



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

Inspection report

**Wesgreen International
School**

**Sharjah
UAE**

Date
Inspection number

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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 pupils; 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 pupils and pupils' 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 110 lesson observations took place, as well as a series of learning walks. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Pupils' workbooks were scrutinised, and discussions were held with the senior staff, the management team, and a range of teachers, parents and groups of pupils. The inspection team were in school for three days.

The lead inspector was Karen Hanratty. The team members were Ian Battersby, Nigel Davis, Andy Smyllie, Amy Murphy and Sarah Pearce.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

As a result of this inspection, the school has shown that it meets the standards for British Schools Overseas, except for those that cannot be achieved legally in the host country. These pertain to aspects of the UK Equality Act 2010. The school actively promotes tolerance and a respect for all human differences, within the confines of the law. This is embedded in the culture and ethos of the school. This judgement is endorsed by the British Government and is valid for three years. The inspection process is quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED).

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

Wesgreen International School provides a good level of education. As a result, students attain well, as demonstrated in external examination results. The care and welfare of students is excellent. Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. Health and safety standards are exemplary. The leadership provided by the principal and other leaders, provides clear and ambitious direction for school development.

3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths at the school, including the following:

- The students, who are proud of their school and value being part of the Wesgreen community
- The positive ethos of the school, as a result of strong, respectful relationships and a clear set of values
- The drive of the school leadership teams, focused on school improvements which will impact directly on student outcomes
- The teachers and other adults in the school, who create a warm, supportive and caring environment
- The emphasis given to students' care and welfare, based on robust safeguarding and child protection practices
- The standards achieved by students, as reflected in external examination results
- Strong links between the school and parents, supported by comprehensive and effective two-way communications
- Rigorous health and safety practices, which are regularly audited and reviewed
- The local advisory board, which acts as a critical friend to the school and provides a local context
- The support and challenge provided to the school by the GEMS board.

3.2 Points for improvement

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

1. To further improve the curriculum, teaching and assessment across the school, by ensuring:
 - the curriculum provides a breadth of opportunity, particularly in creative aspects and curriculum enhancement
 - planning is adapted to meet the needs of individuals and groups of learners
 - all aspects within the EYFS are in line with best UK practice
 - all lessons use time effectively, are well-paced and stimulating, in order to engage students and encourage active and independent learning
 - assessment data is analysed and used effectively, to monitor and track students' progress and inform targeted planning
 - students are given time to respond to and act on the feedback which they receive

2. To evaluate the impact of recent initiatives, including HPL, PERMAH and assessment for learning strategies, to ensure their effectiveness.

4. The context of the school

Full name of School	Wesgreen International School				
Address	Al Muweilah Commercial, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates				
Telephone Number/s	+971 6 5062999				
Fax Number	N/A				
Website Address	https://www.wesgreeninternationalschool-sharjah.com/en/				
Key Email Address/s	registrar_wgp@gemsedu.com				
Headteacher/ Principal	Mr. James McDonald				
Chair of Board of Governors/ Proprietor	Mr. Matthew Burfield				
Age Range	3 – 19 years				
Total number of pupils	3,322	Boys	1,754	Girls	1,568
Numbers by age	0-2 years	0	12-16 years	1,025	
	3-5 years	332	17-18 years	196	
	6-11 years	1,743	18+ years	26	
Total number of part-time children	0				

Wesgreen International School is located in the Al Muweilah Commercial district of Sharjah. It was founded in 1991. In 2018, Wesgreen joined the GEMS group of schools and became a non-selective school. The school delivers the National Curriculum for England, alongside the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for the youngest children and Cambridge iGCSE, AS and A level programmes in the secondary school.

The school is housed in a large, purpose-built campus, divided into four separate sections. The Early Years campus accommodates children from EYFS 1 and 2, and year 1. The primary school is comprised of years 2 to 5 with years 6 to 13 boys and girls based in the segregated secondary campuses. The administration department is housed on the secondary boys' campus.

