



**British School
Overseas**
Inspected by Penta International

Inspection Report

GEMS Cambridge International School

**Abu Dhabi
United Arab Emirates**

Date 31st October – 2nd November 2021
Inspection number 20211031

31st October – 2nd November 2021

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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 the 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 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, all teachers were observed by inspectors. School documentation and policies were analysed, and data reviewed. Students' workbooks were scrutinised. Discussions were held with the senior staff, the management teams, a range of teachers, parents and groups of students. Two and a half school days were monitored. Covid-19 precautions were observed.

The lead inspector was Dr Mark Evans. Also in school were Jennie Burke, Samantha Cuthbert, Ruth Duncan, Lydie Gonzales, Emma Mousley and Mary Stuart; the other team member was Ciaran Cunningham Watson, working remotely.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

GEMS Cambridge International School, Abu Dhabi (CIA) meets all standards for British Schools Overseas.

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

The school ensures excellent academic attainment and progress for learners. It provides outstanding value for money. The learners are well known to staff and supported appropriately. The manner in which the Covid-19 pandemic has been handled is very positive. Students' behaviour is excellent, and they clearly enjoy being at school. Parents and students alike are very supportive of the school.

3.1 What the school does well

The school has many strengths including:

- confident, articulate and happy learners
- academic standards and external examination results that are well above what might be expected
- outstanding spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development of the learners
- a passionate, dynamic and focussed principal with very effective senior and middle leadership teams
- strong and positive relationships between staff, learners and parents
- outstanding day-to-day organisation and logistics
- strong relationships between teachers and learners, and learners and their peers
- it is a safe, healthy and learning-focussed environment
- excellent links with parents and the community
- the commitment of staff, including administrative and ancillary staff, to the well-being of students.

3.2 Points for improvement

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

- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning, by considering the following:
 - The development and sharing of a clear definition of outstanding learning for the whole school, in the context of CIA;
 - Enhancement of the manner in which HPL provides support for all learners;
 - Augmentation of outcomes for learners with SEN through clearer setting of learning objectives;
 - Identification and sharing more best practice through peer lesson observations;
 - Confirmation that all teachers give ample time for reflection in lessons and require students to reason clearly and to think deeply.
- Improvement of learners' skills in thinking creatively, imaginatively and in solving scientific and other problems independently
- Ensuring that the school's development plan not only meets ADEK requirements, but also creates a clear and strategic pathway to even more school improvement.

4. The context of the school

Full name of school	GEMS Cambridge International School, Abu Dhabi		
Address	Baniyas East, P.O. Box 56825, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates		
Main telephone #	+971 (2) 5104343		
Website	www.gemscambridgeinternationalschool-abudhabi.com		
Email	k.hornsby_cia@gemsedu.com		
Principal	Kelvin Hornsby		
Chair of board of governors	Sir Christopher Stone		
Age range	3-18 years		
Number of students	Total = 3,686	Boys = 2,000	Girls = 1,686
Student numbers by age on date of entry	(0-2 years)	(3-5 years)	(6-11 years)
	0	438	1,820
Student numbers by age on date of entry	(12-16 years)	(17-18 years)	(18+ years)
	1,174	254	0
Total number of part-time students	0		

GEMS Cambridge International School, Abu Dhabi (CIA) is a fully inclusive, privately owned, coeducational school that caters for children from 3 to 18 years. The school is located in the Baniyas East community of Abu Dhabi. It opened in 2013 and currently has 3,686 learners on roll: there is a long waiting list for places. The school has a gender split from Year 7 onwards, but from Years 10 to 13 option classes are mixed to allow breadth and balance. The third Year 13 cohort have just graduated.

There are a total of 88 countries represented in the school. The largest groups represented are Emirati – 22%, Indian – 18%, Pakistani – 15%, and Egyptian – 12%. Most learners (92%) speak English as an additional language, and depending on their level of need, receive extra support where appropriate. There are 125 learners, approximately 3% of the school, who have a recognised diagnosis of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). CIA is seen as having an inclusive approach and has an open-door policy, trying to meet the needs of learners whilst giving them access to mainstream education.

