



**British School  
Overseas**  
Inspected by Penta International

## **Inspection report**

**The Westminster School  
Dubai**

**United Arab Emirates**

Date  
i number

**1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022**  
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## 1. Purpose and scope of the inspection

The Department for Education has put in place a voluntary scheme for the inspection of British schools overseas, whereby schools are inspected against a common set of standards that British schools overseas can choose to adopt.

The inspection and this report follow the Department for Education (DFE) schedule for the inspection of British Schools overseas.

The purpose of the inspection is to provide information to parents, teachers, senior managers and the school's management on the overall effectiveness of the school, the standard of education it provides and its compatibility with independent schools in the United Kingdom.

The inspection and report will cover the key areas of quality of the curriculum; quality of teaching and learning; the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students; their welfare, health and safety; the suitability of the proprietor and staff; the school's premises and accommodation (including boarding); and the school's complaints procedures. An essential part of the inspection is considering the extent to which the British character of the school is evident in its ethos, curriculum, teaching, care for students and students' achievements.

This inspection was completed by Penta International. Penta International is approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas. As one of the leading inspection providers, Penta International reports to the English Department for Education (DFE) on the extent to which schools meet the standards for British Schools Overseas.

During the inspection visit, over 150 lesson observations took place, as well as a series of learning walks. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Students' workbooks were scrutinised, and discussions were held with the senior staff, the management team, and a range of teachers, parents and groups of students. The inspection team was in school for three days.

The lead inspector was Dr Mark Evans. The team members were Lewis Ballie, Daniel Bokelman, David Evans, Nicola Singelton and Dwight Weir.

## 2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The Westminster School, Dubai (TWS) meets all standards for British Schools Overseas.

### 3. Overall effectiveness of the school

TWS is a very effective school that offers a high quality of education and care. The school's shared values and ethos result in a happy, proud, vibrant learning community. The inclusive family ethos is effectively supported and maintained by leaders in the school, both amongst staff and amongst students.

#### 3.1 What the school does well

The school has many strengths including the:

- behaviour and attitudes of learners and their strong commitment to their education and personal development.
- school's high quality of education, well reflected in its continued improvement and students' outcomes and offering outstanding value for money.
- high levels of students' achievement in IGCSE, AS and A Level examinations compared to UK benchmarks.
- attainment of learners in all examinations, including summative external assessments and exams.
- significant progress made developing the curriculum, teaching and learning, site security over the past three years.
- plethora of academic and non-academic extra-curricular activities to support and extend the formal curriculum.
- evident pride and gratitude that staff, students and parents have in their school - the opportunities, sense of community and quality provision are truly valued and appreciated
- school's staff training and professional development programme, which has been carefully designed to meet the needs of staff members, including a robust and detailed induction programme.
- teachers and teaching support assistants who work well together in teams.
- designated safeguarding lead who ensures staff remain vigilant regarding their responsibilities and suitability to work with and around children.
- the long tradition of promoting student voice and democratic processes through its excellent student leadership structure, which allows all students to become involved in the leadership and decision making in their school – the outcome of this provision is outstanding.
- wealth of available information, including a detailed parent handbook, GEMS parent portal, a dedicated space on the school website for parents, comprehensive policies, communications during the pandemic on how parents can support their children's learning and also regular social media updates.
- open door policy ensures that parents play and active part in the life of the school which helps to support the family ethos evident at TWS.

## 3.2 Points for improvement

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

- a) Further improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all lessons are as good as the best, for example by:
  - i. promoting a more student-centred approach to learning
  - ii. more innovative and student-centred approaches to learning in lessons
  - iii. engaging learners in more purposeful formative assessment activities in order to better adapt, refocus and challenge them during lessons and raise standards in classrooms
- b) Consider ways to streamline communications with parents
- c) Review whether the campus and facilities support the curriculum appropriately, in terms of learning, socialising and recreation, especially with regard to ensuring secondary girls get equitable learning opportunities and space, compared to boys.

## 4. The context of the school

Full name of school	GEMS The Westminster School				
Address	Al Qusais, Dubai, United Arab Emirates				
Telephone Number/s	+971 4 298 8333				
Website Address	www.gemsws-ghusais.com				
Key Email Address/s	reception_tws@gemsedu.com principal_tws@gemsedu.com				
Executive principal	Mr Carl Roberts				
Chair of board of governors	Mrs Sara Hedger				
Age Range	3 – 18 years (FS1 to Year 13)				
Total number of pupils	5,235	Boys	2,716	Girls	2,519
Numbers by age	0-2 years	0	12-16 years	1,877	
	3-5 years	483	17-18 years	407	
	6-11 years	2,433	18+ years	35	
Total number of part-time children	0				

TWS, Dubai was founded in 1995. The current student population stands at more than 5,000 from over 70 nationalities. This makes the school the largest English curriculum school in the UAE. It aims to provide a stimulating learning environment, which allows students to be productive, and open-minded world citizens and multi-faceted individuals, well equipped to face the competitive world.

