GEMS Royal Dubai School

British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection Dates: 19 to 21 January 2026

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Age Group: 3 to 13

Report Published: 31 March 2026

Report Reference Number: 3/84/2026

Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection report follows the English Department for Education (DfE) schedule for the inspection of British schools overseas. Education Development Trust (EDT) is a body approved by the British government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas and quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

Education Development Trust is one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies, providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally. Education Development Trust employs staff worldwide, all working on projects relating to educational quality.

To be recognised by the Department for Education, a British School Overseas (BSO) must have an inspection report which shows that its performance against all the standards is at least satisfactory. This reflects the standards required for continuing registration as a school in England. Schools meeting the standards will have their inspection reports published on the Department's website and will be added to the register, 'Get information about schools'.

Inspectors report on the extent to which schools meet the relevant standards for BSO accreditation. The inspection follows closely the framework for the inspection of independent schools in England but, where appropriate, also takes account of compliance with local regulations.

The DfE updated the standards in August 2023. The new standards aligned the BSO standards with the Independent School Standards (ISS) and National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Boarding applied to schools in England; clarified and reiterated the relationship between the UK and host country laws and reshaped staff recruitment standards to ensure international applicability.

The BSO standards are as follows:

Part 1. The quality of education provided by the school (curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment).

Part 2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

Part 3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils.

Part 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff.

Part 5. The premises and accommodation.

Part 6. The provision of information.

Part 7. The manner in which complaints are handled.

Part 8. The leadership and management of the school.

Part 9. The quality of provision for boarding.

The purposes of BSO inspections are to:

- help schools to improve the quality and effectiveness of pupils' education and of the care for their welfare
- provide rigorous and reliable inspection reports which help schools to recognise and celebrate their strengths and to identify and remedy any weaknesses
- inform parents and carers and the wider public of the quality of British schools overseas by placing reports in the public domain.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	**Outstanding**
Grade 2	**Good**
Grade 3	**Satisfactory**
Grade 4	**Inadequate**

Information about the school

GEMS Royal Dubai School (RDS) is a privately owned, co-educational British international day school located in Al Mizhar, Dubai. It is part of GEMS Education and opened in 2005. The school currently educates pupils from foundation stage 1 to Year 8 on one site, with further secondary provision planned for September 2026.

There are 840 pupils aged three to 13 years in the school. Pupils represent more than 60 nationalities, reflecting Dubai's diverse international context. The largest ethnic group is Arab. The school is small to medium sized when compared with other British schools in the UAE.

RDS is inclusive and supports a wide range of needs. Around 12% of pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A minority of pupils join the school at an early stage of learning English. Children in the early years follow the statutory early years foundation stage (EYFS) framework. Pupils across the school follow the national curriculum for England (NCfE), adapted to meet UAE Ministry of Education (MoE) requirements, including Arabic, Islamic studies and social studies.

Summary of the evidence base used by the inspection team

This BSO inspection was carried out by three EDT inspectors who spent three days at the school. The BSO registration and self-review documents were completed in advance and the inspection dates were confirmed with 10 weeks' notice. Inspectors reviewed key information about the school prior to the inspection.

During the inspection, the team visited 48 part-lessons and carried out learning walks, including extra-curricular and enrichment activities. A total of seven lessons were jointly observed with leaders. Inspectors also attended an assembly. The team held 25 meetings with leaders, teachers, pupils, parents and members of the school's governing board.

Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and reviewed a broad selection of documentation, including assessment records, policies and strategic plans. Safeguarding arrangements were evaluated to check their compliance and effectiveness. Inspectors also considered the views of parents and staff gathered through the BSO survey, which was distributed shortly before the inspection.

Evaluation of the school

GEMS Royal Dubai School is an outstanding school and provides an outstanding quality of education for pupils from 3 to 13 years.

The school meets all of the Standards for British Schools Overseas except those which it is precluded from meeting because of the host country's legislation. These are explained later in the report. The requirements of the host country take precedence and no action

points are, therefore, specified in relation to these unmet standards and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

Attainment and progress in **English** are outstanding.

Children in the early years make excellent rates of progress from their starting points. They exceed expectations in language and reading. Children apply their phonics knowledge by blending sounds to read words and segmenting words for spelling. There is a significant focus on developing their fine motor skills to support their writing. The proportion of children achieving a Good Level of Development at 80% is well above the England average of 67%.

Throughout the primary phase, pupils continue to make outstanding progress. The strong focus on phonics continues into Year 1 and into Year 2 for the pupils that need it. In Year 1, the phonics screening check outcome is 85% compared to the England average of 79%. The standard of reading and writing at end of key stage 2 is well above the England average at 91% for reading and 89% for writing. Attainment and progress over the past three years have increased significantly for Emirati pupils and for pupils with SEND. For pupils with SEND, their rates of progress have increased to be close to that of the overall cohort as a result of the impact of raised expectations, interventions and targeted support. Girls achieve slightly higher than boys particularly in writing. In secondary, Year 8 only started in the current year but Year 7 results show outstanding progress.

