

Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS)

Verification Report

School name:	GEMS Cambridge International School, Abu Dhabi
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Award verifier:	Andy Taylor
Award adviser (if applicable):	School Led Approach
Date of verification:	28 June 2021

Commentary on the evidence provided:

- The change team is made up a cross section of the school community ensuring all stakeholders have a voice.
- There are a range of key policies which support the school's approach to wellbeing.
- The school has identified key school improvement priorities, of which aspects of the Wellbeing Award (WAS) are an integral part.
- The school has developed a rich curriculum and provides students with the knowledge, skills and understanding to support their own wellbeing.
- The support of all stakeholders' wellbeing is interwoven into all aspects of school life.
- There are many CPD opportunities for staff and as a result, adults in school have the skills to support students' and other colleagues' wellbeing.
- Students contribute to the developments, for example they have taken the lead in the organisation of the forthcoming Time Capsule project.
- The school provides a wide range of interventions which are bespoke to students' needs. Staff have been provided with very specific training to support students.

Strengths identified during verification:

Leadership and management

- The WAS award has been used as a framework to benchmark the current provision. As a result, leaders and staff have a clear view of their effective practice. Underpinned by a clear commitment, leaders also have a vision of how to further develop the school's provision to support emotional wellbeing and positive mental health. This commitment extends beyond the school to the families. The school provides a range of flexible financial options when needed by parents. The school also supports students attending university.
- Leaders have developed effective strategies to ensure they support and promote staffs' mental health and wellbeing. Furthermore, to complement these strategies, both staff and students are encouraged to take active steps to support their own wellbeing.
- Leaders operate a genuine "open-door" policy which is very much appreciated by both staff and parents.

Staff

- Staff feel highly valued by school leaders and appreciate the regular "check-ins" to see how they are. This support starts from the very moment staff are appointed and transition to Abu Dhabi.
- Staff have real ownership of all the improvements that have been made. Investing in staffs' professional development has ensured these developments are sustainable.
- Within the school team, there is a real energy and determination to provide students with a safe and warm environment in which to thrive. The staff work together effectively and support each other.
- Staff have built, through developing effective partnerships with local agencies such as Lighthouse Arabia, a network of support for students.
- Systems in the school, to both record and share information, are in place. Consequently, students are well looked after and supported.

Students

- One student, reflecting the views of the group, stated, "...the school is a place where wellbeing is very important, it's like my second home."
- Strong relationships exist between the staff and students. Moreover, there was recognition that staff will do all they can to help and are tenacious in their efforts.
- Students talked about the different strategies they have used to help them keep healthy which included talking about their feelings. They understood the link between physical and mental wellbeing.
- At key points, students support other peers, for example during transition to new year groups.

Parents

- Parents recognise the work of the school in supporting both the students and also the wider family.
- Parents appreciate the focus on the personal development of their children, as well as being kept fully informed about their child's academic achievement. One parent stated, "...staff members always have the learners at heart".
- The school provides care for all the students and parents felt there is "a real community feel" which they value.

Impact:

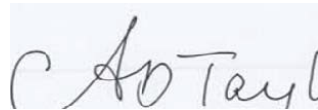
- The school has invested substantially to ensure the staff team is able to provide students and the wider family with the support they need.
- The impact of the school's work to promote wellbeing has been highlighted and recognised by ADEK and other external agencies. In addition, detailed case studies provided by the school evidenced, not only the support provided to students, but the dedication and determination of the staff.
- A culture of mutual respect has resulted in a team whose morale is high and a staff who are proud of their school.

Areas for development:

- Further develop the role of wellbeing champions across both the staff and student body.
- To create opportunities for more "informal sessions" for staff to seek guidance and support.
- To continue to provide staff with a broad range of CPD opportunities to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to support students and colleagues.

Verifier recommendation:

- GEMS Cambridge International School, Abu Dhabi to be awarded the WAS Award for Schools for a period of three years.



Andy Taylor
Awards Verifier

Head teacher comments:

May we use your comment for website/marketing purposes? **Yes / No** (please delete)

Managing Director comments:

On behalf of Optimus Education Congratulations on successfully completing the Wellbeing Award for Schools.



Steph Reynolds
Interim Head of Optimus Education