

## CURRICULUM HANDBOOK

Foundation Stage 1

2023 - 2024

EXPLORING LEADERSHIP



مدرسة جيمس متروبول  
GEMS Metropole School  
MOTOR CITY



## Introduction

### Welcome to Infant School

On behalf of all of the staff at GEMS Metropole, it is a pleasure to welcome you and your family this academic year.

In the Infant School our focus is on leading learning through play and this is at the heart of everything we do. This takes place in our world class facilities; the forest school, farm and indoor environments. Beyond the school day we provide opportunities for the students to develop extra curriculum interests which are also celebrated inside of school.

Parents are strong partners in our learning and it is a pleasure to invite you in to share our journey through the year to a variety of exciting events. We make no excuses for your children being confident, imaginative learners taking risks to lead change in our community.

**Emily Smith**  
Head of Infant School



### Welcome to Foundation Stage 1

On behalf of everyone here at GEMS Metropole School, I am delighted to welcome you and your family to our community within the Foundation Stage. We are excited for you to join us as we start our learning journey at GEMS Metropole.

In FS1 the children learn through exciting play opportunities that are created in our carefully planned continuous provision areas, within the classrooms and beyond. Children are given the opportunity to explore, play, create and investigate as they learn how to become independent learners, taking on challenges as they learn how to communicate effectively and work in collaboration with others.

Throughout the year there are many opportunities for you to be involved in your child's learning as we showcase our term's work at the end of each topic. We invite you to be involved in as much of our school life as possible and take part in our exciting workshops.

**Emma Cobourn**  
Head of Foundation Stage 1





## Infant Leadership Team

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- 1 **Emily** Smith  
Head of Infant School

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- 2 **Emily** Shepherd  
Deputy Head of Primary

- 3 **Neil** Corrigan  
Deputy Head of Primary

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- 4 **Alexander** James  
Assistant Head of Primary

- 5 **Brynn** Cooper  
Assistant Head of Primary

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- 6 **Gemma** Brown  
Assistant Head of Primary

- 7 **Erin** Nelson  
Assistant Head of Primary



## The Metropole Curriculum Journey

At Metropole, our programme of learning embodies the GEMS Education core values and ensures that students receive a high-quality education in a happy, supportive and nurturing environment, where they are encouraged to explore and take risks.

Teachers plan challenging, well-organised and interesting lessons which engage and motivate our students. There are regular opportunities for leadership, enquiry based learning, critical thinking, decision-making and problem solving where students are encouraged to take an active role in the learning opportunities they encounter. All staff have high expectations of both students and each other.

## Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum – FS1 and FS2

Children learning in Foundation Stage follow the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage framework (EYFS) for teaching and development. This stage is very important in a child's life as it helps prepare your child for school 'readiness' as well as for their future learning and successes.

Children learn skills, acquire new knowledge and demonstrate their understanding through 7 areas of learning and development: Communication and Language, Physical Development, Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design. All 7 areas of learning are used to plan children's learning and activities. Teachers make sure that the activities are suited to your child's unique needs.

## The National Curriculum of England Years 1-11

From Years 1-11 students follow The National Curriculum of England and are exposed to a wide range of compulsory subjects which includes: Mathematics, English, Science, Computing, Design and Technology, History, Geography, Art and Design, Music, Physical Education, Modern Foreign languages.

The national curriculum is a non-textbook curriculum which provides pupils with an introduction to the essential knowledge they require to be educated citizens. It introduces pupils to the best that has been thought and said, and helps engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievements.







## Ministry of Education Curriculum

Alongside the Early Years Curriculum and National Curriculum of England, students also study the Ministry of Education Curriculum. Through this, students learn Arabic, Islamic Studies and Moral, Social and Cultural Studies.

The UAE leaders along with GEMS Metropole promote the learning and using of Arabic language as it is considered a fundamental pillar of the Emirates national identity, its people's history and its deep-rooted traditions. The Arabic framework supports both native and non-native Arabic speakers. This framework illustrates the levels expected to be achieved by the learner in each of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Where Arabic is the student's non-native language, the curriculum links the achievement of these levels to the number of years spent in studying Arabic, regardless of the learner's current grade.