Teachers place a strong focus on high quality learning and teaching, using assessment for learning very effectively to adapt lessons in real time based on pupils' needs and to provide targeted support or challenge and extend learning as required. In key stage 1, pupils are highly confident in speaking and listening and develop a broad and rich vocabulary. They can identify and apply imperative verbs and recall key details from a story, understanding predication and inference.

In key stage 2, pupils use extended nouns effectively to describe the appearance and personality of a character and once they have completed the physical description, they continue to describe the character, Oliver, emotionally using key words such as 'determined', 'resilient' and 'hopeful'.

In Year 7, pupils, in a descriptive writing task on the relationship of a father and son, understood well the concept of an extended metaphor and how it creates vivid imagery. In Year 8, pupils read Macbeth fluently with good understanding, using the 'word of the day' to extend their vocabulary. A continued focus on handwriting will accelerate pupils' rates of progress even further.

Attainment and progress in **mathematics** are outstanding across all phases.

In mathematics, there has been a positive three-year trend across the school, with the most recent results exceeding England and international averages. There is no significant variation in the achievement of boys and girls; pupils with SEND achieve slightly lower than the overall cohort, however, the gap in achievement has reduced considerably as a result of support and targeted intervention. The most recent results from the progress tests in mathematics were significantly higher than comparable standards in England and internationally. The school's own internal data corresponds with that of external benchmarking tests. Senior leaders have

developed highly focused procedures to monitor pupils' progress and attainment across the school to allow this upward trajectory to continue, providing intervention where necessary.

On completion of the early years, almost all children achieve above expected standards, providing a strong basis for progression to Year 1. Almost all children have developed a conceptual understanding of volume and can demonstrate this practically using appropriate resources.

Pupils continue to develop their mathematical proficiency. In the primary school, they are able to consolidate their mathematical knowledge, developing an assured grasp of arithmetic operations that provides a firm foundation for their transition to secondary. Pupils in Year 2 understand addition and subtraction, understanding the inverse relationship that exists. Pupils in Year 4 can calculate quotients using division and apply this to a real-life situation. Pupils in Year 5 are able to solve mathematical problems by subtracting fractions. They can recognise the relationship between denominators when presented with different values.

In secondary, pupils develop their mathematical reasoning skills. Pupils in Year 7 can present and understand data in a graphical format, which develops their problem-solving skills. Pupils in Year 8 are able to use algebra to calculate the perimeter of polygons and express their answers algebraically. Pupils in lower secondary are introduced to GCSE questions early in lessons to help them prepare for the structure of examinations.

Attainment and progress in **science** are outstanding.

Outcomes in science are outstanding across the school, with pupils making rapid and sustained rates of progress from their starting points with attainment consistently above England averages. Data over time shows strong rates of improvement, particularly since the previous inspection, with notable gains for Emirati pupils, whose outcomes have improved from acceptable to outstanding.

In the early years and primary phases, attainment and progress have risen significantly over the last three years. There has been a sustained increase in the proportion of pupils working at greater depth, including a 21-percentage point increase in key stage 2 and strong gains in the early years, where teachers embed challenge through both focused teaching and continuous provision.

In key stages 1 and 2, almost all pupils achieve at least age-related expectations, with a very high proportion making better than expected progress. In a Year 4 lesson on how in a musical instrument the strength of a string affects its vibrations and the volume of sound produced, pupils demonstrated excellent predictive skills, making accurate forecasts about what type of sound would be produced. Internal progress data shows consistently high outcomes for all groups, including pupils with SEND and EAL needs, new joiners and pupils who have been at the school since the early years' phase. By the end of Year 6, attainment and progress are exceptionally high, providing pupils with a very strong foundation for secondary science.

Internal attainment and progress data from key stage 3 indicates that high outcomes are being sustained as the secondary phase develops. In Year 7, the large majority of pupils are working at or above age-related expectations, with very high levels of expected and better than expected rates of progress. Girls' outcomes are particularly high, and targeted support is in place to further strengthen engagement and outcomes for boys as the department continues to develop. Pupils

in Year 7 can confidently articulate the importance of reliability and validity when working scientifically.

Science is further enriched through a wide range of enhancement opportunities, including cluster science fairs, innovation challenges, partnerships with external organisations such as the Dubai Safari Park, visiting speakers and real-world projects linked to health, sustainability and animal welfare. These experiences raise pupils' aspirations, strengthen engagement and support the growing interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) pathways.

As the school continues to expand its secondary provision, leaders have identified appropriate next steps, including further embedding working scientifically consistently across key stage 3, strengthening engagement for specific groups and further developing careers links in science.

Pupils' attainment and progress in a range of **other subjects** are outstanding.