The school currently has the sixth lowest fees of any British curriculum school in Dubai, but students achieve well above average outcomes. All students have English as a second language. It prides itself on proving a community feel which is helped by the fact that

extended families attend the school and student turnover is low. Many children will spend their whole school career at TWS and they will often have parents who attended the school, too. The school is oversubscribed with a long waiting list.

The largest groups represented are Pakistani (31%), Indian (16%), Egyptian (16%) and Sri Lankan (6%). Classes are mixed gender in primary and sixth form, with students studying in separate boys' and girls' classes from year 7 through to year 11.

There are 169 learners (3%) who have been identified as special educational needs or disabled (SEND). The school has an inclusive approach and employs an open-door policy to its parent community. It aims to empower its learners to lead happy and fulfilling lives, in a safe, respectful, and equitable learning environment, as communicated through its vision statement.

The executive principal has been in post for 3 years and is supported by the head of school and a team of four assistant principals, who are responsible for specific areas of teaching, learning, assessment, and pastoral care. There are 299 teachers, with an average ratio of 1 to every 18 learners. Teacher turnover is low, with only 6.69% new teachers since the previous academic year. Learners are supported by 26 teaching assistants and 16 learning support assistants, who provide targeted support to the children identified as SEND.

## 4.1 British nature of the school

The British nature of the school is evident from more than just its name.

The school's mission is to deliver a high-quality British education at an affordable price. Students and parents value TWS and this is demonstrated by the positive comments made to inspectors. The school is an active member of the *British Schools of the Middle East (BSME)*.

The curriculum is based on the National Curriculum for England (NCfE), the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) programme and IGCSE, AS and A level public examination requirements. A range of UK resources and educational programmes are used to support learning. Some of which are accredited by the DfE, such as *Floppy Phonics*, *Learning Ladders*, *MyiMaths* and *Oxford Reading Tree Books*. Assessments are based on national standards and curriculum endpoints as enshrined in the English programmes of study and those defined by the school's preferred examination boards. The entire curriculum is delivered in English with the exception of Arabic and Islamic studies for Arab nationals, and modern foreign languages. Year 13 students are well prepared and meet the entry requirements to enter top Russell Group universities and colleges in the UK. Students are supported through wellbeing lessons which discuss Oxbridge and UCAS applications.

TWS has a strong and successful house system which every child is part of. There are four houses, centred around the school values and a traditional UK public school. Students stay in the same house throughout their educational career. Intra-House competitions are held in sports, public speaking, dance, quizzes, art, music and essay writing. The school's house point and rewards system reflect those used in UK schools. The whole of the pastoral structure is based on the house system. There is high importance placed on pastoral care, with dedicated staff positions created to foster and support students' welfare and well-being. There are regular sports days, class assemblies, end-of-year shows and other celebrations - For example, the students will perform "Matilda, The Musical" which is due to take place mid-March. A different Shakespeare play is performed by the older students annually.

The school has a long tradition of promoting student voice and democratic processes through its student leadership structure which allows all students to become involved in the leadership and decision making in their school. Student leaders meet regularly with the executive principal and the rest of the school's senior leadership team. TWS has a school uniform and a school council, which contribute towards the Britishness of the school. The school council is made up of year 12 and 13 representatives from each house who meet with the executive principal every half

term. They write action plans and bring in new initiatives which filter down to the rest of the school.

There is a plethora of academic and non-academic extra-curricular activities to support and extend the formal curriculum, such as drama, debating, elocution and public speaking, music, art and craft, creative writing, cooking and sports. Off-site visits and relevant visitors offer further enrichment to the stated curriculum. Inter-school competitions are held with other British schools. Sixth form students participate in the Cambridge International Education International Project Qualification (IPQ). Students devise and develop a research question, conduct research to answer this question, record their progress in a research log and write a research report.

British values are recognisable in student conduct in and around school. Personal, social and health education (PSHE), including assemblies, develop students' understanding of discrimination and inclusion. There are bright, creative displays around school, celebrating the achievements of the students. British values are clearly displayed around school and form part of the school ethos and culture, particularly in secondary. Dedicated boards are seen to recognise core British values, namely the main school reception and on the staircases. Winston Churchill and Margaret Thatcher feature on an 'Inspiring People' display.

