Assessment Policy

Vision: Grow - Flourish - Succeed
Mission: Together we inspire creative, mindful learners who value diversity, support one another and strive for success.

1. INTRODUCTION

Students' attainment and progress is closely monitored at GEMS Founders School, Dubai (GFS) to provide the best possible opportunities and highest levels of support for our learners. All assessment activities are designed to ensure that learning is personalised so that learners can reach their highest potential.

2. PURPOSE OF POLICY

The GEMS Founders School Assessment Policy has been developed as a part of the school's commitment to providing robust and comprehensive assessment information which is effectively used by teachers to modify and personalise learning.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Provide clear guidelines on the approaches to assessment at GEMS Founders School;
- Clearly set out how, and when, assessment practice will be monitored and evaluated;
- To enable our learners to demonstrate what they know, understand and what they can do in their learning;
- To allow teachers to provide feedback that accurately reflects the individual needs of the learners;
- To help our learners understand their next steps and how they can improve their work;
- To report regular information to parents enabling them to support their child's learning.

3. ASSESSMENT APPROACHES

We see assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning, and it is inextricably linked to our curriculum. Our assessment systems take into account the criteria of the National Curriculum for England, whilst providing a greater focus on mastery. Assessment takes into account children's strengths as well as areas where they need support. At GFS, an assessment schedule is drawn up which includes the arrangements for assessment.

We use five overarching forms of assessment:

- day-to-day in-school formative assessment;
- in-school summative assessment;
- External Benchmark Assessments;
- Cognitive Ability Tests (CAT4); and
- International Benchmark assessments.

3.1 FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Teachers use information from lessons to identify how pupils are performing on a continuing basis and use this information to provide appropriate support or challenge and to evaluate teaching and plan future lessons. Learners use feedback to measure their knowledge and understanding against learning objectives and identify areas in their learning which they need to improve. A range of day-to-day formative assessments will be used including, for example:

- Open ended questioning;
- Observations;
- Use of success criteria;
- Peer and self-assessment;
- Project based Learning;
- Target setting;
- Feedback and marking;
- Discussion;
- Use of exemplars to demonstrate standards;
- Presentations;
- Conversations with children about their learning journey.

3.2 SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Teachers use summative assessments to evaluate learning at the end of a unit, or period, and to measure the impact of their own teaching. School leaders use summative assessment to monitor the performance of cohorts, identify where interventions may be required, and work with teachers to ensure pupils are supported to ensure they make expected or better progress. Summative judgements relate to performance against the National Curriculum expectations. Test materials are used at varying points throughout the academic year to support teachers with making accurate teacher assessment judgements. Summative data is always used alongside formative assessment data to develop a well-rounded picture of each child. Summative assessment is monitored and documented so learning is made visible to all stakeholders. At GFS summative data is captured four times a year and recorded on the school management system (SMS), Phoenix.

A range of in-school summative assessments will be used including, for example:

- End of term and end of year tests;
- Short end of topic or unit tests/tasks;
- Teacher judgements relating to the National Curriculum expectations;
- Mock exams.

Standardisation and Moderation

The process of standardisation and moderation is an essential part of our assessment system. Teachers are involved in standardisation moderation activities to ensure agreement on criteria and consistency of judgements.
Examples of moderation activities include:

- Planning and review with colleagues;
- Review of student books/learning journeys;
- Moderation with colleagues from other schools.

3.3 EXTERNAL BENCHMARK ASSESSMENTS

External benchmark assessments are used to enable school leaders to monitor the performance of student cohorts, identify where interventions may be required, and work with teachers to ensure students are supported to achieve sufficient progress and attainment. They support teachers to understand national expectations and assess their own performance in the broader national context. Results of these assessments are shared with parents and learners to help them to understand how they are performing in comparison to students in the UK.

The following External Benchmark Assessments used at GFS are:

- GL Progress Tests;
- GL New Group Reading Test;
- ABT
- Cognitive Abilities Test

If students are absent during any of the above, arrangements for them to complete this at their earliest convenience will be made. If new students join us throughout the year, arrangements for them to complete the above will be made as soon as possible.

GL Progress Tests

GL Progress Tests provide a reliable, consistent measure at the end of the academic year to benchmark students' performance. Question level analysis highlights any gaps in knowledge and understanding, helping to personalise learning, from providing extra support to setting more challenging learning. We use GL Progress Tests to measures students' knowledge, understanding and application in mathematics, English and science.

GL Progress Tests support school improvement initiatives by showing the relative performance of GFS learners compared to UK and international benchmarks. Testing year-on-year enables us to track individual and group progress.

GL New Group Reading Test (NGRT)

Developing literacy and reading ability is fundamental to a student's ability to access the curriculum. The NGRT is a standardised, termly assessment that reliably measures reading skills to help identify underperformance and where difficulties may lie. NGRT provides teachers with reading ages and the Standard Age Scores (SAS) of their learners. This information is used to plan curriculum content at the right levels and to identify those who may have barriers to accessing the curriculum. The test is administered termly allowing for regular monitoring of reading progress and for measuring the impact of intervention.

ABT (Arabic)

The ABT Arabic Language tests are used to assess proficiency in Arabic reading, grammar, spelling and vocabulary, through online multiple-choice questions, in response to a variety of texts and situations. The tests provide comprehensive diagnostic feedback and benchmark performance against other schools in the region. At GFS, students from Year 4 sit the tests at the start of the academic year. Assessment information is used by teachers to personalise learning.

