



هيئة الشارقة للتعليم الخاص  
SHARJAH PRIVATE EDUCATION AUTHORITY

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ITQAN Programme  
**Improvement Review Visit (IRV)  
Report**

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**GEMS Cambridge International Private School**  
25 / 26 May, 2022



إتقان ITQAN





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## PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Sharjah Private Education Authority (SPEA) is grateful to Sharjah private schools and their stakeholders including students and their parents, teachers and staff, school leaders and governors for sharing their views of the school and engaging with our review teams during this Improvement Review Visit (IRV). This Report shares the findings of this 2-day review. It identifies strengths and areas for improvement along with strategic recommendations intended to help the school bring about its own improvement.

### Purpose

The main purpose of this IRV is to assist schools in their continuous improvement journey through an external validation of their progress, quality, and capacity to improve in the context of Sharjah Private Education Authority's (SPEA) vision to achieve *'Excellence in Education'* by 2024. SPEA has been a pioneer in supporting the private education sector in Sharjah, driven by its mission of *'Enabling the learner's community to grow and achieve aspiring outcomes through supportive and effective services'*. This new and innovative approach to school review is an important part of our strategy for achieving this vision because it supports continuous school improvement.

### Scope

This review is guided by Performance Standards 3 and 6 and seven related Performance Indicators taken from the 2015 UAE School Inspection Framework. These relate to teaching, assessment, leadership and management. Many students, their parents and teachers experience these areas daily. Due to the extraordinary disruption that schools have experienced in the last two years and the impact this is likely to have had on important outcomes, SPEA is focusing this review on these two Standards only, and in isolation from the remaining four Standards. This means that the review does not give an overall performance rating for the school.

The findings relating to the two Standards and their associated Indicators will provide indicative levels based on the 6-point scale in the UAE School Inspection Framework. These indicative levels will help schools understand the impact of their



leadership on the quality of teaching and assessment. The levels may not necessarily be the same as would be the case under the application of the entire UAE School Inspection Framework, however. SPEA believes this is a fair and constructive approach following the disruption in the last two years, and it will help schools to improve in advance of their next full review.

Where applicable, the review programme also gathers information about students' exit qualifications and post-school destinations, and the stage UK curriculum schools have reached in transitioning from Grades to Years.



## THE REVIEW PROCESS

The IRV uses two of the six Performance Standards (PS) and selected aspects of the seven Performance Indicators (PI) from the UAE School Inspection Framework issued in 2015, as follows:

**Performance Standard 3: Teaching and assessment**, comprising:

- PI 3.1 Teaching for effective learning
- PI 3.2 Assessment

**Performance Standard 6. Leadership and management**, comprising:

- PI 6.1 The effectiveness of leadership
- PI 6.2 Self-evaluation and improvement planning
- PI 6.3 Partnerships with parents and the community
- PI 6.4 Governance
- PI 6.5 Management, staffing, facilities and resources

### Indicative levels

The indicative levels stated in this report use the following 6-point scale.

<b>Outstanding</b>	The quality of performance substantially exceeds the expectations of the UAE
<b>Very good</b>	The quality of performance exceeds the expectations of the UAE
<b>Good</b>	The quality of performance meets the expectations of the UAE
<b>Acceptable</b>	The quality of performance meets the minimum level required in the UAE
<b>Weak</b>	The quality of performance is below the expectation of the UAE
<b>Very weak</b>	The quality of performance is significantly below the expectation of the UAE





To gather the required information to inform these indicative levels, our team of reviewers carried out a wide range of activities during the 2-day visit, including:

- visits to lessons mainly in Arabic, English, mathematics and science, including lessons reviewed jointly with senior leaders of the school;
- reviewing important documents such as school self-evaluation form, school policies and the school improvement plan;
- meeting the Governors, Principal, senior leaders, middle leaders, subject coordinators, teachers, parents, and students;
- reviewing teachers' lesson plans, samples of students' coursework and related information;
- attending school activities such as assemblies, arrivals, departures, and break times; and
- analysing the outcomes of the surveys returned by students, their parents, and teachers.