## 5. Standard 1

### The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided is consistently at least good and there are significant outstanding features. The school fully meets the standards for BSO.

#### 5.1 Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum at TWS is good with aspects that are outstanding.

The NCfE provides the framework for teaching and learning at all age phases. The curriculum meets the students' linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social needs. The curriculum prepares students for entry/re-entry into the UK schools and universities. UK curriculum developments are tracked and implemented; EYFS provision reflects aspects of 'Development Matters' guidance, for example.

A coherent and detailed curriculum policy is in place which outlines aims, direction and purpose of learning. Consideration is given to curriculum progression and transition between phases. Mapping documentation gives consideration to skill and content coverage. Long-term planning is well-considered, lesson plans are sufficiently detailed. Progression maps focussing on mathematics and English/literacy were evidenced, with consideration given to transition and skill development at the different ages and stages. The school leadership structure outlines clear areas of responsibility and the primary, girls' secondary and boys' secondary heads are very familiar with all aspects of the curriculum that they are responsible for.

The curriculum offer is suitably broad and balanced in primary. Moral education, global perspectives, ICT and well-being are examples of subjects that are incorporated into the curriculum. There is a desire to incorporate more project-based and outdoor learning opportunities. In EYFS, students engage in age-appropriate learning about mathematical concepts and literacy. Critical thinking skills and memory the focus of their learning. They also learn to talk about their feelings and develop relationship skills through play. Physical activity is limited to movement within the classroom and some scheduled time outdoors.

In Years 1-6, the curriculum incorporates priority on reading, writing and mathematics with other important aspects of the curriculum. Students access Arabic, Islamic Education and moral social cultural studies. Global perspectives

combine other important aspects of the curriculum. There is a conscious effort to develop students' literacy skills which continues as they move into the secondary school. Reading is identified as a priority area for development.

As students enter secondary, they access a curriculum that reflects the KS3 framework. Year 9 is regarded as a pre-IGCSE year; option selection for IGCSEs is reflected in students' timetables in Year 9. Students have access to nineteen IGCSE subjects, fifteen AS Level and eleven A Level subjects - student uptake determines the feasibility of offering this range. There has been a conscious and deliberate effort over the past 3 years to broaden the curriculum in KS4 and KS5; IGCSE option subjects are gradually being added to, and a small number of BTEC subjects are being promoted. Students and parents value more traditional subjects, which alongside MOE recognition of these qualifications has resulted in them not attracting sufficient uptake to run. Well-being and careers feature as lessons within the secondary curriculum.

The majority of students in the school are classified as speaking English as an Additional Language (EAL), however, they are immersed in an English-rich environment. They study first language English until the end of year 10; thereafter they can then choose between first and second language for IGCSE - the school encourages students to take first Language, some default to second language in order to maximise opportunities for a high grade and are destined for universities which do not differentiate between the exams.

The curriculum provides for the academic, moral, physical, creative and social development of students and caters for students who have SEND and EAL needs. The Inclusion Team has clear policies and practices in place to support learners with exceptionalities. Students identified as having SEND are monitored on an ongoing cycle of diagnosis-therapy-testing. Authentic and impactful differentiation is a consideration in the teaching and learning exchange with scope for further development.

The academic curriculum enables students to reach age-related expectations. This is supported by a diverse enrichment curriculum. Despite Covid-19 related restrictions on sports and other after school activities, there is enrichment opportunity embedded within the taught curriculum, including IPQ, community service, student leadership, Arab League, TEDx, project work on sustainability, Trinity Music Examinations etc. Extra-curricular activities are limited because of Covid-19 restrictions, however the school is soon to host its first production, Matilda. Pre-Covid-19, there was in place a sports programme coordinated by a third-party provider which included competitive teams who represented TWS in inter-school fixtures and events. The sports programme is delivered by certified coaches and includes swimming (students can access a pool at a neighbouring school).

## 5.2 Teaching and Assessment

Overall, the quality of teaching and assessment is good with some outstanding features and few unsatisfactory lessons.

Teachers at TWS have a clear understanding of how to create good learning, there are often impressive levels of student engagement. This results in a learning culture of enthusiastic participation. Small things like greeting students in the morning have a big impact on the level of positivity within the school. Almost all lessons had a purposeful learning atmosphere. For example, in EYFS, students concentrate well and really love their activities. Key Stage 4 and 5 boys are able to interact and collaborate very effectively in a wide range of situations to achieve agreed goals. They articulate clearly and can communicate their learning. They demonstrate levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that were often above expected curriculum standards.

