students in Year 13 who left the school moved on to higher education. The majority moved on to universities in the UK, with America, Canada and Australia among the other destinations.

Currently, the school has full membership of a number of organisations including the Council of International Schools (CIS).

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 10 DSIB inspectors. The two teams contributed to a shared evidence base. In total, inspectors visited 133 lessons. They held 50 meetings including those with the Principal and other school leaders, staff and parents and a representative of the GEMS corporate management team. Inspectors talked with pupils in formal interviews, in lessons and as they met them around the school. Inspectors also observed the work of the school and looked at self-evaluation, improvement plans, policies, assessment and tracking systems, safeguarding procedures and pupils' work. Inspectors examined the results of questionnaire surveys returned by parents and pupils and followed up on issues that were raised.

Evaluation of the school

GEMS Wellington International is an outstanding school. Pupils experience a 'British-style education' while celebrating the diversity of cultures represented in the school.

Pupils' attainment in subjects across the school is outstanding and almost all make rapid progress from their starting points.

In Key Stage 5 (sixth form) an increasing number of students are taking IB diploma programmes at the higher levels and results are improving. A similar picture is found at both Key Stage 4 where pupils sit their IGCSE examinations and at Key Stage 2. At both key stages, pupils' performance significantly exceeds UK and world averages.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make excellent progress towards achieving the Early Learning Goals. By the time they move to Year 1 most are exceeding the standards expected for their age. They are especially successful in improving their language and personal and social skills. In English, they develop excellent speaking skills. They quickly learn to recognise letters and to understand the sounds they represent. They can print letters, short words and attempt extended sentences. A similar picture is found in mathematics where children are able to recognise numbers and shapes, undertake simple calculations and, importantly, use and apply the skills they have learned. For example, in a Foundation 2 classroom, children confidently use the 'Arabic Café' set up in the play corner to devise a menu for their friends and then work out what to 'charge' them for the food and drink on offer.

Attainment in English is outstanding across all key stages. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve consistently high levels compared with those in UK schools. In the primary school by the end of Year 6, over 40% of pupils achieved a level 5 in 2013. Pupils continue to score highly at GCSE and in the IB where results at the higher levels compare very favourably with similar international schools.

Pupils are attentive in lessons and work willingly and enthusiastically. They enjoy lessons and participate readily, whether working individually or in groups. They cooperate wholeheartedly with the teachers, as was seen when Year 2 had fun catching and reading connective words on a balloon and subsequently using them in sentences. Pupils rise to the challenges and to the high expectations of teachers. Year 6 create impressive sentences using figurative language and Year 7, when designing advertisements, showed analytical and organisational skills useful for learning in other subjects. Pupils of all ages engage in discussions eagerly and discuss issues confidently and most are able to present their ideas lucidly and intelligently. Across the school, pupils read and enjoy a wide variety of texts, gradually learning how to analyse and appreciate literature.

From their earliest years, pupils develop good writing skills. Year 1 write short sentences sequencing pictures to tell a story. Later, pupils join sentences together to form short essays, learn how to write plays as well as stories. By Year 6, pupils construct complex sentences using subordinate clauses and descriptive language. In this way pupils develop valuable language skills that enable them to proceed into the secondary school and further develop their writing ability. Year 7 displayed significant sensitivity in their poems. By Year 12, English students have developed a sophisticated, mature style suitable for both literary and factual writing.

Attainment and progress in mathematics are outstanding in almost all phases. The exception is Key Stage 5 where attainment is above average and improving. IB students in this key stage demonstrate an increasing understanding of the complexities and challenges found in studying mathematics at this level. For example, handling the combined exercises requiring the application of skills from many topics. Past performance shows that students' average points score in mathematics higher level, standard level and studies are beginning to exceed world averages. The current work of some of the most able students suggests they are likely to reach the top grades.

At IGCSE, pupils' performance is exceptionally strong with pupils achieving examination results that are consistently well above both UK and international standards. For example, in 2013, 95% of pupils achieved an A*-C grade in mathematics. The school has a strong tradition of successful 'early entries' to the examinations. These then enable pupils to pursue other courses which prepare them well for the IB courses that they choose to follow.