3.4 COGNITIVE ABILITY TESTING

Cognitive Abilities Test (GL CAT4) is a diagnostic assessment that is designed to help students and teachers understand how they learn and identify academic potential. It assesses how students think in areas that are known to make a difference to learning. CAT4 is used from Year 4 to assess students' ability in the following reasoning aptitudes:

- Verbal reasoning;
- Quantitative reasoning;
- Non-verbal reasoning;
- Spatial ability.

Students sit CAT4 early in Term 1 of the academic year and usually re-sit CAT4 2 years later to update information about the students' cognitive abilities.

3.5 INTERNATIONAL BENCHMARK ASSESSMENTS

TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study)
One of the UAE National Agenda objectives to lead the UAE to being among the most successful countries in providing world-class education is to be among the 15 highest performing countries in TIMSS. The next TIMSS tests will take place in 2027 for Years 5 and 9.

PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment)
One of the UAE National Agenda objectives is to lead the UAE to being among the most successful countries in providing world-class education, to be among the 20 highest performing countries in PISA. PISA tests the skills and knowledge of 15 year-old students in reading, mathematics and science. The next PISA tests will take place in 2025.

PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy skills)
PIRLS is an international comparative assessment that measures student learning in reading and is aligned to the UAE National Agenda. The next PIRLS test is expected to take place in 2026.

4. ASSESSMENT AND RECORD KEEPING IN EARLY YEARS

On-going assessment is an essential aspect of the effectiveness of teaching in the EYFS.

Observations take place daily (both formally and informally). Teachers make time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. They also make spontaneous observations to capture significant moments of children's learning, known as 'remarking on the remarkable'. Observations are recorded in different formats (e.g. narrative style, photographs and videos) and saved on the ARC Pathway Platform. These observations are aligned to developmental milestones and inform summative profiling of children's development.

The main method of assessment is through practitioners' (teachers and TAs) observations of children in different learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child-initiated play. Other methods of assessing children in the EYFS include engaging alongside children in their play, annotation of children's written work and talking with children about their task or play. Observations are evaluated, children's

learning priorities are identified, and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

Baseline assessment is carried out using a developmental milestones profiling tool on ARC pathway, during the children's first half term in school. Judgements made on children's development are based on practitioners' evidence of children's behaviour observed independently and consistently in their self-initiated activities across all areas of learning and development. This profiling is continued throughout the year to inform teachers' summative judgements at the end of each term.

At the end of FS2, in line with statutory requirements, using all the assessment information which has been collated teachers assess children against the early learning goals. They make a judgement as to whether a child is meeting the expected levels of development or not yet reaching expected levels (not met). This is the EYFS Profile. Additionally, in line with local expectations, we identify and record children working above expectations. A record of each child's progress in all areas of their learning is kept by retaining their assessment data which is captured four times per year.

In term 1 and term 2 parents receive an overview of attainment and progress. At the end of the summer term a written report is sent to parents. This is a summative record of the child's yearly achievement and identifies targets for the child's next steps for learning.

In EYFS there are regular standardisation and moderation sessions. Teachers are involved in standardisation moderation activities to ensure agreement on criteria and consistency of judgements.
Examples of moderation activities include:

- Planning and review with colleagues;
- Book Looks;
- Review of ARC Pathway learning journeys;
- Case studies and holistic pictures;
- Moderation with colleagues from other schools.

5.INCLUSION

In addition to the assessments above, the school will make use of additional diagnostic assessments to contribute to the early and accurate identification of children and young people's additional learning needs and any requirements for support and intervention.
These include:

- Dyslexia Screening tests;
- Non-verbal reasoning assessments;
- GL WellComm Speech and Language Assessment;
- Assessments carried out by external agencies in support of the child.

5. REPORTING TO PARENTS

We communicate clear information related to student learning to parents through parent/teacher meetings, interim reports and end of year reports.

Parents/Teacher Meetings

Formal parent teacher meetings are held termly in both primary and secondary. Parents meet with the class and specialist teachers. Teachers share progress and attainment information and next steps in learning. Parents can request further meetings throughout the year if required.

Interim Reports
Parents will receive interim reports twice within the year, which outline attainment, progress and attitude to learning.

End of Year Reports
Parents will receive an end of year report which outlines attainment and attitude to learning in all curriculum areas, as well as areas of strength and next steps in learning for all core subject areas.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Heads of Schools are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the policy is adhered to.
- Ensuring GFS adheres to KHDA requirements and other appropriate international guidelines.

Deputy Head Teachers are responsible for:

- Analysing student progress and attainment, including individual pupils and specific groups;
- Prioritising key actions to address underachievement;
- Reporting to the Heads of School on all key aspects of student progress and attainment, including current standards and trends over previous years;
- Providing assessment data and reports as requested for DSIB/KHDA.

The Head of Inclusion is responsible for:

- Ensuring assessment and exam accommodations are in place;
- Using assessment data to monitor the progress and attainment of SENDo students;
- Using assessment information to coordinate individual support;
- Managing specialist SEND/EAL assessments.

Teachers are responsible for:

- All teachers are responsible for analysing their class data, highlighting underachieving students and deciding on suitable interventions;
- Using assessment information as part of the planning process to provide personalised support and challenge;
- Teachers are responsible for following the assessment procedures outlined in this policy.

Students

- Students are expected to engage fully in the assessment process by always trying their hardest in all forms of assessment and exams and by following exam regulations specified by examination boards.

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- GFS Feedback and Marking Policy
- GFS Admissions Policy

Signed ..... Date 22 June 2026

Head of Primary

Signed ..... Date 22 June 2026

Head of Secondary

Signed ..... Date 22 June 2026

Whole School Vice Principal

Signed ..... Date 22 June 2026

Associate Principal

Signed ..... Date 22 June 2026

Executive Principal/CEO/Executive Vice President of Education

Next policy review date:
August 2027