The principal has been in post for six years along with the vice principal/head of secondary and head of primary. A team of 200 teachers, the majority of whom are trained in the UK,

provide a ratio of, on average, 1 teacher to every 18 learners. Teacher turnover is low, consistently under 10% over the last 3 years. Learners are supported by a team of 30 teaching assistants and 30 learning support assistants, the latter supporting those with more significant learning needs.

4.1 British nature of the school

The school displays a British nature throughout all areas of the school. It follows the English National curriculum requirements and is organised following structures found in UK schools. The school's policies and practices are based on the expectations and procedures of British Education.

The school has many UK trained teachers. The UK's National Professional Qualifications in School leadership are offered to staff as part of their continued professional development, to ensure that they are up to date with current practice in England. The school also supports NQTs through early career pathways, following the Department for Education (DfE) guidance.

The school adopts the National Curriculum for England and policies follow guidance set out by the DfE. The school also follows the Early Years (EYFS) Framework in the Foundation Stage. In the past two years they have introduced *Read Write Inc.* within Key Stage (KS) 1 to support development of English language and literacy. Secondary students continue their studies journey through GCSE and A-level examinations. The school implements pastoral structures including uniform, behaviour policy, student council and a house system and English is the language of instruction across all National Curriculum subjects, other than in foreign languages and those subjects required in Abu Dhabi.

The school aims to ensure that they are current with developments within England with close working partnerships with Optimus Education and High Performance Learning Associates.

5. Standard 1

The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided is excellent and fully meets the requirements of the BSO standards framework.

5.1 Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum at CIA is excellent.

The school provides a rich, broad and balanced curriculum. It offers appropriate frameworks for use in EYFS through to Key Stages 3, 4 and 5; this includes provision for IGCSE and A-level programmes of study. The school follows the National Curriculum for England and Wales and the principal language for instruction is English. The curriculum ensures that local requirements are fully met. Arabic language is taught to native and non-native speakers. A strength of the school is the scale of inclusivity that it generates and the range of ability levels for which it provides.

The curriculum is carefully designed, reviewed and updated to meet the needs and demands from parents. The curriculum meets the requirements needed at all stages of the school through appropriate planning. A comprehensive framework is provided throughout the school, to build upon the vision they have for their learners. High Performance Learning (HPL) provides a clear focus and culture of learning within the school. The specific language for learning in relation to values, attitudes and attributes helps to make learners resilient, independent, critical thinkers. The curriculum is adapted and checked in accordance with the HPL attributes; it is regularly adapted according to styles of learning. This results in a clear curriculum road map, which also facilitates curriculum celebrations in the school.

School learners come with a wide range of abilities. Specialists are in school regularly, including behavioural and speech and language, to support the development of learners. Nurture groups have been provided to support those learners who are not ready to go into mainstream classes. They engage in a bespoke programme of therapy, with the aim of introducing them into regular lessons. Overall, teachers deliver lessons to be inclusive of all levels of ability; standards remain high but realistically achievable. Teachers are well supported with resources and they make the best use of them during their lessons.

The school's curriculum includes a wide range of educational provision for its learners. The core subjects of English, mathematics and science, provide a solid foundation and barometer for the measuring of teaching and learning at CIA.

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Learners benefit from a wide range of subject areas of learning, including: Arabic, ICT, the arts, PE and music. The school also facilitates opportunities for the personal development of learners, through a wide range of assemblies, sports activities and enrichment clubs.

The school has a structured pastoral system with houses and tutor groups operating within it. CIA has designed its own PSHE curriculum that is delivered throughout as part of a greater pastoral programme, that encompasses school initiatives and events. Transition from primary into the secondary school is positive and well established; parents receive relevant communications in advance and are supported throughout the process.

Secondary students have access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance. This is led by an effective head of sixth form: extra provision is given through the use of external agencies and platforms, including *LIFOLOGY* and *Unifrog*.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment across the school is excellent: there is good and outstanding practice evident in classrooms in all key stages.

Teachers work hard to enable learners to shape their own learning. The school follows a dedicated strategy to help learners become more creative. CIA has actively created a culture of ownership for learners and generated many opportunities for them to take up leadership projects themselves. Learners lead on a number of whole school projects such as mental health awareness and world earth days.