Age-appropriate specialist facilities are available on each campus. These include libraries, sports halls, gymnasiums and outdoor sporting areas, science laboratories, art rooms, and play/recreation areas as well as state of the art multi-media halls in both secondary campuses.

Wesgreen International School's vision is: "To be the UAE's premier school of choice, by inspiring our students to reach their potential, academically, socially, physically and morally". This is supported by the school motto of "Inspiring Excellence, Empowering Global Minds", which is highly visible around the school.

The Wesgreen student body boasts over 75 different nationalities and staff representing 37 countries. The largest student group is Egyptian, whilst Emiratis make up 34% of the student population.

The school identifies the recruitment and retention of good teaching staff as a significant challenge. Student punctuality is also a concern, due to heavy and unpredictable traffic congestion in the roads around the school.

4.1 British nature of the school

Wesgreen International School has a clear British style. The indicators for this are:

- Delivery of the National Curriculum for England, EYFS programme and iGCSE, AS and A level programmes
- Year groups and key stages which mirror the British education system
- The structure of the academic year into three distinct terms and the timetable of the school day
- The school's House system, which is used to promote a sense of identity, as well as for competitions, events and as part of the reward system
- A wealth of opportunities for student leadership across the school, for example, house captains, prefects, head boy and girl, student council, ECO warriors, and classroom leaders and monitors. Many of these positions are filled through a robust democratic process.
- The breadth of sporting opportunities which are actively promoted and eagerly followed
- The school uniform
- The school's core values of excellence, curiosity, respect, responsibility, humility and integrity which mirror some of the finest British values
- The teachers, most of whom are UK trained or have experience working in British style international schools
- The leadership structure within the school
- High quality classroom resources, many of which are sourced from the UK
- Respect shown for, and participation in, key British events, for example the Queen's platinum jubilee which was celebrated in school, and her recent death, which was marked with a two-minute silence on the day of her funeral.

5. *Standard 1*

The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided fully meets the standards for BSO, with many good elements.

5.1 Curriculum

The curriculum meets the standard for BSO; some elements are good. It provides a solid foundation for students' learning and development.

The curriculum is aligned with the National Curriculum for England. In EYFS, the curriculum has been tailored to match children's needs; there is a sharp focus on language acquisition through a visual and interactive phonics programme, and talk-based approach to learning. Learning environments are designed to facilitate personal, social, emotional, and physical development: teachers use space creatively. Phonics teaching has been extended into years 2 and 3 to address learning gaps following the pandemic. Following a curriculum review, a thematic approach has been adopted in the primary phase, incorporating vocabulary development through the Frayer model and direct instruction where appropriate. A 'flourish' group for children with more complex needs utilises further assessments to ensure an appropriately adapted curriculum for core subjects.

Subject leads are enthusiastic and knowledgeable; they meet across phases to ensure progression of the planned curriculum, and this is reviewed regularly. Quantitative and qualitative data supports this. An analysis of PASS data on student response to the curriculum is being acted upon. The ongoing integration of High Performance Learning (HPL) in an age-appropriate format will enable students to become reflective and empowered learners; leaders are passionate about this area of curriculum development. Academic outcomes and achievement compared to starting points indicate that students are well prepared for external examinations.

Lesson planning is highly structured; in the best lessons, this results in appropriate levels of support and challenge for all learners.

Adoption of the PERMAH model complements the required Moral Education programme, and supports students' PSHE education and preparedness for the next stage of their lives. Careers and university guidance is a current focus and is improving.

The curriculum pathways for students at Key Stage 4 and 5 offer breadth and challenge; however, support for EAL learners in secondary is not as effective as in the primary phase. The range of options subjects on offer reflects the school's context.