Behaviour and attitude of the students are exemplary. Students show a real enthusiasm for learning. The classroom and corridor management through well-embedded processes result in very few incidents of poor behaviour; managing over 5,200 students in one building thus appears to be effortless, although of course it is a result of excellent systems.

In the best lessons, students worked collaboratively in groups, before sharing their learning with the rest of their class. Excellent levels of spoken English observed in a Year 5 social studies about seas and oceans, allowed the students to make their own presentations, which was then supported by highly effective questioning from the teacher: this strongly promoted critical thinking. One example of higher order thinking observed was when the class explained the environmental implications of North Sea fisheries and the oil industry.

Good and excellent lessons were often driven by great planning by the teacher. In many EYFS classes, the use of a range of suitable activities led to students who were well on the way to being independent learners, with good prompting and questioning by the teachers and assistants. There was effective use of assessment for learning, as the teachers check for progress throughout the lesson and embedded (as appropriate) peer assessment practices.

One Year 3 mathematics class was particularly well planned in terms of resources and targets. The students were excited to seek the answers and a route to meeting the targets. In a Year 6 English class, for example, on using writing techniques to build suspense in a story, students composed paragraphs suitable for a suspense story and were able to produce high quality writing. This was supported effectively by excellent scaffolding and strong planning, including 'help words', authorial techniques, visual stimuli (artwork) and high levels of pace and challenge. In a Year 9 girls' English class, the teacher organised the students into groups with clear instructions from the onset.

Success criteria were discussed, understood and relevant; this resulted in a high quality of student interaction and collaboration, and was clearly a well-understood and embedded strategy. The students communicate their learning with peers and staff orally and in writing, for example "Jane Austin's work inspired women to stand up, to be empowered, and to get out of their houses...". The topic was meaningful and relevant for students, identifying learning from previous lessons and differentiated outcomes. The teacher's discussion with students promoted thoughtful and considered responses.

In lessons that were less effective, it was often because the teacher was not able to engage all the students. A Year 12 life skills lesson for example, included an outstanding presentation by a female student, but a significant number of boys were not listening to her and instead chose to complete mathematics and science homework. They effectively opted out of learning.

Teachers across the school are well aware of EYFS, NCfE and IGCSE-AS-A Level expectations and generally demonstrate good competence in the skills and knowledge of the subject matter of their respective key stage curricula. Lesson observations, focused learning walks and students' work scrutiny every 6 to 8 weeks help to support teaching practice. The evaluation and any next steps needed follow effective monitoring and moderation by the senior and middle leaders. Data is analysed for planning further action points.

Assessment is viewed as an integral part of learning and teaching, and was evident in lessons. A variety of formative and summative assessments are in place to assess the students' learning and monitoring their progress. It also supports teachers to facilitate teaching and learning, to identify what students already know and how to take the next steps to guide them forward. A meaningful assessment and reporting process is in place across the school.

Students are actively engaged, motivated and independent learners. They can talk about the learning process and are open about giving and receiving feedback. Assessment strategies in the best lessons enable them to improve and work purposefully to achieve or exceed their expected learning outcomes. Students in KS5 demonstrate in a high standard of independent learning, supported by an environment of reflection and reasoning. Most students know their strengths and areas of development and understand individual targets to improve their outcomes.

For EYFS, ongoing assessments are made against the early learning outcomes, and is compared with students achieving a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD) against UK standards. In primary and beyond, the school uses the student's prior attainment, CAT4 scores and the "if challenged" grades to set personalised targets at the start of the academic year for all students from year 1 to 11, while the ALPS MEG based on their IGCSE results is used for Years 12 and 13.

## 5.3 Standards achieved by pupils

Standards achieved by students are excellent. TWS students make strong progress and achieve excellent results in externally validated examinations, for example at GCSE and A-level.

All students in the Early Years are EAL learners and most start school without any preschool or nursery training. Students are supported by providing them with lots of opportunities to develop their speech and language skills through the introduction of the International Phonic Programme along with differentiated and challenging play activities like storytelling with props, investigations and coding apps. EYFS Target Tracker reports indicate that 64% of students in the whole cohort achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD) and 63% of the students have achieved at least the expected level in the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) and an Average Point score of 35, which is above UK average of 34.5.

GLS progress tests in Years 4, 6 8 and 10 show that a majority of students have attained above expected levels. Progress in science is particularly strong.

