



SEND Inclusion Award (SENDIA)

Verification Report

School name:	GEMS Cambridge International School, Abu Dhabi
School address and postcode:	P.O. Box 56825, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
School telephone:	+971 (2) 5104343
School website:	www.gemscambridgeinternationalschool-abudhabi.com
Principal:	Kelvin Hornsby
Principal's email:	k.hornsby_cia@gemsedu.com
SENDIA coordinator:	Sarah Oliver-Browning
SENDIA coordinator's email:	s.oliverbrowning_cia@gemsedu.com
Award verifier:	Andy Taylor
Award adviser (if applicable):	School-led approach
Date of verification:	17 May 2021

Commentary on the evidence provided:

- The portfolio was very well organised. All KPIs have been evidenced and the documentation therefore meets the requirements of the award.
- SEN provision is an integral part of the school improvement plan. Clear success criteria have been identified.
- Documentation evidences a school which is working in partnership with both student and family.
- The school has developed very effective and efficient record keeping systems.
- Leaders have ensured staff are accountable for the progress of all students. There is a clear and coherent approach to the teaching of students with additional needs.
- Learning passports and IEPs reflect the views of students and identify clear support strategies.
- Documentation and discussions evidenced how staff develop the independence skills of students.
- Transition arrangements show that students are well supported as they progress through their school career.
- New staff are provided with an extensive induction. This contributes to the consistent approach to the inclusive practices within the classrooms.

- There are procedures in place to ensure there is early identification of need. As a result, highly effective support is quickly put into place. In addition, leaders have a thorough understanding of the impact of all interventions which are provided for the students.
- Policies and procedures support the SEND provision within the school.
- The Local Advisory Board (LAB) are fully committed to the school. They play a very active role and members have been able to witness, first hand, the inclusive practices implemented in the school. In addition, the LAB is provided with detailed reports and analysis of data which clearly evidences the impact of leaders.

Strengths identified during verification:

Leadership and Management

- Leaders have a clear vision about the development of SEND provision across the school. There is significant allocation of the school's budget to support students with additional needs and this exemplifies the school's commitment. They are determined to address potential barriers for any student. As a result, the school's provision for students with SEND is extremely effective.
- Effective management by senior leaders has involved all staff and there is strong evidence of distributed leadership. Due to this, the commitment to ensure students thrive is evidenced across all sections of the school.
- The SENDIA framework has been used as a diagnostic tool to benchmark current practice and to identify areas to develop even further.
- Leaders value the opinions of stakeholders and have adapted practices and procedures accordingly.

Staff

- Interviews with staff showed how well the SENDIA award had been co-ordinated and managed. The staff had been kept well informed about the school's progress towards the award and most importantly, they have felt empowered to contribute.
- Professional development and staff induction processes have been highly effective. Over time, leaders have developed a staff team which can support students with a variety of needs. Moreover, there is consistent pedagogical practices across the school, where quality first teaching supports the learning of all students.
- Staff feel highly valued and have real ownership of all the improvements that have been made. Investing in staffs' professional development has ensured these developments are sustainable.

Parents

- The parents interviewed were greatly appreciate of the school. They valued that their children attended a school which was truly inclusive.
- Communication is a real strength and continued to be so during the Covid-19 pandemic. Parents are well informed about all aspects of school life.
- Parents are fully involved in their child's education. Because of this, they feel that they work in a true partnership with the school.
- Parents were very positive about the ways in which the school celebrated the "whole" child. The emphasis of nurture and support, in their view, is always a key priority of the school.

Students

- Very strong relationships exist between the staff and students. Should they have any worries, anxieties or concerns, students know that staff will support them.
- Students talked at great length about the ways in which the staff helped them, both in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities. They were very appreciative and felt the staff really cared about helping them progress in their work.

Impact:

- The SENDIA co-ordinator has been highly effective in her role. Collating evidence for, and preparations leading to, the Final Verification are examples of her thoroughness and attention to detail.
- Inclusion was a key priority even before the school embarked upon the process and the award will enable the school to celebrate its highly effective practice.
- The SEN team have been resolute in their drive to support staff to ensure the best outcomes for students with additional needs. Their actions have been highly effective which in turn are reflected in students' outcomes across all phases.

Areas for development:

It is important to note that the SENDIA advisor found no areas within the SENDIA framework which needed to be strengthened. Leaders identified the following areas:

- To continue to provide staff with support and training to further enhance the provision for all students.
- To develop the Parent Portal as an extensive resource and reference point.
- To embed the strategies and interventions for students within the secondary phase.

Verifier recommendation:

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

Principal comments:

May we use your comment for website/marketing purposes? **Yes / No**