Curriculum enrichment opportunities have been hindered by the pandemic; creative ways to continue these despite restrictions have been implemented. The extra-curricular programme in primary features Response to Intervention (RTI), focusing on closing learning gaps in numeracy and literacy in a fun and engaging manner. Themed weeks connect learning to real life situations and problems: the STEAM Fair utilises project-based learning to address future challenges and promote transdisciplinary thinking, independence, and creativity. In FS1, students celebrated Peace Day through activities focused on personal, social, emotional and physical development. All KS5 students participate in the International Award. Many ECAs are sports-based; the school acknowledges the need for greater breadth and is planning to address this.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment meets the standard for BSO: a significant proportion of teaching is good or better.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and detailed plans are in place to facilitate a consistent delivery of the curriculum. In the best lessons, teachers use a variety of approaches to engage the children. For example, in an FS2 class the children were asked to help a rabbit puppet find out how many bears were in the box. Children were praised for being ‘hard working hedgehogs’, a reference to the values and attitudes of the HPL programme. In a few lessons, students arrive late, there is a lack of urgency to begin learning and at times, the pace of the lesson is slow, resulting in low-level disruption. This was observed in some secondary lessons. Where learning is most productive, teachers have good time management skills and ensure behaviour expectations are known and understood by the students; throughout the lesson, they are insisted upon and consistently applied.

The most effective teachers provide differentiated activities to ensure that learning is matched to the needs of all students in the class, allowing all students to acquire new knowledge and make progress. For example, in a year 1 class, some children were supported by a teaching assistant (TA) to make a shopping list as a group, while others independently created their lists before being challenged to extend their learning by writing a sentence about what they wanted to buy. In a year 9 mathematics lesson, the most able were challenged with a competitive task, whilst others tackled supported tasks, either self-selected or at the teacher’s direction, and had access to separate support materials to scaffold their learning.

Wesgreen is an inclusive school. The student support department provides support lessons, individual education plans (IEPs), support and guidance specifically for students of exam age, and general guidance and training to staff. The number of ‘students of determination’ and students with English as an additional language is increasing. Strategies, such as ‘Quality First Teaching’, ‘Response to Intervention’ and the ‘Flourish’ programme in primary, and the ‘Peer Mentorship Programme’ in secondary are implemented by the student support staff to enable all students to make progress. The impact of these programmes is being monitored and evaluated.

The school has invested in a range of resources, and these are used to enhance students’ learning. For example, in a year 5 science lesson, students used iPads to scan a QR code. The link took them to relevant information which they used to research relative gestation periods in mammals. In year 11, students used different indicators to determine pH levels; the students commented that they learn more from practical lessons as the learning is active.

In EYFS, space is used creatively to develop an inspiring learning environment, with multiple areas to support the development of learning in the prime areas; communication and language; physical development; and personal, social and emotional development. Best practice was observed where teachers encouraged children to ‘choose their learning’, then supported individuals in the different areas. For example, on the International Day of Peace, an FS1 teacher introduced a finger-painting activity then allowed children to choose their learning and supported them accordingly. Continuous provision was evident in all EYFS classrooms; however, the full benefit of this approach is reduced by the necessary provision for Arabic language and Islamic studies.

A clear framework is in place for the assessment of pupils, highlighting both formative and summative expectations. In EYFS, baseline assessments are recorded on ‘Evidence Me’. Students are teacher-assessed daily and summative assessments are carried out at the end of each term. This is supported by continuing teacher assessment. Primary students carry out pre- and post-unit, and termly assessments in mathematics and science, and cold and final writes in English. The data is recorded on ‘GO4Schools’, a system that was introduced during the previous term. In both EYFS and primary, termly pupil progress meetings are held with heads of year and the head of school, to analyse data and plan interventions.

In the best lessons, formative assessment strategies such as targeted questioning is used by teachers to check students’ understanding. For example, in a year 2 science lesson on materials, the teacher proposed unusual materials to make common objects, such as a cardboard window and newspaper umbrella. Children were challenged to explain “Why wouldn’t it be a good material?” and “What could we use instead?”. The school’s marking and assessment policy outlines strategies for providing constructive feedback to students and for students to use this to deepen their understanding.