	Progress tests in English (PTE)	Progress tests in mathematics (PTM)	Progress tests in science (PTS)
	Above expected levels	Above expected levels	Above expected levels
Year 4	61%	74%	81%
Year 6	62%	56%	69%
Year 8	47%	59%	72%
Year 10	59%	70%	77%

Target setting is thorough and reviewed regularly throughout the year during Challenge Meetings. Targets are generated through the use of CAT4 scores in Key Stages 3 and 4 and ALPS MEG and IGCSE average point score used for Years 12 and 13.

Performance in IGCSE and A Level exam has steadily improved over the years. In Summer 2021, TWS outperformed British schools in their IGCSE and A Level exams in the percentage of students who achieve A\*-A and A\* -C grades. The school was ranked 6th out of 18 GEMS schools for A\*-C at IGCSE and 11th out of 18 for A\*-A.

	TWS		GEMS average		UK average	
	A*-A%	A*-C%	A*-A%	A*-C%	A*-A%	A* - C%
IGCSE JUNE 2021	46%	90%	51%	89%	30%	77%
A LEVEL JUNE 2021	52%	97%	50%	90%	44%	88%

ALPS Quality Indicator places the school within the top 10% of the schools following the same curriculum as TWS. The value-added scores are 1.21 for IGCSE, 1.09 for AS level and 1.07 for A-level examinations. This indicates that almost all students have met or exceeded the minimum expected grade for the subjects which they are studying: indeed, the average TWS student achieves over one grade higher than average students worldwide.

In line with the national agenda in the UAE, the school also takes part in the TIMSS, PISA, PIRLS assessments. TIMSS 2019 held for students of Year 5 and Year 9 in mathematics and science indicate that students have performed significantly higher than the TIMSS centre point. Students who participated in PIRLS 2016 and 218 performed better than PIRLS centre point.

Students also participate in various events and competitions outside school which gives them an extensive range of real-life opportunities, for example the Chevron Readers Cup 2021, Achieve 3000 reading competition, Poetry for all 2020, Medical and Science Exhibition (MASE) 2020, National Level Mental Math competition. They also participate in Kenken, MUN, Spelling bee, GEMS innovation Challenge, business competitions, sustainable projects, TEDx, National Day and a virtual art exhibition which all help to enhance their skills and become responsible learners.

The high-quality careers provision and pastoral care has significantly contributed to the success of students particularly in the secondary school.

92% of the students in 2018-19, 70% in 2019-20 and 60% in 2020-21 have been admitted to universities of their choice. There was a drop in the last 2 years due to the pandemic affecting travel and these students are supported through the GEMS Alumni programme. Some of the students also received scholarships.

## 6. *Standard 2* Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is excellent.

TWS is a fully inclusive school which embraces and celebrates the diverse school community and its varied cultures and nationalities. Students across all phases of the school have ample opportunities to share and celebrate their experiences from their cultural backgrounds in lessons and extra-curricular activities (ECAs). Students appreciate the importance of treating all groups of people equally and with respect.

Discussions with students, teachers and senior leaders, together with observations of students' attitudes and behaviour in almost all lessons and around the school, validate an aspect of the school's vision which is "to create a safe, respectful and equitable learning environment where everyone is free to express their opinion and to have that opinion fully respected". Students' behaviour is excellent throughout the school in most lessons, when students are moving around the building, and at break times. They show very good levels of self-discipline at all times.

Students are proud of their achievements. They understand the importance of regular attendance, hard work, and enjoy participating in all aspects of school life. School leaders keep a close check on attendance. Attendance is high with an average of 96%. Students are very welcoming, polite, curious and work hard to maintain the orderly and peaceful nature of the school. They are sensible, responsible citizens, who value their learning, friendships and relationships with staff.

The school ensures that meaningful opportunities implemented to develop, embed and celebrate the core values and foster a very positive ethos. The school's student leadership, house system, the positive approach to the rewards and sanctions policy, morning and celebratory assemblies, and extra-curricular initiatives are making a very positive impact. 'Courage', 'opportunities', 'encouragement', 'inclusive', and 'teamwork' were key words used by student leaders to describe the impact of their roles. The school's four houses - Wisdom, Equity, Courage and Tolerance – along with their wellness web, peer-joint program for students, ECAs, themed days, and assemblies promote and foster an ethos which students are proud of. Surveys about the school's wellbeing initiatives and activities in Years 3-13 report that 95% of the students believe that they value personal relationships and have mutual respect towards their peers; 94% of the students believe that teachers care about their wellbeing at school; and 93% of the students are happy to be a part of student led initiatives. In partnering with EduCCate Global, (a global sustainability initiative that includes local matters), students are empowered as pioneers of sustainable living, promote climate literacy, raise awareness within school community.