## SCHOOL INFORMATION

School	School ID	352
	School location	Muweilah S School Zone Area- Sharjah
	Establishment date	September 1, 2019
	Language of instruction	English
	School curriculum	English Curriculum
	Accreditation body	BSO, BSME
	Examination Board	Pearson Edexcel, CIE, Oxford AQA IGSE, A-levels
	National Agenda Benchmark Tests/ International assessment	IBT, RBT, PIRLS, CAT4, NGRT, GL Progress tests, PASS
	Fee range	AED20,000 to AED30,000
Staff	Principal	Ms Albertha Huyser
	Chair of Board of Governors	Ranju Anand
	Total number of teachers	101
	Total number of teaching assistants	38
	Turnover rate	17%
	Main nationality of teachers	Indian, Filipino, British, Arab
	Teacher: student ratio	1:15
	KG: roll and gender	Boys: 268    Girls: 244
	Primary: roll and gender	Boys: 426    Girls: 369
Students	Middle: roll and gender	Boys: 152    Girls: 115
	High: roll and gender	Boys: 26    Girls: 30
	Nationality groups	1. Emirati: 66
		2. Largest nationality: Egyptian
		3. Next largest: Indian
	Total number of students with special educational needs	28



## INDICATIVE LEVELS

### STANDARDS AND INDICATORS

Performance Standard 3: Teaching and assessment	Good
PI 3.1: Teaching for effective learning	Good
PI 3.2: Assessment	Very good
Performance Standard 6: Leadership and management	Good
PI 6.1: The effectiveness of leadership	Very good
PI 6.2: Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good
PI 6.3: Partnerships with parents and the community	Very good
PI 6.4: Governance	Good
PI 6.5: Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Very good

## THE REVIEW FINDINGS

### PERFORMANCE STANDARD 3: TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

These findings draw mainly from our team of four reviewers' 51 visits to Arabic, English, mathematics and science lessons, 17 of which were carried out jointly with school leaders.

#### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The overall quality of teaching and assessment is good. Most teachers' strong subject knowledge underpins the planning of 'design thinking' lessons that include connections to the real world. Lessons are consistently purposeful and enjoyable for students. The school tracks individuals and cohorts of students' progress in learning very effectively across all subjects.





## **STRENGTHS**

- Teachers' application of their subject knowledge and consistent use of effective teaching strategies.
- The school's use of visible learning outcomes and success criteria, which meet the needs of individuals and groups of students.
- Teachers' use of a wide range of effective questions, which extend and challenge students' thinking.
- The school's use of highly effective assessment approaches, which inform delivery of lessons founded on the planned and intended curriculum.

## **KEY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

- Opportunities for greater student engagement in lessons or parts of lessons where teacher-talk dominates.
- Overall consistency in the quality of lessons.
- Teachers' promotion of self- and peer-assessment for students.
- Teachers' use of written feedback, in order to support students' understanding of their strengths and how to improve their work.



## PERFORMANCE STANDARD 3: FEATURES OF PRACTICE

### PI 3.1 Teaching for effective learning

#### Teachers' knowledge of their subjects and how students learn them

- Most teachers have secure knowledge and skills related to their subjects and communicate these confidently to students.
- Teachers make effective use of visible learning outcomes and success criteria to meet the needs of individuals and groups of students.
- Teachers use a wide range of effective questions to extend and challenge students' thinking.

#### Lesson planning, the learning environment and the use of time and resources

- Lesson planning is comprehensive and consistent and uses the 'Design Thinking' approach to provide a range of purposeful activities.
- Lesson planning promotes the review and consolidation of learning in most lessons.
- Teaching is mostly well-paced and resourced and creates active and engaging learning environments.

#### Teacher-student interactions including the use of questioning and dialogue

- Teachers' warm and positive relationships with students promote effective learning and lively learning environments in most lessons.
- Teachers use a range of questions for different purposes to encourage thinking and to engage students in meaningful reflection and dialogue.

#### Teaching strategies to meet the needs of individuals and groups of students

- Most teachers use a range of strategies to support the individual learning needs of students well, including appropriate challenge and support.
- Students who are encountering significant barriers in learning are supported effectively in classes.