End of unit assessments and end of term exams are used in secondary to monitor levels of attainment and progress. Target grades are produced based on CAT4 assessments. ‘GO4Schools’ is being introduced to facilitate a more in-depth analysis of the data to support students in the preparation for iGCSEs, AS, and A Level examinations. Weekly meetings for core subjects, and bi-weekly meetings for non-core subjects are scheduled so heads of department can discuss the data with members of the senior leadership team (SLT).

There is confidence amongst the SLT that the newly implemented approach to monitoring and tracking pupil progress will be impactful.

5.3 Standards achieved by pupils

Students' behaviour around the school is very good; students are warm, friendly and respectful to peers, staff and visitors. Behaviour management systems are based on positive reinforcement, with clear expectations and consequences for infractions. However, persistent low-level disruption takes place in some lessons where the pace of learning is too slow to gain students' full attention. Expectations around behaviour and uniform are being reinforced since the return to face-to-face learning. At the time of the inspection, attendance across the school was satisfactory when compared with UK expectations.

The standards achieved by children in the EYFS and primary are good. Children have a positivity about their learning, and enjoy school life. In the EYFS, the children are baseline assessed on entry in the seven areas of learning. At identified checkpoints across the EYFS, children are reassessed and the data recorded on 'Evidence Me'. At the end of FS2, children attain slightly higher than their peers in the UK in the prime areas, with 79% of children having high or extremely high levels of engagement, and 90% having high or extremely high levels of emotional wellbeing.

GL progress tests in mathematics, English and science are used from year 2 onwards as a means of benchmarking children and to measure progress. End of key stage data shows that children in year 6 perform higher than children in the UK in mathematics, and significantly higher in English and science. This is especially commendable considering the majority are not first language English speakers. There is a focus on raising the levels of progress made by children who have been impacted in recent years by the pandemic and curriculum realignment.

Standards achieved by students in the secondary school are good. CAT4, NGRT and internal baseline data provides a benchmark to support teaching, and to measure progress and value-added data. Progress test data for science and mathematics show that an increasing majority of students are making expected or better progress. At iGCSE AS and A Level, student outcomes are excellent and exceed UK national averages. Attainment and progress are tracked and monitored at departmental and whole school level, reviewed by middle leaders and interventions planned in response to this. Previously, the school focused on attainment but the focus is moving to looking at progress over time and providing appropriate pathways for all learners. This will continue to ensure that students are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good, with some elements that are excellent.

Students enjoy school and many state that they are happy at Wesgreen International School. Students feel their teachers and other staff care about them and respect them; they feel that school is a “second family” and a “close-knit community”. This is supported by positive practices such as the use of PERMAH and an emphasis on well-being initiatives. Kindness is highlighted throughout the school; there are displays encouraging random acts of kindness in KS 1 and 2, and a kindness calendar is published that urges students to be kind throughout the month.

Students are given opportunities to develop their spirituality through curricular links, activities and displays. For example, students in year 4 developed lists of the characteristics of groups of vertebrates. In pairs, they carefully studied photographs of two different types of fish, and of a newt and a toad, to find similarities in their appearance. Some students expressed wonder as they eagerly pointed out similarities to their partner. The Islamic faith features prominently in the spiritual development of students at Wesgreen. This is evident in the students’ successes in Quran recitation and memorisation competitions in the UAE. Attractive and interactive displays throughout the school celebrate Islamic learning and faith.

Behaviour is generally good; students move around the school quietly and calmly. Any low-level behaviour issues in lessons are usually swiftly addressed through the use of reward and sanction models appropriate to the phase of the school, such as the ‘Superhero’ charts in the primary school. Students interviewed showed an astounding level of empathy for others when discussing minor incidents of poor behaviour; a primary student said that a student “might have an emotional reason” for the behaviour, and a secondary student stated that “usually bad behaviour is not their fault”. Instances of bullying are very rare in the school.