## High Performance Learning at GEMS Metropole

GEMS Metropole School is on a very exciting journey to become world-class! Students at Metropole develop the language and skills to help them explain the current stage of their learning and the next steps they need to take to improve and deepen their understanding. The High Performance Learning approach recognises that all learners have the potential to achieve the very highest results and develops the attitudes and performance characteristics required for this to happen.

High Performance Learning is based around a framework that includes 30 generic characteristics that students need to develop to be high performing learners. These are based around, 'How we think' and 'How we behave'.

High Performance Learning is embedded throughout the curriculum at Metropole and across the wider school. We truly believe that all students can be high performance learners and we strive for all our students to have a performance mind-set and reach their potential and beyond!



## Forest School

Throughout the academic Year, Foundation Stage will learn a variety of skills and gain a great deal of knowledge and understanding as part of their Forest School sessions. However, the main focus of Foundation Stage Forest School sessions will be on developing children's communication and language, following rules and boundaries, gross motor skills, independence and curiosity when exploring the natural environment around them.

Foundation Stage learn the Forest School song and develop their listening skills by sharing a different story each week. They have one focused session a week as well as access to the different outdoor areas every day, in which they have free use of the area to explore using the skills they have learnt in their Forest School sessions.

During their Forest School time, the children will begin to learn, with support, how to thread, use tools safely (with gloves), use natural resources to create dens for toys, as well as making natural craft. The children also learn games to play with their friends.

Forest School teaches children to care for the environment and encourages them to be sustainable learners and show concern for society. We think about the world around us, where food comes from and we even have opportunities to plant our own bulbs and seeds and are responsible for caring for them.





## Termly Topic Overviews

### Term 1A: Who are we?

As we start our learning journey at Metropole, we will be finding out all about each other. We begin by exploring our new environments and building relationships with our new friends and teachers. We will be introduced to our class bear, who will join us throughout the year on all our learning adventures linked to our High Performance Learning. As we settle into our classrooms, we will invite our Mums and Dads in to show them a 'day in the life' at Metropole in Foundation Stage One.

### Term 1B: Can you sing me a song?

Over this term we will learn a range of nursery rhymes. We start the topic by entering a pitch black classroom and seeing the night sky on the board. We will also find different scenarios in the class during this topic like a cracked humpty dumpty egg and a spiderweb. We end our topic with 'World Nursery rhyme week' where we invite our families in as we perform all the nursery rhymes we have learned. During this term, we also celebrate UAE National Day, we learn about the UAE and we help the farmer find his camel, a real one! We will also have the opportunity to watch a drama performance to learn more about the UAE National Day.

### Term 2A: What is your favourite animal?

After the Winter Break, things start to get a little 'wild' at Metropole. We start the topic by receiving a number of mystery sized boxes from a Zoo. What do you think is inside? We will be learning about all different kinds of animals, where they live, what they eat and how we as the future generation can protect them and keep them safe. We will complete our 'Wild Things' topic with some mystery footprints going through the classroom. The children will make their own binoculars and use their imagination to go on a safari and will have to investigate which animal has visited their classroom and left their footprints.



## Termly Topic Overviews

### Term 2B: What is in the treasure box?

This term we will kick off our learning by discovering a treasure chest in our classrooms – children will get to explore the contents and guess who it belongs to! We will learn all about floating and sinking as we experiment with different materials to build boats. During this topic, we will have the opportunity to visit an Aquarium and find out more about the deep blue ocean and what lives inside. We will end this unit with an exciting treasure hunt around Metropole which we will invite parents to take part in.

### Term 3A: What do you want to be when you grow up?

During this term we will be exploring growth in both animals and humans. We look at the story 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. The children will be enticed into discovering more about this story by finding an egg on a leaf in their classroom. What could be inside this egg? Will it hatch? They will follow the life cycle of a Butterfly as the story unfolds. Within this topic we also explore what we want to be when we grow up. We will become interviewers, inviting adults into question. Following this children will enter into the story of 'When I Grow up'. Here they will consider different job roles, people that help us and what they might like to do when they grow up. After immersing themselves into all the different job occupation language and action they will even get to hear from some grown ups doing some of these jobs in a show and tell session (maybe even yourself!).