Results for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, confirm that pupils are exceeding UK standards by a significant percentage with year-on-year improvements. An increasing number of pupils are reaching level 6.

Across the key stages, pupils' attainment is supported by strong computational skills, an ability to persevere, collaborate on investigations and to use and apply their knowledge in practical situations. Good examples of these were seen in a Year 6 class where pupils were using their knowledge of percentages to calculate where to shop in the Mall. In a Year 11 class, pupils made good use of their understanding of a topic to 'teach' other members of the group.

Attainment in science is outstanding in all phases. Pupils are encouraged to design and plan their own experiments to investigate and can make predictions using scientific language as early as Year 1.

At all key stages, pupils perform consistently and significantly above the UK national average. In Key Stage 2, level 5 was achieved by 56% of pupils compared to 36% in

the UK and, at Key Stage 3, 51% of pupils achieved level 7 compared to 28% in the UK. In GCSE additional science, 89% of pupils gained A*-C grades compared to 64% in the UK, 50% of these grades were at A*-A compared to 12% in the UK. Results were equally as good in IGCSE triple science compared to the Edexcel world average. Students take the IB in post 16; 75% of these students achieved a level 5 or higher which again is well above world averages for all three science subjects.

A similarly positive picture of attainment and progress is seen in a range of other subjects across the curriculum. For example, in IB examinations for 2013, students achieved level 7 in 13 different subject areas.

Pupils make outstanding progress across the school because teachers rigorously track their progress against challenging targets and intervene as necessary to help pupils improve. Pupils in Key Stages 4 and 5 are given opportunities to challenge themselves to work at high levels using enquiry and research skills in a variety of contexts and are capable of solving complex problems. In primary, investigation is linked to topic work and special science days such as Year 5's astronomy day facilitate this learning outstandingly well. In Key Stage 3, pupils are motivated by forensic investigations into blood spatters and learn about the importance of controlling variables.

Attainment and progress at GWIS are supported through an outstanding curriculum which is well designed and takes full account of UK expectations. It caters exceptionally well for the needs of all pupils including those identified as having additional needs. This group of pupils makes excellent progress from their starting points. Consequently, the school provides pupils with a range of courses and experiences that will prepare them well for a transfer to a British school. An excellent range of extra-curricular activities as well as a comprehensive careers guidance programme prepares pupils well for life beyond academic courses.

The school judged its teaching and pupils' learning to be outstanding and this is verified by the inspection. Excellent subject knowledge and highly motivated teachers help to bring subjects 'alive'. As a result, pupils are keen to learn and ready to respond positively to the many opportunities to work collaboratively which are on offer. Assessments of pupils' progress are strong and regular but there are some gaps. For example, assessment of children's performance in relation to the Early Learning Goals needs to be tightened so that it provides an accurate picture of the levels at which pupils should be working when they start in Year 1.

Pupils' behaviour and their spiritual, moral and social development are outstanding. Pupils show an excellent attitude of care towards one another. For example, among their other responsibilities, prefects regard their role as ensuring younger pupils are kept 'safe and happy'. Throughout the school, pupils have a very good knowledge of both British and Dubai cultures.

The welfare, health and safety of all pupils are given the highest priority and the provision is excellent. Parent and pupils comment favourably on how well pupils are cared for and appreciate the high quality of information that they receive. The school is responsive to parents' views and makes changes where possible. Improvements to traffic flow around the school are a good example of this. Accommodation is bright, attractive and well maintained.

Excellent leadership of the school by the Principal is a key feature in its success. He is ably supported by Vice Principals and leaders at all levels. Indeed, the empowerment of leaders at all levels, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, has resulted in a dynamic school where decision making is not restricted by structures or hierarchies. This helps to explain why there is an excellent capacity to improve still further.