### **Teaching to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, innovation and independent learning skills.**

- Critical thinking, problem-solving, innovation and independent learning skills are promoted purposefully including through, for example, dialogue and discussion.
- In many lessons, digital technologies are used carefully to focus on key information and tasks and to promote independent learning.

## **PI 3.2 Assessment**

### **Internal assessment processes**

- Internal assessment procedures align well with the curriculum standards and are supported through consistent moderation.
- PASS data are used effectively to identify students' personal and social wellbeing needs.

### **External, national and international benchmarking**

- The school benchmarks students' academic outcomes effectively in English, mathematics and science, using a range of measures which have been specified earlier in this report.
- External benchmarks are used appropriately to inform target-setting and lesson planning.

### **Analysis of assessment data to monitor students' progress**

- Assessment data are analysed to monitor students' progress and interpreted accurately to identify students' strengths and areas for improvement.

### **Use of assessment information to influence teaching, the curriculum and students' progress**

- Across all subjects, teachers use assessment information effectively to address curriculum gaps and meet the learning needs of students.
- The school uses effective assessment arrangements to support students who have special educational needs through individualised progress criteria.



### Teachers' knowledge of and support for students' learning

- Personalised oral feedback during most lessons is significantly influenced by teachers' awareness of individual students' strengths and challenges.
- Students are sometimes involved in self- or peer-assessment that provides simple guidance on how their work can be improved, but not yet consistently in all lessons.

## THE REVIEW FINDINGS

### PERFORMANCE STANDARD 6: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

#### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The overall quality of school leadership and management is good. School leaders have a shared vision which contributes to an inclusive and vibrant learning environment that focuses on the wellbeing and progress of all students in the school. The school has well-established and comprehensive approaches to safeguarding and child protection. Overall, the school has a strong capacity to improve.

#### STRENGTHS

- The school's supportive, positive and collaborative learning environment for staff, which helps teachers to feel confident about asking questions and trying out new approaches.
- The school's relationships and interactions with parents, which are friendly and inclusive so that parents feel informed about their child's learning and development.
- The school's well-organised day-to-day flow with effective routines and procedures and high-quality resources.

#### KEY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Senior leaders' consultation with teachers, parents and students, in order to help inform self-evaluation and improvement planning processes.
- The Board of Governor's composition, in order to include representation from a wider range of stakeholders.



## PERFORMANCE STANDARD 6: FEATURES OF PRACTICE

### The effectiveness of leadership

- The development and implementation of the school vision is a whole-school process and is clearly reflected in the school culture.
- Leaders ensure that the learning environment is purposeful and opportunities are provided for teachers to increase their capacity and responsibility.
- Most leaders, particularly at senior levels, demonstrate secure knowledge of the curriculum and effective teaching practice.

### Self-evaluation and improvement planning

- The school is committed to monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning with a view to improving consistency and sharing effective practice widely.
- Self-evaluation is comprehensive and involves executive and senior leaders.
- School improvement planning is comprehensive and contains detailed actions that are regularly reviewed.
- Further involvement of parents and students will strengthen the school's evaluation and planning processes and their likely impact.

### Partnerships with parents and the community

- Relationships and interactions with parents are an important strength of the school.
- Parents feel well-informed about their child's learning, development and wellbeing.
- The school has impressive community partnerships with schools and other organisations locally and internationally.

### Governance

- The Governing Board includes representatives of the school's owner, parents and the community. Teachers and students are not yet represented on the Board.
- The Governors monitor general school performance and look at the progress and attainment of all students. They now need to develop a stronger focus on monitoring the quality of teaching.



### **Management, staffing, facilities and resources**

- Day-to-day management of the school is very well managed and characterised by effective procedures and routines.
- The school is equipped with high-quality and suitably varied resources that complement teaching and learning.
- Teachers are well qualified and trained suitably.
- Most learning areas are spacious although some rooms tend to be very full.

## **ADDITIONAL ASPECTS**

### **Transitions (Grade to Year Project) in UK Curriculum Schools**

- The school is now fully aligned with the Grade to Year Project for UK Curriculum Schools.

### **Exit Qualifications and Post-School Destinations**

Not applicable. The first cohort of Y13 students is in 2022-2023.