Students demonstrate respect and tolerance for each other, staff and other adults; inspectors noted that they were routinely greeted and approached politely and enthusiastically by students. Through moral education, primary students reported they were taught to “treat others as we want to be treated”; students are encouraged to empathise with their peers in difficult social situations. They know the difference between right and wrong and are supported to make the right choices, both to impact themselves and others. Students reported that they monitor the behaviour of their peers and will let someone know if they are not following the rules. More formally, student leaders are empowered to reward students who are observed as making good choices. Democracy is built into a range of student leadership opportunities in both the primary and secondary schools.

The school actively promotes tolerance, a respect for human differences and acceptance of a range of lifestyles; this is achieved within the laws of the host country. Values are instilled in students through both the curriculum and extra-curricular activities, as well as implicitly through the diverse nature of the school. International Day was referenced by both parents and students as a way of learning about and understanding each other's culture and background appropriately. A secondary student reported that during her A-Level English, she was encouraged to read a range of fiction from authors and cultures around the world, and in humanities in the primary school, students learn about a range of cultures including Egyptian and Chinese.

The views of students are sought on a number of topics, related to both their learning and wider school issues. Students appreciate that their voices are heard. Whilst information gathered is often used to inform the development of initiatives at a staff level, students feel that they are able to have an impact on issues in the school. Examples of this are the student well-being campaigns, House Captains generating ideas for competitions and the resurgence of the school magazine. Students reported they had "endless support" for their endeavours from the staff. Students are also encouraged to come up with their own initiatives, and develop ideas into practice. A recent example of this was the development of a peer mentoring and support project.

The school makes links with the wider community to ensure students are aware of the responsibilities they hold towards their school, their community and the world. Career days, Business Leadership Forum, links with charities and the Duke of Edinburgh International Award are all examples of how students are encouraged to think about their roles as global citizens. There is a strong focus on environmental issues, led by the Eco-Warrior group, who are involved in beach and desert clean-ups, as well as a range of in-school initiatives including building a campus garden. A notable initiative was visits from a local senior citizen care home, where students were encouraged to engage with residents, play board games and learn about the past.

Students are well prepared for each stage of school life and beyond. Before the move to year 2, year 1 students are taken to the primary building to spend a day in the 'big school'. A year 6 student reported that before she had the opportunity to tell her teacher that she was scared about the move to year 6, her teacher took the class on a tour of the secondary buildings, where year 6 is housed: "It was like she could read my mind". Secondary students are prepared for university entrance through the use of Unifrog, university fairs, GEMS for life and careers guidance from the secondary counselling staff, although some students felt they would like some more targeted support for writing university applications.

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

The provision for welfare, health and safety is excellent; it is a key priority for the school.

Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and robust. Systems are monitored and maintained, with a strong designated safeguarding lead (DSL) who oversees the processes in action. All staff receive annual Level 1 and 2 child protection training. School leaders are trained at Level 3 to ensure a strong focus on child protection, with competent support for teachers. Posters displayed around the school ensure that students are familiar with safeguarding leads. Systems for reporting concerns are applied diligently by staff and students alike.

A phrase heard more than once during the inspection was: “Student welfare is at the heart of everything at Wesgreen”. This permeates throughout school life, where relationships are strong between students, and between staff and students. Due to effective procedures and support from counsellors and pastoral teams, students know they are cared for. A series of well-being activities alongside PERMAH further promote student care. The school has a variety of means to support staff, ensuring their well-being needs are also met.

Healthy eating is promoted, and in the large majority of students’ lunchboxes and the canteen this goal is achieved. There is a clear drive to develop the range of healthy options on offer. Water is available at many points around the school to ensure students remain hydrated.

Student leaders are proud to design and lead campaigns concerning anti-bullying and promoting student well-being. Such campaigns promote the visibly excellent behaviour. They are complemented with initiatives put in place by school staff around areas such as online safety; as a result, students feel well cared for.

A major school priority to ensure students are safe and well cared for is clear guidelines, and rigorous risk assessments for school activities, trips, sporting competitions and more. Comprehensive fire evacuation and lockdown procedures are in place and regularly practised during the year. Joint school and Civil Defence training and drills ensure all evacuation requirements and standards are not only met, but exceeded. Regular health and safety audits are conducted within the GEMS group, providing robust checks and recommendations to ensure the highest standards are met and maintained.