As a result of this inspection, undertaken during January 2014, 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 quality of the curriculum is outstanding. The curriculum policy leads to detailed departmental and lesson plans. The curriculum is reviewed every five weeks and adapted to meet pupils' needs fully.

All pupils from the earliest years follow a programme which is broad and balanced, offering many opportunities for academic as well as artistic, creative and sporting activities. An outstandingly rich extra-curricular programme for all ages enriches pupils' experience. The curriculum is fully aligned with the British system and successfully prepares pupils for Common Entrance, GCSE, IGCSE, BTEC and the International Baccalaureate. All pupils are therefore well set to transfer directly into British schools at an appropriate level.

Courses are delivered in English and suited to pupils' age and aptitudes. Basic skills developed in the primary school lay firm foundations for secondary school success. Pupils with special educational needs are scrupulously identified and work is personalised for them. Gifted pupils are challenged by extension work and, for example, opportunities to coach primary pupils. Careful planning enables subject links to be forged so that, for example, English and mathematical skills support other curriculum areas.

An excellent personal, social and health education programme reflects the school's values and promotes pupils' personal development. Pupils follow this course

throughout school until, in Year 12, it becomes a 'careers, action and service' programme. This imaginatively designed course enables pupils to reflect on a wide variety of relevant issues and to develop ethical, responsible attitudes and practical skills.

Pupils begin a structured careers guidance programme in Year 8 which helps them make sensible career choices. This is complemented by work experience in Year 10 and advice on university applications in Year 12. Valuable support enables 100% of pupils to gain entry to universities worldwide, most to institutions of their first choice.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding, resulting in pupils making outstanding progress across English National Curriculum subjects. A positive and stimulating learning environment, where pupils want to succeed, is created by skilled teachers who are enthusiastic, have excellent subject knowledge and know the needs of individual pupils extremely well. This results in carefully planned lessons with a variety of challenging and exciting activities and investigations that engage all pupils and enable them to fulfil their potential.

Clear learning intentions and success criteria allow pupils to understand what they are learning and to set their own targets. Evidence of challenge throughout most lessons is seen in effective questioning that encourages pupils to think more deeply, and the insistence on the use of appropriate vocabulary. For example, in a Year 1 science lesson, pupils had to use predictions to think carefully about what they would expect to happen to different materials and whether they were waterproof.

High-quality questioning also developed pupils' deep critical thinking and debating skills in Year 12 chemistry when pupils had to analyse reasons for discrepancies in experiments. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the development of critical thinking and enquiry skills is especially obvious during 'free-flow' mathematics and science activity sessions. As a consequence of this challenge, pupils make rapid gains in their learning.

Pupils are enthusiastic and motivated learners keen to answer and ask questions to develop their understanding. This is enhanced by the excellent relationships between teachers and pupils at all levels. The exemplary behaviour in lessons results in a strong commitment to learning as well as the development of collaborative and independent learning skills. In the majority of lessons, pupils are encouraged to find things out for themselves or to collaborate with their peers. In science lessons in particular, pupils are expected to plan their own experiments. However, sometimes pupils are not given enough time to work through problems, to make mistakes and to learn from these. Nonetheless, collaborative working is a strong aspect of the majority of lessons.

A creative curriculum is taught in primary where learning is meaningful and relevant to real-life situations. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils learned about the language and culture of Brazil through investigations using information and communication technology, from visiting parents, tasting food and many other stimulating activities.

Teachers make good use of the extensive resources and facilities that are available to them. Teachers create excellent resources including 'home made' videos to stimulate and set up learning activities. Technology is regularly used, so interactive whiteboards, tablets and personal computers, for example, are well used in and outside the classroom.

Teachers' assessments of pupils' progress are accurate and regular in most parts of the schools. The school's main use of this assessment is in evaluating and planning learning and teaching as well as providing more frequent 'early alerts' flagging up under-achievement or lack of progress and quicker intervention thereafter. In the primary school, this regular assessment has identified scope for 'stretch' in for example mathematics and led to the inclusion of levelling of tasks and success criteria in teachers' planning and pupils' peer assessment. 'Learning conversations' share valuable assessment findings among staff and prompt next steps; and similar conversations lead to action planning with pupils.