## VIEWS OF STAKEHOLDERS

Students, parents and teachers expressed their views about the school through the stake holder surveys conducted by SPEA and in meetings with the review team. The infographics below show key outcomes of the survey, and the following narrative reflects the views they expressed in the survey and meetings. If important concerns were raised, then reviewers considered these and have reported their findings in the relevant sections of this report.



### Students

Most students are satisfied with the education they are receiving, feel safe at school and enjoy attending. A large majority think the schoolwork is not challenging enough.



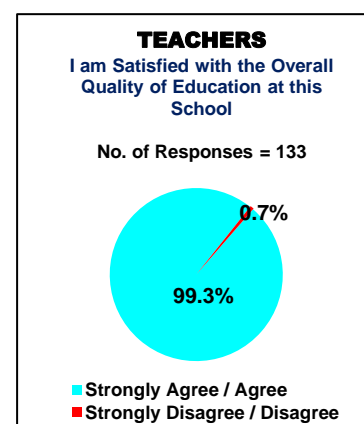
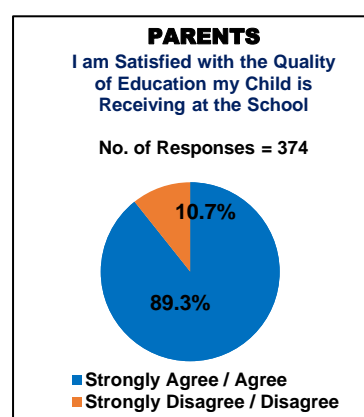
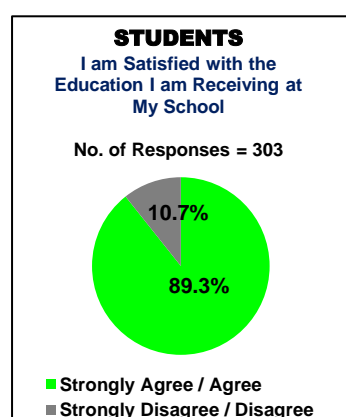
### Parents

Most parents are satisfied with the education their child is receiving. They believe their child's needs are being met and they feel comfortable in approaching the school.



### Teachers

Almost all teachers are satisfied with all aspects of the overall quality of education at the school. They are pleased with the pastoral care they receive from the school and opportunities for advancement.





## STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

### Standard 3: Teaching and Assessment

To improve teaching and assessment, the school should now:

- i) provide training for teachers focused on balancing a range of approaches in lessons to achieve greater student engagement, with a particular focus on reducing excessive teacher-talk;
- ii) use professional development training to enhance teachers' use of self- and peer-assessment and to use the information gathered to facilitate students' interest and next steps;
- iii) take steps to identify and share widely with all teachers the most effective teaching approaches taking place in many lessons; and
- iv) clarify expectations about the use of written feedback to students which helps students understand their strengths and areas for improvement.

### Standard 6: Leadership and Management

To improve leadership and management, the school should now:

- i) involve teachers, students and their parents more actively in the processes of school self-evaluation and share expectations about their contributions to school improvement;
- ii) build further on lesson visit evaluations to share best practice across the school including, for example, by enabling teachers to visit each other's lessons; and
- iii) include full representation of all key stakeholders on the Board of Governors.

### Stakeholder Views

To improve stakeholders' views, the school should now:

- i) explore the views of students, parents and teachers about aspects of the school and address any areas of concern; and
- ii) include representatives of key stakeholders in evaluation and priority planning.





In addition to considering the full content of this report and identifying actions required to bring about improvement, the school should build the above recommendations into its improvement planning process.

In consultation with the assigned School Improvement Advisor, the school should send its revised improvement plan, including specific actions, timescales, and success measures, to SPEA within two months of the publication of this report. Four months later, the school should submit a detailed report on progress to SPEA.

SPEA's next school review will validate the progress report and include a review of further progress made by the school in implementing the recommendations from this IRV report.

If you have a concern or wish to comment on any aspect of this report, please contact SPEA on [schools.review@spea.shj.ae](mailto:schools.review@spea.shj.ae) within three weeks of receiving this report.