Pupils are well supervised whilst in and around the school buildings, and a harmonious atmosphere of respect exists. CCTV is in operation to support campus safety. The maintenance and cleaning staff take a pride in ensuring the school is clean and safe for the whole community. An effective QR code system around school allows any health and safety concerns to be reported immediately, using the school’s management system.

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

The suitability of staff and proprietors meets the requirements for BSO.

The school implements thorough recruitment procedures including advertising, interview processes and checking of references and documentation to ensure that teachers are appropriately qualified and fit to teach the age group and subject areas for which they are employed. Staff who are involved in the recruitment process have all received safer recruitment training. The majority of teachers are UK trained or have experience of working in British style schools. New staff take part in a robust induction programme; this covers matters related to school life as well as sharing wider information about life in the UAE.

Teachers are subject to an initial probationary period, during which they are observed teaching and other aspects of their work are monitored.

All teachers take part in a robust performance management cycle. Targets are agreed between teachers and line managers, which relate to whole school priorities, departmental areas of focus and individual development goals. These are reviewed regularly. The performance management cycle, which includes lesson observations and learning walks, book scrutiny and pupil progress meetings, provides opportunities for teachers to reflect on and develop their practice. Professional development opportunities targeted towards whole school and departmental priorities as well as teachers' self-identified development needs, provide teachers with the opportunity to grow professionally. Leadership training programmes, both from the National Professional Qualification (NPQ) suite of trainings and training developed within the GEMS group, prepare staff for the next steps in their careers.

Job descriptions are provided for all staff; teachers, leaders, and administration and clerical staff. These clearly outline roles and expectations. Administration teams are led by specialists in their field, bringing a wealth of knowledge and experience to areas such as human resources (HR), IT and accounts. These are supported by teams in the GEMS head office.

The school owners provide support and guidance with the strategic development of the school, whilst entrusting the day to day running and decision making to the principal and senior team.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The school provides a good, very safe and secure environment for the students in which to learn; it fully meets the requirements for BSO.

The school campus is divided into 4 main areas catering for EYFS, primary, secondary girls and secondary boys. Classrooms and other areas are bright and well-resourced, with space used creatively to enable the curriculum delivery. Displays are of a high standard, with an increasing emphasis on celebrating high quality students' work. Facilities include a generous number of classrooms, science and ICT labs, art and performing arts rooms, as well as multimedia rooms which enhance the learning for the students. They are well-appointed, well-resourced and with appropriate safety equipment to ensure students can learn safely.

Physical education (PE) facilities for outdoor provision alongside small and large sports halls for both boys and girls allow for the provision of a wide range of sports such as football, basketball, netball and volleyball. A small and shallow swimming pool allows students in primary to begin to learn to swim. These are all well maintained areas that are safe and conducive to physical development and allow competitive as well as participation sports to take place.

The four clinics are expertly staffed and well resourced, particularly in the newer primary block which has three separate treatment rooms. First aid boxes are available around the school for the trained security and first aiders to use. Modifications have been made to the school building to allow access for all, including toilet facilities, lifts and stair lifts.

Break time facilities allow younger students to develop physical skills and older students to choose areas according to their interests. Outdoor recreation spaces all include covered areas, providing shade in the warmer months.

Highly professional and well-trained maintenance and cleaning staff ensure that buildings are maintained to a high standard, clean and safe; students and staff take a visible pride in their building.

Ambitious plans to remove many external dividing walls and develop the school's outside spaces into 'Forest School' style areas will further enhance the site.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information to current and prospective Wesgreen parents and carers is excellent; it fully meets the standard for BSO.

The school's website is clear and informative, with key school policies easily available. The website details the school's vision, mission and values, together with a welcome message from the principal. Details of the school's academic performance and university destinations supports new parents well. A 'chat' feature allows for instant communication and answers to any queries.