Pupils make excellent rates of progress in a range of other subjects across the curriculum. Pupils benefit from specialist teachers in physical education (PE), drama, art, computer science, modern foreign languages, food technology, and design and technology. Pupils enjoy the diversity of the wider curriculum, particularly the creative subjects, which helps to develop their dexterity skills and provides the opportunity for learning from the core subjects to be applied in other subjects. For example, in a Year 7 design and technology lesson, pupils applied mathematical concepts when ensuring shapes were cut to an acceptable tolerance.

Summary of other judgements against the BSO standards:

- The quality of the curriculum provided by the school is outstanding (see Part 1 below).
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding overall (see Part 1 below).
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding (see Part 2 below).
- The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are outstanding (see Part 3 below).
- The Standard for the suitability of the proprietor and staff is met (see Part 4 below).
- The premises and accommodation meet the requirements of the Standard (see Part 5 below).
- The provision of information for parents meets the requirements of this Standard (see Part 6 below).
- The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the requirements of the Standard (see Part 7 below).
- The leadership and management of the school are outstanding (see Part 8 below).

As a result of this inspection, undertaken during January 2026, the school has demonstrated that it meets the BSO standards except for those standards that cannot be achieved legally in the host country. The school's provision prepares pupils well to enter or re-enter the independent school system in England. This judgement is endorsed by the British government, quality assured by Ofsted and is valid for a period of three years.

Part 1. The quality of education provided by the school

The standards relating to the **quality of the education** are met except for the standard in paragraph 2 (2) (d) (ii). This is not met because of the requirements of the host country relating to the UK Equality Act 2010.

The quality of the **curriculum** is outstanding.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and coherent. The early years curriculum is fully aligned to the EYFS and in primary and secondary to the NCfE. It is also aligned to the MoE curriculum to comply with the requirements for Arabic, Islamic studies, moral education and social studies.

The curriculum provides a strong emphasis on developing pupils' oracy, creative thinking, and reasoning skills. All children and pupils have a library slot each week to underpin the focus on reading across the school which is monitored through a reading tracker. All pupils from Year 3 take French.

In the early years, the curriculum nurtures children's curiosity. In primary, the curriculum is carefully mapped to ensure progression across each subject and into secondary. The secondary and primary phases work effectively together to ensure consistency, especially in the transition between Years 6 and 7. Across primary and secondary long-term planning clearly sets out the curriculum for the academic year, which is reviewed and updated annually. This is refined into accessible termly plans, which are further distilled by topic and lessons across the weeks.

From this, teachers devise personalisation slides which show how the provision will be delivered across differentiated groups. SEND, EAL, English language learners (ELL) and the most able successfully benefit from break-out sessions, in-class support, targeted interventions and additional challenge. Problem-solving and critical thinking skills are integral to learning across the curriculum.

Curriculum planning, monitoring and adaptation are excellent. The curriculum review led to more defined structures, including structured reading lessons that explicitly teach and practise key comprehension skills. A new strategy was introduced for writing in August 2025 to reduce the previous writing content to six high quality units that could be delivered in more depth.

The curriculum has a focus on breadth, real-world applications and innovation and enterprise opportunities. Sustainability is effectively taught half-termly and secondary pupils have a weekly enterprise lesson. In Year 8, pupils benefit from a valuable internship with a photographic company, learning photography, business and entrepreneurship skills.

Curriculum policies and plans promote diversity inclusion, and respect for all in line with the Equality Act 2010 with pupils learning to respect people with differing characteristics including age, gender, race, religion, disability, pregnancy and maternity. UAE law precludes the school from addressing, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, sex and sexual orientation. Relationships and sexuality education is delivered in an age-appropriate way, working closely with the Islamic studies team and within the legal frameworks and host country laws. Personal, social, health and emotional (PSHE) development opportunities are identified through weekly planning, supported by a comprehensive well-being curriculum.

The school's extra-curricular activities (ECA) include a wide range of activities which are very highly regarded by parents and pupils. For example, coaches from a premiership football club run some of the football ECAs. The ECA curriculum encourages participation and competition, providing progression and continuity. School trips are always carefully linked to the curriculum.

Britishness is evident across the curriculum. For example, pupils study the Victorians and Anglo Saxons, the second World War and the blitz, British vegetation and landforms and the wide range of British authors in the library. The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance are implemented through, for example, the school's own GEMSTONES value system, Islamic and British values of the month and weekly assemblies. In an Islamic studies lesson, Islamic values were compared to British values and similarities highlighted. Democracy is also evident in the election of pupils for leadership roles. The school has a well-developed house system with the houses named after British Royal Residences.

The quality of **teaching, learning and assessment** in the school is outstanding.

Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. The pedagogical approach is based on high performing culture and highly structured principles. The school uses informed research to structure and enhance pupils' learning. Leaders have developed pertinent policies which are reviewed periodically to standardise this practice across the school.