Nevertheless, assessment of children's performance in relation to the Early Learning Goals is not sharp enough to provide an accurate enough picture of the levels pupils should be working at when they join Year 1. Current assessment measures do not always take account of the latest expectations for children as they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage. This in turn means there is sometimes a mismatch in the tasks set for pupils in Year 1 resulting in slower progress at the start of the school year.

Most marking of pupils' work is of high quality and provides pupils with a clear view of what they need to do to improve and how they can reach the next level but there are minor inconsistencies across different subjects and phases. This has already been identified by the school following a work scrutiny.

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. Pupils develop self-confidence through making presentations in class and contributing to the assembly programme. Opportunities have increased as the school has created more leadership roles. There are additional posts for head girls and boys and further committees thus creating more involvement for less forthcoming pupils.

Personal, social and health education is taught through a UK programme modified to meet the school's needs. In the early years, children develop self-esteem and habits of independence. In the primary school, pupils develop personal values and are introduced to issues in the world around them. For example, Year 6 pupils reflect on war-torn countries and the consequent effect on people's lives. In the secondary school, pupils discuss a wide range of issues such as anger management and healthy lifestyles. The curriculum enrichment programme encourages a positive approach to the development of moral values. Pupils write their own programme, choosing topics such as inter-personal relationships and work-based skills. International Baccalaureate students benefit from a deeper study of ethics.

The WIS Charter, which encapsulates the school's ethos, promotes respect and good relationships leading to excellent behaviour throughout the school. Pupils contribute to school and community life in many ways and develop civic and personal responsibility. Prefects learn consideration by ensuring that pupils of all ages feel safe and happy. Trained volunteers work with primary pupils on, for example, reading support or additional mathematics. Pupils support local charities and some help in schools for disadvantaged children. Many pupils offer service overseas by helping to build schools in, for example, Thailand. Pupils show initiative in fundraising for international disasters such as those in the Philippines and Japan and supporting environmental charities. Many carry out voluntary work projects and all older pupils undertake community action and service.

From the earliest years, pupils develop an understanding of life in Dubai. They know about the Royal Family and celebrate events important to the country, like World Expo 2020. Lessons in general, particularly the humanities, teach about the nature of life in Britain, its economy and government. Displays in the primary school show Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament. The school parliament, based on the UK parliament, is elected and inducts pupils into the democratic process. Pupils offer themselves as candidates and are elected to serve. As members of an international community, many of the pupils have a keen awareness and personal insight into problems in other parts of the world.

Cultural diversity is celebrated by all sections of the school. Colourful and interesting displays, for example about Brazil in the primary school, including its football prowess, catch pupils' attention and show them where and how others live. Pupils speak of the way in which the 96 nationalities live together harmoniously. Notices in school urge pupils to respect all religions while remembering they live in a Muslim country. Celebrations featuring national costumes, personalities and food contribute to the school community's happiness and well-being.

The school successfully promotes a knowledge and understanding of British life. Most of the staff qualified in the UK, the curriculum is British and extra activities like rugby, cricket and netball, drama, and music imbue the school with a British character. Occasions such as Remembrance Day are commemorated and

collections organised for the British Legion. The house system, common in British schools, encourages competition and a sense of corporate identity. Respect for values such as freedom of expression and human rights are nurtured through assemblies, debating and societies such as the Model United Nations.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and do so regularly. Throughout the school, attendance and punctuality levels are good.

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

Arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff are outstanding and reflect the ethos of the school to provide the best for all pupils. This is demonstrated in the innovative approach taken to improve the security of access to the school by parents and other visitors and in the actions taken to address issues relating to the safe arrival and exit from the school by private transport.

All policies and procedures to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils are fully in place and rigorous implementation of the clearly defined roles and responsibilities for child protection ensure pupils feel safe and secure. Safeguarding arrangements fully meet requirements.