Relationships between teachers and students are outstanding: warm, professional, caring and strongly focussed on learning. In lessons, teachers are confident and offer lots of praise and encouragement. Teachers manage students' behaviour very effectively. Classroom time is well managed, and pace is normally appropriate.

Teachers have secure knowledge of the English National Curriculum and plan purposeful lessons which both sustain students' interest and often challenge their thinking. Even in non-lesson periods, there is a strong focus on learning. For example, in one FS 'snack and chat' time, there were well-orchestrated routines in the run up to the period, with effective packing away, sitting in the carpet, waiting to visit the bathroom and sanitising hands. Students were able to collect their own snack box, move to their allocated and proceed to open the boxes and eat independently. Almost all snack boxes were filled with healthy food: fruit, vegetables, cheese, yoghurt. The students communicated confidently with each other and with the adults in the room. There was a very calm atmosphere and social as well as personal development was significant.

Teachers also challenge the learners. In one Year 1 science lesson, there were lots of open-ended questioning, seeking answers by asking 'how/what/who/can you work out/ give me an example of...' In the best lessons, there are obviously well-embedded routines and students demonstrate respectful behaviour towards their peers and adults in the room, by putting their hands up, taking turns, listening and responding to others' ideas/thoughts. Students show great confidence in their teachers: they are happy to 'have a go' and share their answers / ask questions. The best lessons are fast paced and keep everyone on task: there is no time for anything except learning.

In one Year 5 mathematics lesson, there was excellent use of mathematical language. Explanations were modelled clearly using the interactive panel. Additional intervention was given to various groups to provide further differentiated support and to extend their understanding. Good use of questioning prompts like 'why?' and 'tell me how you know that' were used.

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Learners used technology to annotate the diagrams to support them though some found this trickier. Worksheets were available for those who did not have devices. Similarly, in a Year 6 English lesson, the teachers ensured clear understanding of how the learners were showing progress. They were asked to share what they were learning and why. All could name and explain the key features of the genre which the task was linked to. There was a clear focus on language and description within the lesson which extended understanding and purpose.

In some of the best lessons in primary and secondary, students were highly engaged and enjoyed working independently because of the high expectations set by the teachers. The students' level of understanding was checked throughout the lesson time with effective questioning. Cold calling was used as well as making use of Teams Posts and Padlet so that the students could display their knowledge and gain instant feedback from their teacher. The students' level of understanding was probed and further information was teased from them. Able students had the opportunity to engage with stretch activities in both of these lessons. In one secondary French lesson, the activity was set up to allow students to justify their misconceptions whilst in a science lesson the teacher brought the class together when she noticed a common misconception which she then explained. In both lessons strong teacher/student relationships were evident and the students had a positive attitude towards the lesson. Students spoke with confidence about their learning.

Resources are plentiful and used well by teachers to enable students to learn easily. The effective organisation by the teaching staff with the quality and range of resources they were able to use, supported high quality learning. Teachers have secure knowledge of the English National Curriculum and learning objectives are set for all lessons and many of the learners are well aware of the purpose and direction of learning.

Assessment policies and timetables are in place to monitor students' achievements. These are implemented effectively. Internal assessment processes are coherent and consistent being linked to the school's curriculum standards. External benchmarking is conducted at the start and end of each academic year in all year groups and this data is used to set targets, measure progress and adapt teaching accordingly. Teachers have very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of their learners.

There is effective use made of EYFS baseline assessments, CAT 4, Pass and HPL attitudinal surveys. These are used to target set and GL Progress Tests across KS2 and 3 enable external quality assurance to check learner progress. In KS4 and 5, the use of mock examinations provides extensive and regular assessment information for teachers to adapt strategies to ensure that any knowledge gaps are filled and that significant value is added when measured against 'CAT4 if challenge' targets, and ALPS predictors across all subjects.

The school analyses learners' attainment carefully and compares it with other British curriculum schools, especially within the GEMS group, to ensure that learners are achieving competitive standards and are high performers.

5.3 Standards achieved by students

CIA students make strong progress and achieve excellent results in externally validated examinations, for example at GCSE and A-level.