Teachers exhibit outstanding subject knowledge which allows them to design engaging and interesting lessons, often providing strong linkages between classroom learning and practical applications of this knowledge. For example, during a Year 5 mathematics lesson, the use of fractions was linked to proportions of food. Teaching assistants support classroom activities extremely well, allowing all groups of pupils including pupils with SEND to make outstanding rates of progress in lessons. In early years, teachers display outstanding knowledge of child development and early childhood education, enabling them to integrate activities to help promote children's independence. Teachers and teaching assistants routinely develop their skills by following a highly ambitious professional development programme that is supported by school leaders.

In lessons, teachers use technology well to enhance learning and promote independent study. Teachers adapt resources in lessons, meeting the needs of all pupils including those with SEND and providing appropriate challenge to more able pupils. The pace of lessons allows for reflection and discussion to be embedded expertly in classroom practice. Pupils are routinely asked to share their learning 'with a friend' helping to develop their confidence and collaborative working skills. Pupils are inquisitive and keen to develop their knowledge; they are provided with opportunities in lessons to enhance their learning by completing extension tasks,

supported by the teacher and teaching assistants. Pupils are highly engaged in lessons and produce excellent standards of work as a result.

Teachers have exceptionally high expectations for pupils, using questioning to support the development of pupils' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. For example, in a Year 5 art lesson, the teacher used reflective questions to allow the pupils to evaluate line depth, enabling them to produce suitable ink and pressure prints.

Assessment is highly effective. Lessons commence with a 'do now' activity that allows the teacher to very quickly understand previous learning and current knowledge. Individual wipe boards are used extensively to facilitate this. Activities ensure that learning commences immediately as soon as pupils enter the classroom. Ongoing assessment for learning in lessons enables teachers to provide high levels of support to pupils who require help and specific individual learning for pupils who have understood the concept and are ready to make more progress. Assessment in lessons is highly effective because teachers and teaching assistants use successful, diverse and reliable methods to understand the progress that pupils have made by questioning and reviewing completed work. Pupils respond well to teachers' feedback and habitually self-assess their own work which helps them take responsibility for their own learning. Teachers also encourage peer-assessment in lessons.

Senior leaders comprehensively analyse and benchmark internal assessment data. Data provided from external benchmarking tests is subject to equal scrutiny, allowing leaders to identify and provide targeted interventions, if required. As a result, pupils' rates of attainment have increased over the previous three years.

Part 2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The standards relating to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils are met except for the standard in paragraph 5(b)(vi). This is not met because of the requirements of the host country relating to the UK Equality Act 2010.

The **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** of pupils is outstanding.

The school's '#RoyalStandard' is at the centre of the school's values and ethos and promotes a culture of high performance, behaviour, well-being and expectations which permeates the whole school. The '#RDShineBright' well-being core programme fosters pupils' emotional, mental, and physical health, creating a supportive environment in which pupils thrive.

British and Islamic values are deeply intertwined, working together to promote respect, responsibility and integrity. Pupils are respectful to others and parents convey high levels of confidence in the school's nurturing of pupils' academic development and emotional well-being. Cultural development is highly effective. The school celebrates its international community and embeds UAE national identity and British values across the curriculum through cultural events, trips, themed days such as International Day and Flag Day, the wider world and the NCfE.

The school is inclusive with an Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM) Inclusive School Award and a nomination for a centre of excellence. Around 12% of pupils are identified as having SEND. Pupils

are assessed on need and staff know their pupils well, providing education that is personalised to meet their individual needs. Pupils are integrated into classrooms, and each teacher acts as a teacher of inclusion.

Learning support assistants and teachers work closely together to provide the best possible experience for pupils with SEND, involving and keeping parents informed. They are encouraged to take part in extra-curricular activities. Pupils with ELL make up 6% of the school's population and along with pupils with EAL needs are well supported to develop their language skills. The inclusion team reviews the curriculum to understand how best it can be tailored and presented in a different way that is accessible to all pupils.

Workshops for parents and pupils increase awareness of risks that pupils may encounter. The school works in collaboration with parents and has provided parental workshops with forthcoming meetings concentrating on mental health. New guidance introduced on unsafe behaviour and the misuse of drugs has been shared with parents and pupils to raise their levels of awareness.

Behaviour is exemplary and underpinned by the '#RoyalStandard' principles which set out behaviour expectations. Positive behaviour is celebrated through '#RoyalStandard' assemblies and acknowledgements, while behaviour that does not meet expectations results in fair and proportionate consequences with an emphasis on restorative practice, as detailed in the comprehensive positive behaviour policy. It promotes good relationships and a safe and productive learning environment. The 'Be a GEM' expectations outline behaviour routines, rewards and sanctions with links to moral education and well-being.