Secondary pupils have a tutor with whom they can discuss concerns and know they will be dealt with promptly. Alternatively, pupils can seek the help and support of well-being coordinators, counsellors, year heads, prefects, house captains or buddies. Buddies in Year 7 specifically help Year 6 pupils with transition to the secondary phase.

Rewards are regularly given for excellent work, attendance and other participation in school life; these are further enhanced by the house system, which is a vehicle for sporting competition and charity work.

Healthy living is promoted throughout the school so that pupils bring healthy food in their lunchbox or choose from the healthy options on offer. Personal, social and health education lessons and nutrition talks for parents are central to the promotion of healthy living. Sports are on offer at lunchtimes and after school. The UK Healthy Schools programme has been initiated by the school.

The medical facilities run by two doctors and three nurses are excellent and the systems for keeping medical records are thorough. They contribute to the promotion of healthy living through health education topics and monitoring pupils' body mass index annually.

Standard 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

This standard is met. GEMS corporate support services support the school well in ensuring that all the required checks are in place. 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 with meticulous records maintained.

Standard 5. The premises and accommodation

The school's excellent use of the premises and accommodation makes a strong contribution to pupils' learning and progress. In this vibrant, attractive building, staff make very effective use of the facilities that are available. Despite the large number of pupils on campus, space is well used and accommodation has been cleverly adapted to ensure that maximum use is made of what is a relatively small site. For example, outdoor areas near classrooms have been upgraded to allow for additional play and climbing equipment to be added. This has enabled pupils to improve their physical development skills and provided staff with good opportunities to extend the opportunities for outdoor learning.

Currently, the premises and accommodation fully meet the local requirements and these are regularly checked by the Dubai authorities. For example, regular fire-safety inspections and food-hygiene checks are carried out and the school has all the certificates required to operate.

The school has been repainted within the last year and all classrooms and teaching areas are regularly upgraded. This has resulted in good-quality accommodation that not only meets pupils' learning needs during the school day but allows staff to deliver an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. For example, developments across the school site in technology have enabled all pupils to have regular access to high-quality facilities and resources. Classrooms are of a good size, well resourced and many provide an attractive learning environment.

With over 2000 pupils on site, the school remains tidy and well maintained. Cleaning and maintenance staff take a great pride in their work and this is shared by most pupils who talk confidently about their contribution to maintaining high standards, highlighting the school's 'green groups' who help to ensure that any waste paper is recycled. Pupils also enjoy pointing out some very impressive classroom displays. These are a feature of many parts of the school and are well used to celebrate pupils' achievements. In addition, much of the display reflects the British nature of the school and the curriculum that is being followed. For example, in the Year 6 corridor, the displays illustrate the pupils' World War Two studies in history and help to explain what life was like for families living through this period.

Quite rightly, site security and the safety of pupils are treated as the highest priorities. Effective systems have been established to provide for both.

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

Provision of information for parents, carers and others is outstanding. The school website is easily navigated and contains much of the information that both current and prospective parents might need. Email communication and text alerts are regularly used to keep parents updated, although difficulties with technology can sometimes slow this process. For example, when the school was required to close due to adverse weather conditions the SMS alerts to parents overloaded the system and some did not get through immediately. Action has already been taken to address this gap in the system.

Most parents speak in positive terms about the responsive nature of the school. Staff respond promptly to email communications and parent/teacher conferences are purposeful and informative. Access to staff is a real strength and many parents talked in glowing terms about the 'partnership' they felt they had with the school. Reports on pupils' progress are detailed and informative. They offer good insights into each child's strengths and weaknesses as well as making it clear the grade and level that they are achieving.

There are increasing opportunities for parents to become actively engaged in the life and work of the school. For example, the WIS council consists of three groups, led by the Principal or Vice Principals and these involve parents in discussions on school strategy, teaching and learning and extra-curricular activities. As a result of ongoing discussions with parents, arrangements for the drop-off and pick-up of pupils have been changed, illustrating that school leaders are responsive to suggestions that might improve the provision.