Foundation Stage (FS) 2 teaching is aligned to the 2021 EYFS framework where baselines show that the majority enter FS2 working below the expectations in English and mathematics. They make excellent progress.

Read Write Inc is used from Term 2 in FS1 to teach phonics and reading until the end of Year 2. The Year 1 *Phonics Check* is used to compare standards to UK expectations with an improving trend over the past 3 years. The majority of students are now achieving the expected standard in the Year 1.

The school identifies the level of language proficiency within the first 4 weeks of the academic year according to the categories of new to English, early acquisition, developing competency, competent and fluent. The students in each category are identified within each class and year group: appropriate actions are identified and actioned.

Learning Ladders is used within the primary school. This is combined with annual GL Progress Tests to triangulate externally accredited attainment and progress year on year. Internal data and external data are broadly in line. Primary teacher assessments show most students are working at expectation or above. There is generally an increasing trend in attainment, as shown by GL Progress Test results. Most learners make better than expected progress over time, as seen in the three-year trends. They are capable, conscientious and respond well to new opportunities. They like to take responsibility for their own learning.

Achievement at GCSE and A-level is significantly higher than UK and international averages. For both GCSE and A-level performance, across all subjects the ALPS Quality Indicators are at the highest levels. Over the last two examination series, almost all learners have taken external examinations.

The number of students completing A-level examinations have increased significantly over the past three years: the percentage of students achieving A* to B grades has also increased significantly with 78% of students achieving these grades. GCSE results also follow a similar pattern where most recent results show 77% of students achieved grades 9 to 5 in 2020-21.

CAT4 data is used to identify targets, and progress is assessed against the CAT4 'if challenged' targets for GCSE which shows the percentage of students either achieving or outperforming CAT4 'if challenged' targets has significantly increased over the past 2 years in nearly all subjects.

19 students achieved full marks in one or more of their GCSE or A-level examinations across mathematics, biology, chemistry and physics. The Year 13 psychology results were outstanding with a 100% pass rate, 75% of grades being A-B, and 50% of the students achieving a grade A. Last year in their A-Level examinations, 100% of students entered gained A*-B in PE, French, computer science, Spanish and Arabic. More than 70% of students gained A*-B information technology (IT), physics, mathematics, chemistry and biology.

In the summer series of examinations, 47 learners achieved the top grades across their chosen subjects at GCSE, AS and A-level standard. CIA was sampled across three subjects during the summer of 2021 with no corrections to grades identified by the Cambridge Examination Awarding Body. The school was also recognised by both Cambridge and Oxford AQA as being a centre of 'Best practice' across the region.

6. Standard 2 Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development of students

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the learners at CIA is excellent and meets the BSO standard. This aspect of the learners' experience is a significant strength of the school.

The GEMS core values of 'Care, Excellence, One Team and Always Learning' permeate all areas of the school life and enable students to grow their self-worth. The learners are strongly supported by caring staff and the pastoral system, resulting in learners being genuine ambassadors of the school. The learners are confident, kind, mutually supportive, inspired and inspiring, self-disciplined and respectful.

The school ensures that opportunities are in place to develop, embed and celebrate the core values; such as the house system, the positive approach to the discipline policy, celebratory assemblies, e-cards, and counselling initiatives led by the inclusion department. 'Individual motivation', 'healthy competition', 'mutual encouragement' and 'teamwork' were key words/phrases used by Year 7 and 10 learners to describe the impact of the house system. Some Year 11 students explain that there is "just the right amount of discipline" and "a strong sense of safety". Those support systems encourage the learners to model expectations to their younger peers, 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.

The learners love their school, their teachers and their learning experience, as evidenced in the GL PASS assessments and through many individual anecdotes. The school is "known for being a friendly community" according to one Year 8 learner.

The learners' general high levels of participation and willingness to express their opinions in lessons are evidence of their confidence, self-esteem, and sense of safety to take risks. Learners listen to one another's thoughts and, when they challenge them, they do so with respect. A Year 6 learner explains that her teachers and the activities organised at schools make her feel challenged in many ways: to be a good and even better person, to be an effective learner, and to think about her actions today and how they impact her peers, her future and that of others. The students' willingness to support and learn from their peers is evident. A Year 9 learner explains that they "grab each other's knowledge". The older learners are able to articulate that they recognise the caring student network as an asset of the school for their benefit, but also as an opportunity to enhance their character development.