Students have a keen understanding of British values, such as empathy, equity, honesty, the rule of law, and have high expectations for putting democratic principles into practice. The school's house system, along with initiatives such as its theatrical production of 'Matilda',

sports teams, and debate club are embraced and celebrated. The *Primary Pulse*, a musical extravaganza for primary students, fosters and showcases young talent annually. Learning based, virtual tours to places and museums in Britain like Westminster Abbey, the London Eye, the Natural History Museum, and Shakespeare's Globe theatre facilitated the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In and out of lessons, students demonstrate high expectations for themselves and others, take responsibility for their actions, and exercise their understanding of right and wrong. The learners feel safe at school and know whom to talk to if they have a problem.

## 7. Standard 3

### The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of the students is good.

There is a well-focussed culture of safeguarding in the school. All members of the school community make the health, welfare and safety of students a priority. Leaders' work in this area is supported by a set of comprehensive policies which are shared with staff and made available to parents.

Through its induction procedures, new staff are made aware of the school's principles and approaches to maintaining the welfare of students. Admission procedures comply with local requirements and the school is a non-sectarian, co-educational institution which welcomes boys and girls of all nationalities, religions and cultures. New students are helped to settle into the school very quickly.

The school benefits from updated policies on safeguarding from the GEMS corporate safeguarding specialist, along with the school's designated safeguarding lead and safeguarding officers. These are reviewed on a regular basis in the light of students' needs, their security and due consideration best practice locally and in the UK.

The school's leaders ensure that relevant health and safety laws are complied with the effective implementation of comprehensive health and safety policies and risk assessments. 20% of the school's staff have undertaken a fire risk assessment and taken appropriate steps to ensure that the school complies with local fire-safety regulations and 10% have been trained and certified as emergency first responders.

The need to protect students when using technology and the internet is supported by its E-Safety Guidelines. The school has protective firewalls and educates its students and staff about risks and protecting themselves when using the internet, including cyber-bullying and harmful websites.

Expectations for behaviour are clear and understood by new and established students. This results in a warm atmosphere with positive and respectful relationships between students and adults. Students know the consequences of not complying with behaviour codes and accept sanctions, along with guidance about how to address unacceptable behaviour, as outlined in the school's rewards and sanctions policy.

The assistant principal, pastoral leads and pastoral team members manage behaviour consistently and takes particular care to support students as they adjust to the school's expectations for behaviour.

Attendance is above average and is recorded carefully. Robust systems record late arrivals at the start of the day. Students are supervised well while relaxing and playing spontaneously during breaks. They take responsibility for managing their actions and know how to play safely.

School transport is of high quality with supervision throughout journeys to and from school. Careful planning ensures students travel on the correct bus and are met by an approved adult.

The school promotes healthy lifestyles for parents and students. Students are aware of the need for healthy foods, exercise and the impact of pollutants on health. Displays of students' work promote key aspects of healthy lifestyles.

Clinic facilities allow students who become unwell or who are injured at school to be cared for by qualified nurses. First-aid kits are located throughout the school and a significant number of adults (10% of staff) are trained first aiders.

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

The suitability of the proprietor and staff at TWS meets in full the requirements of the BSO standards. The rigorous safer recruitment policies and processes in place are very good standards.

TWS is owned and operated by GEMS Education, the largest K-12 education provider in the world, with 43 schools in the MENA region. There is a dedicated vice president safeguarding officer at the GEMS School Support Centre who can provide external support to deal with safeguarding issues, including complex ones, if required. Annual safeguarding audits are undertaken and quality assured by external agencies.

The executive principal and SLT have appropriate requirements for safer recruitment, ensuring well qualified and committed staff are employed. These safer recruitment checks include the proprietor and board. The safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures follow British legislation, as well that of the host country and the school group. The school undergoes external safeguarding audits and follows any advice given. The last international safeguarding audit was in 2021. The SLT as well as head of HR, have all completed safer recruitment training. School policy states that one member of the senior leadership team is present on all interviews.

Prior to staff appointments the HR department completes appropriate checks in the UAE as well as in the staff member's host country. Two references as well as police checks are carried out in the host country as well as country of origin, wherever possible. Additional checks are completed by an external agency for UK teachers. An effective HR department ensures all checks are in place to ensure staff at the school are suitable to work with children and records are accessible as required.