Instances of bullying are extremely rare, as pupils benefit from a strong values-led approach that consistently fosters kindness, empathy and respect, promoted through for example, assemblies and the 'Be a GEM' expectations. The inclusion and well-being teams provide timely, coordinated support for pupils with emotional or behavioural needs with weekly meetings, ensuring a holistic approach to safeguarding, attendance, well-being and behaviour. Each morning pupils 'check in' indicating their feelings on that day through easily recognised buttons. If pupils are sad or raise any concerns, the school responds with appropriate levels of support.

Pupils collaborate confidently, work respectfully with mixed groups and value the diversity of the school's community, as guided by the 'Leadership GEMSTONES' and well-being curriculum. Pupils' leadership opportunities including house captains, digital leaders, eco monitors and RDS ambassadors, actively promote teamwork, responsibility and service. Pupils value this opportunity and take it very seriously. It reflects the British values of democracy and mutual respect. The pupils' voice is very strong in the school and pupils feel listened to. Two RDS pupils work alongside the Youth Parliament to represent and facilitate the pupils' voice across all of GEMS schools.

Part 3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The **welfare, health and safety** of pupils and staff is outstanding.

The school is fully compliant with all the safeguarding and welfare regulations of the UK and host country. It provides a safe learning environment for all pupils. Leaders have implemented and continually review the health and safety and risk assessment policy.

Pupils feel welcome when joining the school. Regular transition and parental awareness events allow pupils to settle into the school rapidly. Expectations of the school are clearly communicated with pupils and parents through the school's online platforms. Parents are provided with school policies and updates through the school newsletter and website. The school has fostered outstanding relationships with parents resulting in an attendance rate of 98% across the school. Pupils arrive at school and their lessons on time and are fully ready to learn.

The school reviews policies annually, including behaviour and attendance. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and bullying is uncommon. The school fully investigates all instances of bullying, providing a strong culture of togetherness. A mutually respectful relationship exists between pupils and teachers.

Safeguarding in the school is managed exceptionally well by the governing board and safeguarding team. Rigorous policies, including safeguarding and child protection have been established and disseminated which clearly detail procedures to be followed to ensure pupils' safety. Staff are fully aware of their responsibilities which meet the requirements of UK legislation. The role of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is clearly defined and understood. All staff have been trained in safeguarding and child protection with regular refresher training to ensure currency. Posters detail members of the safeguarding team with referrals possible through the use of quick response (QR) codes or discussions with staff. Parents share their views on the efficacy of safeguarding with leaders through surveys, and regular discussions with staff.

Pupils are fully aware of the reporting process to be followed should they not feel safe or have concerns about their peers. They also understand the importance of online safety and the steps to be taken to ensure that they stay safe at home and at school when using digital technology.

The school is supported by a counsellor who promotes pupils' welfare through interventions such as the 'listening lounge' where pupils can talk freely about their thoughts and feelings.

Pupils' safety is meticulously managed; an extensive safety policy outlines individual responsibilities. Risk assessments have been completed for all activities with controls introduced to reduce identified risks. In workshops, access to tools and powered machinery is strictly controlled. Electrical equipment is tested for safety and carries the appropriate certification. A full-time lifeguard monitors pupils' safety in the swimming pool.

The school has a fully equipped clinic on site staffed by suitably qualified and experienced medical personnel. First aid kits contain appropriate equipment and are managed by the medical staff. The school also benefits from many first aiders who have also been trained in the use of defibrillation equipment.

The school has a written fire evacuation procedure which is displayed and understood by pupils who are aware of the muster points in the event of an evacuation. Regular fire drills are conducted with the results clearly recorded. Firefighting equipment is tested annually and is compliant with the regulations.

Part 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The school has implemented a robust system to support the safety and well-being of all its pupils with effective checks to ensure the suitability of its staff to work in the school. The human resources (HR) manager is responsible for the conducting of all background checks, ensuring that staff are suitable to work with children. This includes all teaching, governance and support staff, promoting an excellent safeguarding culture.

The HR manager maintains a single central record (SCR) which contains evidence of application, identity checks, reference requests, including confirmation from two sources, criminal record checks, confirmation of qualifications, medical suitability, right to work documentation and extensive interview notes. The record is digital and contains a time stamp of when the information was received, ensuring that no formal offer of employment can be made until the school has all the information. Staff files also contain this information. The SCR is only accessible by the HR manager and headteacher. All members of the senior management team have been trained in safer recruitment practices to uphold the highest standards of safeguarding.

The school has introduced a system in which visitors, parents and staff have different coloured lanyards to make them easily identifiable across the site.

Part 5. The premises and accommodation

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The building is over three floors and is bright and spacious. All classrooms have natural light, and provide a safe learning environment for early years, primary and secondary pupils. The school is growing its secondary provision year on year and is moving to a newly built secondary school in September 2026.

The school places a high priority on security and health and safety. There are regular security patrols of the site. All staff, parents and visitors must wear lanyards on arrival at the school.