British culture and values are promoted and reinforced in a variety of ways throughout the year groups. Motivational quotes from W. Shakespeare or J. K. Rowling, a C. Dickens display, pictures of the Queen of England with Emirati Rulers and artwork on Westminster

are displayed in corridors. A Year 9 moral education lesson engaged the learners in a discussion on what makes a community and how to positively contribute to the lives of others. 'My Identity Programme' runs throughout the school and increases the students' awareness of their own selves, their community, their home and host countries, and global issues. A Key Stage 5 French lesson explored volunteerism, its impact and scope in Europe and the Middle East; and learners in Politics examined Brexit and feminism. A transient learner shares that the British system as provided at the school is his favourite educational system because it encompasses the holistic development of young people with teachers who encourage the learners, and that he would look to stay in that system should his family relocate. The learners suggested that the British system and its rigour were top reasons for attending the school.

The student council opens the opportunity for learners to engage in the voting and democratic process. Sports day, international day, pink day, Model United Nations, international trips and charitable events were mentioned by the learners as opportunities to develop, practise and consolidate their collaboration and empathy skills, which they define as life skills that build their self-confidence and character: they are well aware that these will contribute to their success in their university and their working lives. They feel those opportunities help them reflect on their context and appreciate with increased respect others' backgrounds and life experiences.

The international expeditions have an impact on the school community, its awareness of and interest in global issues. Learners spoken to demonstrate a strong sense of international mindedness. The leadership team reported that participation in trips has increased and expeditions have become oversubscribed. Parents spoke strongly about celebration of, and tolerance for, all cultures within the school community.

The core values of the school are modelled effectively by the staff, strongly understood and demonstrated by the learners, and make a strong contribution to the promotion of modern British values and development of essential life skills.

7. Standard 3

The welfare, health and safety of the students

CIA meets the standard required for BSO.

Health, safety and wellbeing is central to the procedures put into place across all areas of the school. The school cluster operations manager works hand-in-hand with the SLT to ensure the safety of all students and staff on campus. The school is compliant with written policies and procedures, which are regularly reviewed and updated, currently with a focus on the development of procedures to guard against Covid-19.

CIA has a highly effective and qualified safeguarding and child protection team in place. Staff are aware of at least one lead member of staff on the safeguarding team. The school has a robust online system with a structured referral process in place, through the school counsellor and lead child protection officer. The school is developing a self-referral system for the students and is building connections to specialist outside agencies to improve further support.

The school has a number of appropriate emergency response plans in place in case of accident and emergency. Staff are aware of these plans.

The school has a suitable usage policy for ICT and considers teaching and learning throughout the curriculum for different phases. Staff have considered carefully the development of the use of social media and ensure that they have procedures in place for collecting permission from parents before posting students on any social media platforms. They plan for teaching, in the form of e-safety, to support students, aiming to ensure that students use technology in a safe and responsible manner.

The school has a detailed written policy for behaviour across all areas of the school. The policy outlines the intentions of the school and how positive reinforcement and rewards could be used, alongside a structured disciplinary procedure. Students have a very responsible attitude when moving around the premises and excellent routines are in place to ensure students are safe.

All staff contribute to the day-to-day safety of the students through an effective collaborative approach. Embedded structures are in place to ensure that all security and safety procedures are adhered to. The outstanding organisation and implementation of routines at the beginning and end of the day, including school buses, is systematic and ensures staff and students are safe.

Attendance and admission registers are completed electronically each day. The school has developed a variety of teaching structures to continue to support attendance of learners,

who are affected by the ongoing pandemic, through online classes in primary and hybrid classes in secondary.

Cleanliness across the school is to a high standard and cleaning procedures have been influenced by the impact of COVID-19. The SLT have a clear understanding of the impact of extended lockdowns on the whole community, and acted to ameliorate them. They use well-developed practice during lockdowns, to inform further ongoing practices that support the staff, students and parents.