The 'GEMS Connect' application for parents is outstanding, providing a clear communication tool, as well as the facility to pay school and bus transport fees. The app allows parents to receive real-time information about their child's location during their bus trip home. This centralisation of communication to parents is a real strength. Communications between home and school are stored on the app, providing a useful repository for parents to review information.

Parents are kept well informed about school events and the programme of study their child is following. Weekly newsletters from each year group in the secondary school and class teachers and year leaders in the primary are emailed to parent; these are also stored on 'GEMS Connect'. A range of social media platforms are used to push messages and celebrations of learning and events across the school. These fast, informal communications are greatly appreciated by the parents.

As face-to-face meetings are now recommencing following the pandemic, the school was able to hold coffee mornings for parents, providing information specific to individual year groups, in the early weeks of the school year. A programme of meetings related to curriculum areas, subject options and other important information is being planned.

Students' academic progress is communicated via regular reporting cycles, including written reports and parent-teacher conferences. Although the number of contacts varies between year groups, there is a consistent school-based system to demonstrate performance and provide individual feedback for each child.

The opinions of parents are sought through regular surveys; these usually take place twice a year. Data is analysed and action plans developed to address any common areas of concern. Parents who spoke to inspectors stated that the school communicates effectively throughout all sections of the school. They also feel that their opinions are listened to, considered carefully and, when appropriate, acted upon.

11. Standard 7

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school fully complies with the BSO standard for handling complaints.

A clear and robust policy regarding parental complaints is readily available on the school website. This clearly describes the importance the school places on reacting in a timely manner to any identified issues, and how the partnership between home and school can strengthen learning. It also contains information regarding complaints from students.

Whilst procedures vary slightly for different types of complaints, all have clear processes, which are recorded transparently by the school. The school aims for all issues to be resolved by the class, form or subject teachers, in the first instance. Open communications are encouraged to de-escalate any potential tensions. If parents are not satisfied with the outcome of their initial complaint, it is moved up through different stages of leadership. This may ultimately include the principal/CEO.

Parents who are still not in agreement with the outcome may take their complaint to the GEMS head office.

The complaints log demonstrates a low level of formal parental complaints, with documented resolutions.

12. Standard 8

Leadership and management of the school

The leadership and management of the school are good with many excellent features. The leadership is the driving force behind the outstanding features of the school. Clear structures have been established across a range of school functions, which provide consistency and raise standards. These include expectations around learning, teaching and assessment. As a result, students make good progress and attain well. The welfare and safeguarding of students are a high priority, with robust procedures in place; this is a particular strength of the school.

The GEMS group senior leadership provide effective challenge and support, whilst working with the principal and vice principal in developing the strategic direction of the school. The recently appointed principal and vice principal, working closely with the senior leadership team, are ambitious for the school. The school's vision: "Inspiring excellence, empowering global minds" is well embedded. The school's values of excellence, curiosity, respect, responsibility, humility and integrity frame the vision effectively.

School self-evaluation is thorough, and feeds into whole school development priorities. There is a clear link between self-evaluation and improvement planning, including staff performance management and CPD. School priorities cascade down from the principal and GEMS board, as well as filtering up from teachers' needs in the classroom. As a result, there is a commonality amongst performance management targets, as well as scope for individual development priorities to be met. Levels of staff satisfaction with CPD are high, with 87% of staff reporting that the approach was effective in improving their practice.

The ethos of the school encourages strong relationships, which are a strength of the school. Morale across the school is high. Parents, students and staff all value the support which they receive. Communications with parents are particularly effective, using a range of strategies to ensure key messages are transmitted quickly and efficiently. High visibility of the leadership team and an open doors policy ensures that any parental concerns are dealt with rapidly. The local advisory board comprises a small group of parents, the vice-principal, principal and GEMS cluster manager. The board acts as a critical friend to the school, providing effective two-way communications between the parent body and school leaders, whilst also helping to provide a local context.

The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and finances are carefully managed. As a result, the school is well resourced to meet learning needs across subjects and age groups. Strong links exist within the GEMS cluster, providing expertise, support and guidance in all aspects of school operations.