The premises are clean and well maintained. The school undertakes daily checks of play equipment, regular tests of the water and is fully compliant with the Dubai municipality regulations.

There are excellent sports facilities with two swimming pools that include separate changing facilities for boys and girls, a sports pitch and separate play areas for the lower years. Acoustic panelling in music rooms, performing arts studio, PE halls and multi-purpose areas allows for effective teaching and communication throughout the school without disturbing other areas. There is a designated inclusion hub. The school plans to install a lift to enable better access for those with restricted mobility.

The school meets the clinical and welfare requirements. Clinical spaces are maintained to a high standard. All toilets have disabled access and are segregated by age and gender. The early years classrooms all have integrated toilet facilities and direct access to the play area outside.

There are two excellent and well used libraries, one for early years and one for the whole school. Both benefit from a wide range of books for all ages and are used to promote reading across the school. Specialist classrooms support food technology, innovation, art, and design and technology. There is a separate canteen for pupils in Year 3 and above. Pupils in Year 2 and below eat in their classrooms with a rigorous cleaning rota to prepare the classroom for lessons afterwards.

Resources for learning are excellent. All classrooms have interactive white boards and comfortable seating with high quality wall displays. Play equipment in the segregated early years area promotes learning through play and children's development of their gross motor skills.

Part 6. The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

Parents are extremely happy and complimentary about the school. They complete a survey termly and the results are highly positive. They are well informed about the progress and well-being of their child. They receive termly reports, termly face-to-face meetings with the form tutor and teacher and in 'Through the Eyes of my Child' are able to visit a lesson with their child three times a year.

Parents receive regular information on the online platform and class charts as well as benefiting from the school's open-door policy where they can meet the teacher when dropping off and picking up their child. There are many opportunities for parents to receive feedback on their child's progress and to engage with the school. Parents value the 'GEMS Connect' app and the two weekly newsletters: one whole school and one by year group. They particularly like the school's full transparency, reflected in the parents' survey which is highly positive.

Parents of pupils with SEND are well informed about the progress of their child and work collaboratively with the school in their child's best interests. They receive regular updates and are involved in setting the individual education plan (IEP). They value the fact that there is consistency in all the information that they receive from the school, be it from the teacher, learning support assistant or the inclusion team.

Parents value that well-being is such a priority. They are informed if their child is facing emotional challenges and work together to provide the necessary levels of support. The daily check-ins are a regular way of keeping informed of a child's welfare and if there are concerns these are shared with parents. Access is provided to the school counsellor if required.

Parents are well informed and kept up to date through presentations, for example, by the principal or on digital safety and the misuse of drugs. Those that are unable to attend receive the presentations electronically. There is an active Friends of RDS group (FORDS) that organises events such as National Day, Flag Day, the school's own birthday celebration, teachers' and pupils' appreciation day, film night and Iftar during Ramadan. These events are well attended and appreciated.

Information on the school's website is comprehensive, including the school's essential policies such as anti-bullying, inclusion, safeguarding, well-being, attendance, positive behaviour and

complaints. It also includes the school's mission and vison, parents' handbook, the latest inspection reports, admissions details and contact details.

Parents have high praise for the extensive range of ECAs and the fact they are now split into six-week blocks. These are provided by the school and are of high quality. Children are happy at school, and parents value highly the support that they and their children receive.

Part 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school meets the requirements of this standard.

The school has a comprehensive and fully compliant complaints procedure aligned with the BSO requirements and local regulations. The policy is current, approved by the governing board and published online. It outlines a clear three-staged process, beginning with informal resolution and progressing to a formal written stage with defined timescales, escalation routes with details of the staff involved at each stage. All complaints are centrally logged on an online system, ensuring thorough investigation, clear communication and a secure audit trail. Since the start of the year, 20 complaints have been recorded with three escalated to KHDA and resolved appropriately. An independent panel stage is in place where the complainant may bring a representative. Confidentiality is strictly maintained throughout.

Part 8. Leadership and management of the school

Leadership and management of the school are outstanding.

Leadership and management are highly effective and ensure that the BSO standards are met consistently and with exceptional impact across all phases. Leaders demonstrate strong professional knowledge, research-informed practice and a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. There is a deliberate and successful focus on developing leaders as educational leaders rather than managers, underpinning a strong culture of reflection, continuous improvement and professional accountability throughout the school.

Strategic leadership is very well established and supported by robust and coherent governance structures. Regular executive, senior, middle leadership and Local Advisory Board (LAB) meetings provide clear oversight, continuity, financial management and strategic direction. Governance partners are well trained, highly experienced and provide effective challenge and support, rigorously holding leaders to account for standards, outcomes and culture. The LAB works closely with senior leaders through structured lines of enquiry, data analysis, lesson visits and triangulation of evidence, ensuring that exceptionally high standards are sustained as the school expands its secondary provision and prepares to occupy a new building. The school will move its secondary provision to a new building in September 2026. Leaders should ensure that the exceptionally high standards in the current secondary school are maintained.