The school has a very calm and productive atmosphere and it is evident that all members of the school community enjoy working and learning in this school. There is a happy and supportive feel across all phases of the school, and this is also reflected in the relationships between staff and students within lessons.

8. Standard 4

The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The rigorous safer recruitment policies and processes in place meet BSO standards.

CIA 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 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. 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 (ADEK) 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

All aspects of the BSO standards are met.

The school premises and facilities provide an excellent physical learning environment which meets the needs of students including those with special educational needs. CIA has appropriate security arrangements and provides a safe environment for its pupils. External lighting has recently been improved to ensure safe entry to and exit from the premises. The buildings fully comply with local regulations and are well-maintained. There is an ongoing, incremental plan for improvement. Resources, fixtures, fittings and furniture match educational needs, are of high quality and are in good condition. An elevator is available for the use of pupils with a physical disability or staff and visitors who require it.

It was purpose built in 2013 and facilities are of high quality. There is a significant multimillion dirham yearly investment to ensure that this is sustained. The school has a well-planned and supported life-cycle for ICT equipment that has recently seen additional hardware updated across the whole school. There is an extensive range of resources that are well matched to curriculum requirements and there has been further investment in reading books across the school that supports the guided reading programme and phonics schemes.

CIA does not charge what are thought locally to be 'premium' fees. Thus the school facilities offer excellent value for money and include a full disability access learning environment; a centrally air-conditioned multi-purpose sports/performance hall; 6 centrally air-conditioned multi-purpose sports/performance rooms; 4 basketball courts; 4 tennis courts; a fully shaded 200m athletics track; a full size AstroTurf pitch; 4 large covered play areas; separate post-16 provision; outdoor learning areas for EYFS; 2 learning resource centres; well-equipped first aid clinics with 4 nurses; 2 dining rooms; a radio station; specialist student support and counselling facilities; a parent café and bistro area; a garden classroom; 2 prayer rooms and many break-out learning spaces.

Gender specific toilet and washing facilities are provided and are cleaned on a regular basis. Staff and visitors have separate designated washroom facilities. All washroom and changing areas have cold and hot running water. The temperature of water in these facilities does not pose a risk of scalding to users. Drainage systems for the dispersal of waste and surface water have been recently upgraded. There is more than adequate natural light and, where appropriate, good artificial lighting. The school is well ventilated and the temperature is controlled by air-conditioning throughout the building. Adequate sources of drinking water are available and in compliance with local regulations. Effective timetabling ensures that the use of available outdoor spaces is maximised for learning and play. Suitable indoor and outdoor space ensures physical education is delivered in accordance with the school curriculum. Corridor displays are reflective of the school's goals.

10. Standard 6

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

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

CIA provides a highly British educational experience for families living in Abu Dhabi. They have built up their model over time to ensure that they meet the needs and demands of learner and parent cohorts. They embrace the country and culture that they are in but build upon the British nature of provision. Support teams are bilingual, to facilitate communications with parents. Parents have access to members of the corporate body through the GEMS parent platform.

The school provides a steady stream of useful communication for parents and they have an open door policy to facilitate frequent engagement with all stakeholders. CIA has a dedicated parent relations executive to handle and process direct communications with external agencies and all school stakeholders, including admissions related matters. The government relations executive is the key link with the local regulator (ADEK) and also supports parent requests. Various parents' working groups exist in partnership with the school. The school has what they refer to as a professional governance model with parents' working groups, because they serve the levels of interest that the parents have; they prefer having this bespoke approach rather than having a unitary parents' association. Parents reported that any concerns they have are answered quickly and they have the information and ability to contact the relevant member of staff for assistance.

The school produces termly reports for learners at the end of each of the three terms. SEND students have weekly as well as termly reports. The school also has scheduled parental meetings to discuss learner progress, as well as parent support events; parents have found them to be helpful and informative. The school publishes a regular newsletter to celebrate events and achievements. CIA actively canvasses parental opinion through proactive communications with its stakeholders. This is carried out through regular email communications from teaching staff, departmental and sectional questionnaires and whole school surveys. Levels of school engagement are tracked on the GEMS platform PULSE. The school takes pride in listening to parental feedback and contributions; they refer to parents as being... "Architects of what we do. They say, we do and we give feedback to them".