The HR department holds thorough records of all staff and volunteers on a single central register. This includes dates appointed, as well as police checks and qualifications. Supply staff are not used as supply is managed internally. Local authority (KHDA) approval is also an expectation before employment can commence which provides an additional step in the safe recruitment of staff to work with children.

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

The premises and accommodation are satisfactory and meet BSO requirements. There are some excellent features.

The school facilities are carefully managed and well-maintained, they are broadly fit for purpose. The standard of cleanliness is high. Given the number of students on campus, rooms and common spaces are carefully timetabled to ensure efficient use. Displays around campus, particularly in common areas, are vibrant and engaging, many in the display in Secondary corridors have been curated by students with direction from teachers.

The school undergoes regular site checks by local regulatory authorities, as well as by GEMS. It is fully compliant.

Space is limited in classrooms, with some concerns noted about health and safety, particularly in the girls secondary wing. In a number of year 7-11 girls' classrooms, the single entry/exit point was partially obstructed by a desk. Dual access points in primary classrooms were often compromised due to obstructions prohibiting access through one of the doors. Similarly, laboratories with dual access points were observed to have one door locked or obstructed. Hallways, particularly in EYFS are obstructed by student bags and teacher desks. The secondary boys wing is more developed in terms of classroom space, with the newer building accommodating the number of students in classes comfortably and safely.

The Covid-19-related social distancing requirement of 1 metre between students is not possible to achieve given the nature of the school. The local educational regulator has been notified of this and the school has been given an exemption. Based on student numbers and classroom size, the distance achievable is reportedly 80-90 centimetres.

The executive principal and manager school operations are well aware that the number of students in classes, given the physical size of most classrooms, may well compromise opportunities for enriched educational experiences; group work opportunities, for example, are limited because of this.

Entry/exit to campus is well-managed. Student departure is staggered and all exit points around the campus perimeter are in use at the end of the day to manage student/staff departure effectively. The school perimeter is secure with an access control system and staffing, once on campus students are secure. Trained security staff are ample in number and the school references security/health and safety audits undertaken by the parent company has improved from 65% (3 years ago) to 95% (current) against a checklist of 154 compliance standards. CCTV cameras are located in common areas, with recent upgrades to better achieve whole school coverage.

Fire extinguishers and hoses are located in strategic places and identifiable on clearly labelled maps. Inspection records reflect ongoing and up-to-date checks. There is provision for individuals who are mobility-impaired (ramps, elevators and stair lift). There are four AED units located across campus which are serviced regularly.

Canteen facilities are currently closed in response to Covid-19. In 2019 the school changed caterers to a contractor who was recognised by the Dubai Municipality; this change improved the service and quality of items available to students.

The executive principal has overseen a facilities improvement plan over the past 3 years and has a clear vision for further improvements in the school improvement plan. These include refurbishment of laboratories, libraries, improvements to evacuation access and a dedicated room for interventions. The manager of school operations has requested the addition of a second bus gate to mitigate for emergencies; he has considerable knowledge of campus logistics and undertakes regularly risk assessments. There is a clear understanding of what improvements to premises are needed to enhance teaching and learning; good use is made of facilities given current limitations.

## 10. Standard 6

### The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information for parents, carers and others is excellent.

The school is accessible and welcoming to its community and operates an open-door policy, enabling frequent and effective engagement with all stakeholders. There is a wide range of appropriate and important information shared with parents, including a parent handbook and a range of key policies, including safeguarding and child protection. The school communicates information with parents through email, SMS, the GEMS parent portal, student planners, the school website (including a designated parents' area) and social media (Facebook). The school address and telephone number, key documents and policies, curriculum information, KHDA inspection reports, student achievements, admission procedures and information on extra-curricular activities are also available on the school website.

Parents are enthusiastic about the performance of the school and highly appreciative of the regular communications, which ensure that they are well-informed of everything taking place, including events, students' achievements, and future school improvement initiatives.

Support teams are bilingual and facilitate daily effective communications with parents. Parents also have access to members of the corporate body through the GEMS parent platform. Any concerns they have are answered quickly, and they have the information required to contact the relevant member of staff for assistance. Parents believe student behaviour is very good, and that the school takes complaints including bullying very seriously. They described the procedures in the complaint and resolution and anti-bullying policies and identified the key staff.

Regular parent surveys have helped shape school developments, including road safety and online learning during the COVID 19 pandemic. Parents feel that the school listens to them well and are appreciative that leaders at all levels, including the executive principal, are accessible and responsive to their feedback. Various parent working groups meet monthly and work in close partnership with the school.