Leaders consistently promote the school's vision to cultivate confident, curious and compassionate learners equipped with critical thinking, creativity and resilience. Expectations are high, clearly communicated and consistently enacted. Recruitment processes are rigorous

and prioritise professionals who share the school's aspirational ethos and commitment to excellence. Coaching and professional development are embedded at all levels, not solely for staff requiring support, contributing to a reflective, motivated and highly skilled workforce that is fully aligned to the school's values and '#RoyalStandard'.

Leaders ensure that exceptionally high standards are achieved for all pupils across all phases and subjects. Outcomes are strong and continue to improve, with pupils making rapid rates of progress from their starting points and attaining standards above England averages. This includes consistently strong achievement for all groups of pupils, including Emirati pupils, those with SEND, EAL needs and new admissions. Leaders use robust assessments to identify underperformance swiftly, allowing for targeted support and intervention.

Curriculum leadership is a significant strength of the school. Leaders have designed an engaging, coherent and aspirational curriculum underpinned by highly structured principles. As a result, pupils develop not only secure knowledge but also advanced cognitive performance characteristics, positive learning values, attitudes and behaviours that will prepare them for future learning and life. Curriculum innovation is further strengthened through purposeful partnerships, cross-cluster collaboration and industry links, supporting coherence and ambition as the secondary phase develops.

Leadership places a strong and deliberate emphasis on well-being. Comprehensive systems promote pupils' physical, emotional and mental well-being, supported by counselling, medical provision and a structured well-being curriculum integral to pupils' personal development. Pupils are taught to take responsibility for their learning and personal growth, embodying the school's values and contributing positively to school life and the wider community.

The school's inclusive ethos is firmly embedded. Inclusion, well-being and academic achievement are mutually reinforcing priorities, reflected in external accreditations and recognition in inclusion frameworks. Pupils benefit from extensive leadership opportunities, community engagement, charity initiatives and sustainability projects, developing responsibility, confidence and strong societal awareness. Pupils consistently embody the '#RoyalStandard' and its core values, including integrity, respect and empathy.

Overall, leadership and management provide clear vision, strong capacity and highly effective governance. Leaders' relentless focus on excellence ensures that the school's values are fully lived in practice, resulting in high performance, which is consistently expected and realised, consequently leading to exceptional outcomes for pupils as the school continues to grow and develop.

Early Years Provision

The quality of **early years'** provision is outstanding.

Most children join the early years aged three and make rapid rates of progress from their individual starting points. Outcomes are consistently high, with a high proportion of children achieving a Good Level of Development, above those typically seen in England.

Effective leadership, skilled teachers and well-qualified support staff ensure high-quality provision. Robust baseline assessment, including pre-entry stay and play sessions, enables staff to gain an accurate understanding of children's needs and organise learning groups effectively from the outset. Teaching is highly personalised, with careful scaffolding and adaptation, ensuring that all children are supported and challenged appropriately.

Teachers and additional adults work collaboratively, forming a strong understanding of each individual child's development. Support staff are deployed effectively as class teachers and contribute significantly to learning through high-quality interactions. As a result, children develop strong communication, social and learning skills. They demonstrate curiosity, independence and confidence, collaborating well, negotiating play and engaging purposefully in enquiry and exploration.

The curriculum is rich, engaging and closely connected to the wider life of the school. Early years does not operate in isolation. Children collaborate regularly with other phases and specialist staff, including the performing arts and food technology teams. Curriculum themes such as 'People Who Help Us' are brought to life through visits from police officers, nurses, bus drivers and emergency services, alongside external trips to restaurants, play barns and the farm. Core texts, including traditional tales such as 'The Gingerbread Man' and 'Goldilocks', are enhanced through cross-curricular learning, for example baking gingerbread cookies with the food technology team.

Children confidently participate in whole-school events and performances, including National Day celebrations, fashion parades, sports day and stage performances, such as class productions of 'Old MacDonald'. Key milestones are celebrated meaningfully, including the first 100 days at RDS, with parents invited to share in events such as breakfast celebrations and street-party-style learning experiences. These opportunities strengthen community cohesion, reinforce learning and help to build children's confidence.

The learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, is stimulating, purposeful and well resourced. Despite recent staffing changes, practice is consistent and embedded across the phase, reflecting strong teamwork and effective professional development. Swimming provision is a particular strength, with age-appropriate facilities ensuring that all children develop confidence and water safety skills by the end of the year.

Parents are actively engaged as partners in learning and communication is strong. Children are well prepared socially, emotionally and academically for transition into key stage 1, which is managed effectively to ensure continuity and confidence as they move to the next stage of their education.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

GEMS Royal Dubai School meets all of the required standards except those that would be in breach of the host country laws. The requirements of the host country take precedence.