Parents and the community are seen as the most valued partners of the school. Overall engagement is monitored and reviewed through the school's quality assurance programme (QAP).

Learners have a wellbeing link (QR code), which goes straight through to the student support team. These are logged on a daily basis, flagged up by the school's counsellor, who may take action as appropriate. Learners in the lower school are brought to the attention of the counsellor through staff referrals. Staff are proactive in offering support for learners

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throughout the school. The school has a parental advocacy group (the Butterfly Foundation) that offers positive support and offers active endorsement for it.

Parents feel that the school staff know their children well and use words such as 'welcoming', 'positive' and 'safe' to describe the way the school cares. Parents stated that they felt like the school was a family and that it has allowed their children to flourish. Parents suggest that they are very appreciative of the opportunities and support available for their children at CIA.

11. Standard 7

The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school has a clear complaints policy that includes the BSO requirements. The complaints and feedback policy is available on the school website. There is also an option on the website for parents to request a call back, highlighting the open door ethos the school actively encourages.

CIA has a team dedicated to listen to parent queries and concerns so that they can be quickly resolved. The school responds to all parent feedback. The parent relations executive speaks 5 languages, to meet the international parent group needs so that language is not a barrier to provide parent feedback. Each front facing parent relations team has a least one member of staff who is bilingual in Arabic and English. This was a response to the changing demographic of higher Arabic speaking parents, in relation to a lower number of Arabic speaking teachers. This allows all questions to be registered and relayed to class teachers.

A complaints log is kept that includes details of the complaint as well as action taken. The senior leadership team identified the trends in complaints as being linked to high parent expectations and curriculum equivalency expectations for learners and their onward education.

The school invites parents to complete regular parent surveys. The most recent data shows an improvement in the rating of parent satisfaction. The parent relations executive works actively with the small group of parents who on the survey appear as 'detractors'. The school also sought external verification and was awarded the 'Leading Parent Partnership' award by Optimus Education.

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

Leadership and management of the school are excellent.

The principal has a strong vision and a powerful drive to move the school forward. He is a charismatic leader who has developed the capacity for distributed leadership throughout the school. This is very effective.

He is very well supported by his vice principal, head of primary and an enthusiastic, ambitious, 'home-grown senior leadership team. There is a holistic approach to the education being provided and a culture of striving for the best for everyone. The team are passionate about developing and assisting every pupil to reach their potential both academically and personally, by providing a caring and supportive learning environment. Collectively, the leadership and management teams demonstrate a strong commitment to raising standards across the whole school.

The governance of the school incorporates wide representation from all stakeholders. This includes the owners, GEMS Education, who provide corporate governance in terms of education, safeguarding, inclusion, HR, finance, legal, IT, and procurement support. There is a local advisory board 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.

Staff turnover is low. The school's leaders have been successful in recruiting and retaining staff who are proud of the personal contribution they make to the school's success. Around the school there is a palpable happy, kind and inclusive atmosphere amongst the staff and learners.

The school development plan is based upon a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, including those outlined in the last ADEK inspection report. Feedback and input are regularly sought from all stakeholders and used to improve further the school's provision and performance. There is evidence of this filtering down through the organisation via the middle leaders and into classroom level.

Finances are strategically allocated to support the targeted areas for improvement as well as a rolling agenda of sustainability. The school runs very efficiently on a day-to-day basis, in no small part because of the quality and abundance of administrative and support staff. Their skill and work allow teachers to concentrate on teaching.

A particular feature of the school's leadership is the commitment to continuous professional development for all staff. There are a broad range of opportunities on offer from in-house

provision to external providers which can be accessed depending upon the needs and interests of the individual.

The school leadership team have established highly successful strategies for engaging parents and carers. Regular contact, both face to face and electronically, ensures that they are provided with the information required about the school as well as their child's progress. Parents and carers are given specific guidance about how they can support their child at home.

There is a culture of respect and tolerance across the whole school. Leaders clearly and passionately promote equality of opportunity and diversity for both learners and staff.