Detailed curriculum information is available on the school website. The school produces termly reports for learners at the end of each of the three terms. TWS also has scheduled parental meetings to discuss learners progress, as well as a range of parent support events. Parents have found the support events and communications to be helpful and informative, especially during the recent pandemic, when the school provided information and guidance which enabled parents to support the wellbeing and academic progress of their children more effectively, whilst they learned from home.

## 11. Standard 7

### The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school's procedure for handling complaints at TWS meets in full the requirements of the BSO standards.

TWS has a commitment to make sure that all complaints are resolved quickly, fairly, humanely and with due process. The school treats complaints seriously and ensures all process are clear, prompt, confidential and fair to all parties and will use its best endeavours to guarantee an acceptable resolution is achieved. This reflects good practice from the UK and meet BSO standards.

Parents are informed of the process through the website, parent handbook and students' planner. This information is updated, as required.

Complaints against the school are dealt with fairly, in an open and responsive way whilst maintaining its highest standards in achieving a quick and satisfactory resolution with a clear timeline based on the complexity of the complaint. Parents and staff expressed that the school is open and ready to listen to concerns and criticism and respond positively keeping in mind the welfare and the best interest of all stakeholders in making decisions while maintaining confidentiality. Being a multicultural school, the process is accessible to all concerned people. Matters are dealt with in an equitable and culturally sensitive manner.

The school has a clear process for dealing with all perpetrators, staff or students if found to be at fault. They may refer the student or staff to the government agency or to GEMS, if deemed necessary. All reported cases are treated with utmost confidentiality at all times.

## 12. Standard 8 Leadership and management of the school

Leadership and management at TWS are excellent, they meet in full the requirements of the BSO standards and there are many outstanding features.

The overall governance of the school incorporates wide representation from all stakeholders, the owners (GEMS Education) provide corporate governance in terms of education, safeguarding, inclusion, HR, finance, legal, IT, and procurement support. There is a local advisory board (LAB) that is made up of parent, business and community representatives who provide support and act as critical friends, giving feedback and help in implementing changes at the school. This is very effective.

The governing body members play an important role in conducting learning walks and lesson observations from time to time along with LAB meetings. The senior leaders are held to account for the quality of the school's performance, as they monitor the school's actions, including the achievements and personal development of all students. The GEMS vice president-school has regular meetings with senior and middle leaders from the academic and administrative team.

The school writes an annual budget which is checked by the finance team at corporate office before being approved by GEMS Education Board. The financial budgeting is linked to the school improvement plan which aims to develop the facilities, improving resources (including human resources) and improve learning and teaching.

The executive principal, working in a very effective team with the head of school, provides outstanding leadership. Leaders at all levels inspire and set a clear strategic direction for the school: they are committed to the pursuit of excellence through mission statement "Empowering learners, Creating the future": there is a consistency in their core purpose of providing a high-quality British education at an affordable price.

All senior and middle leaders have demonstrated secure knowledge of the NCFE and other related documents. They aim to ensure that the school is fully inclusive and are committed to supporting best practices in learning, teaching and assessment. Distributive leadership is encouraged at all levels and this has established a culture of high expectations and a drive for continuous school improvement.

All staff have a defined portfolio covering internal and community responsibilities, which provides a cohesive framework for strategic and operational leadership. Leaders at all levels promote positive relationships. Celebrations of 'staff birthdays', 'principal's commendations' and the 'gratitude bowl' have strengthened the relationship between staff and leadership team, and thus promoted high standards.

Student voice is a particular strength at TWS. It provides drive from the students themselves in pursuit of school excellence. The student leadership team meet with the executive principal and head of school regularly to share views and get an update on the progress of their initiatives. Student leaders provide peer guidance and innovative initiatives at a TWS and an international level. This promotes leadership opportunities for students to develop and enhance their leadership, critical thinking and decision-making skills.

Students' emotional, physical and social wellbeing is monitored regularly by senior and middle leaders. Issues such as obesity, smoking, health and hygiene and bullying are being focused upon and effective corrective measures have been implemented to ensure that they are not continued. Sensitivity and concern during the recent pandemic has helped students and their families through the difficult times. According to the most recent student wellbeing survey, 84% reported that students are aware of the school behaviour policy and actions taken against bullying. Periodic medical check-ups (for example dental, eye tests, hair care) provided for students to ensure healthy living. Partnerships with charity organizations such as *Dubai Cares* are also well received by students who actively appreciate and participate in community service.