It cannot fully meet the standards that relate to 2(2)(d)(ii) or 5 (b)(vi). GEMS Royal Dubai School encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics of age; disability; pregnancy and maternity; race and religion or belief, as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

What the school could do to improve further

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

1. The school will expand its secondary provision to a new building in September 2026. Leaders should ensure that their comprehensive plans are fully embedded, and consistently implemented, allowing the school's aspirational '#RoyalStandard' curriculum and its ambitions and high expectations to continue. This will ensure that pupils in the expanding secondary phase continue to benefit from the same rich, coherent and high-quality educational experience that is seen elsewhere in the school.

Summary of inspection judgements

The quality of education

	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Overall quality of education	x			
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	x			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs	x			
How well pupils make progress in their learning	x			

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	x			
The behaviour of pupils	x			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	x			

Leadership and management

Overall effectiveness of leadership and management	x			

School Details

Name of school	GEMS Royal Dubai School
Type of school	Private
Date school opened	2005
Age range of pupils	3-13
Gender of pupils	mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	840
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	N/A
Annual fees (day pupils)	AED 40252 – AED 76762
Annual fees (boarders)	N/A
Address of school	Street 11 A Al Mizhar 1 Dubai
Telephone number	+971 04 2886499
Email address	j.steel_rds@gemsedu.com
Headteacher	Mrs Jan Steel
Proprietor	GEMS Education

GLOSSARY

Achievement – Progress made by a pupil taking his/her individual circumstances and starting point into account.

Accreditation – The system whereby a school or similar organisation is assessed against agreed standards and if deemed as having achieved the standards required is provided with some form of official certification or recognition.

Accreditation Board – The body responsible for the strategic direction, operation and conduct of the accreditation service provided by Education Development Trust

Assessment – The process of finding out how well pupils have learnt what they have been taught. It is a continuous process that occurs throughout the school year, using a variety of forms for different purposes.

Attainment – The level pupils reach, usually measured by reference to benchmarks, such as test and examination results.

British Schools Overseas Inspection (BSO) – Inspection framework and standards defined by the DfE for British schools overseas to opt to be inspected against.

Education Development Trust – Formerly CfBT Education Trust, we are one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally.

Central Support Team – Personnel based in Education Development Trust Head Office who are responsible for the administration of the various educational services provided to international schools.

Combined or Joint Visit – a BSO Inspection visit combined with an ISQM accreditation or re-accreditation visit conducted at the request of the school. This will be carried out concurrently with reference to both frameworks and sets of standards. Some of the standards against which the school will be inspected are common, but some of the BSO standards relate to the British nature of the school.

Cycle of Inspection – The period of three years between BSO inspection visits.

Curriculum – The educational programmes or courses of study taught by a school including subjects and activities inside and outside the classroom, as well as extra-curricular enrichment programmes.

Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) – Private schools in Dubai are required by the to be inspected. A joint KHDA/BSO inspection may be requested through the KHDA's strategic partner, Education Development Trust.

Leadership – Leadership at any level (for example principals/headteachers, governors, board members, team/subject leaders) involves setting direction, empowering staff to work effectively, creating a suitable environment for learning, and setting an example to others. It entails different skills from management.

Learning – Pupils' gains in knowledge, skills and understanding.

Management – The practical business of running a school, department or aspect of a school's work in an efficient and useful way.

Ofsted – The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills is the non-ministerial government department of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools in England and is responsible for school inspections in England.

Progress – The gains in learning made between two points in time. A pupil can be described as having made insufficient progress, satisfactory, good, or outstanding progress in relation to his/her starting point.

School self-evaluation – The identification by the staff of a school of its strengths and weaknesses across the key aspects of its performance. Effective self-evaluation focuses specifically on the impact of the school's work on the outcomes for pupils.

Standards –
(1) The levels of knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils and a school demonstrates at a particular point in time.
(2) The evaluation requirements to be used in the inspection of British Schools Overseas.

Teaching – All activities undertaken by the teacher aimed at enhancing pupils' learning.

With 50 years' experience of delivering education services worldwide Education Development Trust's vision is a world in which all lives are transformed through excellent education. We strive to improve education for learners globally, grounding our work in research and evidence. We support leaders to raise standards, improve school performance, develop great teachers and open career pathways.

Teaching and learning are the essence of what we do and we have more than 2,500 staff around the world designing and delivering services. Education Development Trust staff support educational reform, teach, advise, research and train.

We have built a reputation for providing high quality educational support and inspection services. One of our main aims is to improve schools through high quality school inspections. We have strong values and a clear vision to deliver a world class inspection service that will directly contribute to improving the quality of teaching, learning and care of all children and young people in settings, schools and colleges.

Education Development Trust first delivered inspections on behalf of Ofsted in 1993. Since then we have developed our experience and expertise in the field of school evaluation and improvement to become one of the UK's first major providers of inspection services.

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Report reference no: 3/84/2026