



SEND Inclusion Award (SENDIA) Verification Report

School name:	Gems Founders School, Dubai
School address and postcode:	PO Box 390498, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
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School website:	www.gemsfoundersschool-dubai.com
Principal:	Matthew Burfield
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SENDIA coordinator:	Siobhan Brady
SENDIA coordinator's email:	s.brady_gfs@gemsedu.com
Award verifier:	Andy Taylor
Award adviser (if applicable):	School Led Approach
Date of verification:	8 th September 2019

Commentary on the evidence provided:

- The portfolio was very well organised and reflects the high standards of the SENDIA co-ordinator.
- The working party is comprised of a range of staff with differing responsibilities. As a result, developments towards the award have involved staff from all levels.
- All staff have been kept well informed about progress towards the SENDIA Award.
- The inclusion team has been highly effective in supporting the inclusive provision for pupils and work closely with class teachers to ensure this.
- New staff are provided with an effective induction. This contributes to the consistent approach to the inclusive practices within the classrooms.
- The inclusion team has provided a range of training opportunities for other members of staff.
- The school ensures that both parents and the pupils contribute to the content of Individual Educational Plans.
- 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, the Inclusion team has a forensic understanding of the impact of all interventions which are provided for the pupils.

- Staff are determined that all pupils make good or better progress. Leaders act swiftly to both support pupils and provide additional training for staff if this is required. Subsequently, the effectiveness of this support is monitored.
- The policies and procedures support the SEND provision within the school.
- Provision for SEND is an integral part of the overall development plan.

Strengths identified during verification:

- The school is led by a leadership team with a clear moral purpose. The drive from leaders to ensure inclusion is a core value has positively impacted on the school's culture. They are determined to address potential barriers for any pupil. The school's provision for pupils with SEND is highly effective.
- Effective management by senior leaders and the Inclusion team has involved all staff and as a result there is evidence of effective distributed leadership.
- The SENDIA framework has been used as a diagnostic tool to benchmark current practice and to identify areas to develop even further.
- During the tour of the school, the SENDIA Co-ordinator highlighted areas of provision, including the ABA Centre and Flourish classes which exemplify the school's vision.
- Staff feel that the professional development has been highly effective. Over time, leaders have developed a staff team which can support pupils with a variety of needs.
- The school works effectively with external agencies to provide a real network of support.
- The parent interviewed felt that the information that is provided in terms of her child's progress is very clear. She feels fully involved in her child's education. Because of this, the parent felt a true partnership with the school.
- Parents are supported, both individually and in small groups, with additional guidance to help support their children.
- Communication is a real strength. Parents are very grateful to the staff and really value how approachable they are.
- The pupils talked about the ways in which the staff helped them. They were very appreciative and felt the staff really cared about helping them progress in their work.

Impact:

- The school is a very welcoming, nurturing and happy school. It is an organised and very effective learning environment.
- The SENDIA co-ordinator has been highly effective in her role. The detailed portfolio is just one document which evidences the thoroughness of her approach and attention to detail.
- Inclusion was a key priority even before the school embarked upon the award. A culture of mutual respect has resulted in a team whose morale is high and a staff who are very proud of their school.
- 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.

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:

- Continue to provide staff with training to support pupils with specific needs.
- Embed current developments to ensure consistency of practice.

Verifier recommendation:

- Gems Founders School, Dubai should be awarded the SENDIA Award for Schools for a period of three years.

Principal comments:

The clear criteria have allowed our school to celebrate the existing practice in terms on SEND and Inclusion. I am very proud of the work that the Inclusion Team, lead by Siobhan, have done at GFS to embed best practice across the school. It is clear from the feedback and our own self-evaluation processes that our approach to Inclusion is leading the way in the UAE. We really appreciate the rigour of the accreditation visit and feel it has added to the journey we are taking towards outstanding.

May we use your comment for website/marketing purposes? **Yes**