Standard 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school meets all the requirements of the standards. The complaints' procedures are clear and are available on the school's website. There are timelines established for completing the staged approach to dealing with complaints. In addition, procedures allow for a complaint to be referred to the GEMS Corporate board if it cannot be satisfactorily resolved at school level. Records indicate that complaints' procedures are rarely used and parents confirmed that easy access to school leaders means that any issues can usually be addressed informally.

Standard 8. The quality of provision for boarding

Not applicable.

Standard 9. Leadership and management of the school

Leadership and management at all levels are outstanding and this helps to explain the school's continued success. A relatively new leadership team, exceptionally well led by the Principal, has brought fresh 'sets of eyes' to the school, is visible around the school and has quickly identified where the school can improve still further. For example, the enhanced role and influence of middle leaders has been pivotal to the new sense of direction and vision that is emerging. It has resulted in a school where there is a real sense of trust in colleagues to make the right decisions at year group or faculty levels without the need to refer decision making 'upwards'. Pupils have noticed the differences this year, commenting favourably on how accessible and approachable they find school leaders and how the Principal has 'a friendly word for everyone and knows our name'. This is an inclusive school where school leaders ensure that all pupils are made welcome, feel valued and have their achievements celebrated. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and any form of discrimination is tackled robustly.

High expectation of pupils' performance throughout the school is the norm and there are robust systems in place to check on the progress they make. In turn, staff are held to account for pupils' progress; data tracking systems have been successfully upgraded to provide staff, pupils and parents with better information. This approach is working because there are year-on-year improvements in pupils' external examination results.

School self-evaluation is precise, accurate and succinct. It is based on a thorough analysis of the school's performance and an honest acceptance of where improvements need to be made. For example, school leaders recognise that more work is needed to ensure that assessment arrangements for younger children are sharper. In particular, by ensuring that, as they transfer to primary school, the work set for them in Year 1 is pitched at the correct level.

Effective governance of the school makes a significant contribution to the leadership. The GEMS board member responsible for the school has an impressive knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses. Support and challenge are provided in just the right proportion and there is a clarity about expectations which is appreciated by all concerned. Governance checks that all safeguarding requirements are met and that performance management is rigorous. In addition, access to the group's central services such as human resources and finance means that the Principal has ready access to expertise in these fields.

Staff are well qualified, carefully recruited and enjoy high-quality support and training to build on their strengths and address any weaknesses. Most are British trained and have an excellent grasp of the UK curriculum. Consequently, their subject knowledge and teaching styles enable them to confidently prepare pupils to enter or re-enter the UK education system. There is excellent leadership of learning and teaching at all

levels within the school. For example, in faculties, year groups and across the school, teachers work in teams to share best practice and improve their skills. Success in these areas is at the heart of why the school does so well.

Management of resources is outstanding and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning because equipment, accommodation and staff are well deployed. Parents in their questionnaire responses and in their meeting with inspectors confirmed the view that the school is very well led.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

GEMS Wellington 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:

1. Sharpen the accuracy of assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that transition into Key Stage 1 is smoother and improves progress further in Year 1.

Summary of inspection judgements

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

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	√			
--	---	--	--	--

The quality of provision for boarding

	NA			
--	----	--	--	--

Leadership and management

Overall effectiveness of leadership and management	√			
--	---	--	--	--

School details

Name of school	GEMS Wellington International School
Type of school	Private
Date school opened	2005
Age range of pupils	3-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	2376
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	NA
Annual fees (day pupils)	AED 35244 - 76675
Annual fees (boarders)	NA
Address of school	PO Box 37486 Dubai
Telephone number	04 3484999
Email address	k.miller_wis@gemsedu.com
Head teacher	Mr Keith Miller
Proprietor	GEMS Varkey

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0118 902 1674, or email enquiries@cfbt.com.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

CfBT Education Trust
60 Queens Road
Reading RG1 4BS
T: +44 (0) 118 902 1000

Report reference no: 1014



CfBT Education Trust
60 Queens Road
Reading
Berkshire
RG1 4BS
0118 902 1000
www.cfbt.com