### Term 3B: Are We Nearly There Yet?

For our final term in FS1 we head on a journey, but where will that journey take us? As we jump aboard the 'Train Ride', we continue to learn new story telling language and develop our mark making skills. We make a visit to Oli Oli, taking part in a bespoke workshop. Here we will get the opportunity to investigate, explore and further deepen our scientific skills. At the end of this term we showcase and perform all what we have learnt on our learning journey through FS1, inviting our families into school to celebrate with us.





## Foundation Stage 1: Curriculum

### Communication and Language

In this area of learning in FS1 we focus on speaking, listening, attention and understanding. Communication and Language is an important and integral part of most learning experiences in FS1. As children develop speaking and listening skills, they are truly placing the building blocks for literacy and learning. On top of this they are learning key skills for example how to express themselves and make friends. For this reason, throughout FS1 we will be focusing on a plethora of different activities and learning opportunities in order to develop these areas.

Each half term we have a story or rhyme focus which involves the use of communication and languages, learning and developmental areas, such as listening and understanding the stories, learning chunks of language and new vocabulary and participating in small group and one-to-one discussion relating to our stories. It also encourages students to offer explanations of what might happen whilst using recently learnt vocabulary from the stories.

In addition, throughout our day-to-day learning children are supported in responding appropriately to what people say, expressing their ideas and feelings using past, present and future tenses and to include conjunctions in sentences to extend speaking. This is done through play with peers and adults, teacher modelling, circle time, lesson activities and general language use both in the classroom and outdoor environment.



## Foundation Stage 1: Curriculum

### Physical Development

Physical development comes under one of the key areas of Foundation stage. At GEMS Metropole Foundation stage, we aim to support our students in developing and strengthening their movement, understanding their own body, the handling of objects including pencil grip, tool use and accuracy and care when drawing. Throughout the year students are encouraged, taught and provided with different opportunities to develop the different physical development areas both in the classroom and outside of the classroom in our outdoor areas and P.E. lessons.

One predominant area is the strengthening and development of fine motor skills. We do this through providing different opportunities within the classroom environment such as writing patterns, playing with playdough, using tweezers, using and strengthening pencil grip and using small tools to make changes to materials and lots of different activities that involve our hands!

Another important area within physical development is gross motor skills. During the year, we offer the opportunity to demonstrate spatial awareness, strength, balance and co-ordination both during PE lessons, using the outdoor area and whilst playing in the classroom during continuous provision time.



## Foundation Stage 1: Curriculum

### Personal, Social and Emotional Development

At GEMS Metropole, we place a high focus on our childrens' personal, emotional and social development as we understand that this is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development.

Our aim is to ensure all children feel happy and safe when coming to school. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable our children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Our children are supported to manage their emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, and to persist and wait for what they want.

Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peacefully. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.





## Foundation Stage 1: Curriculum

### Literacy

At GEMS Metropole we want our children to develop a passion for reading and writing for pleasure from the start of their learning journey. Each topic, we use rich quality texts to develop our students vocabulary and build on their story telling skills. Throughout school, we use Talk 4 Writing to support early stages of writing and storytelling. This supports their oracy, imagination and creativity.

Our aim is for children to verbally retell stories through images and symbols that they are able to process independently and in their own way. We encourage children to make marks that can be expressed to give meaning, which then develops into children exploring initial letters from their name or things important to them. For example 'm' for mummy.

### Phonics

At GEMS Metropole, we believe that every child should have the opportunity to become a happy, fluent reader. The MTS Phonics Scheme offers a coherently planned sequence of lessons that supports the effective teaching of phonics within EYFS, KS1 and, where appropriate, KS2.

Throughout Phase 1, young learners develop the knowledge, skills and understanding to discriminate between and use auditory, environmental and instrumental sounds. Phase 1 is taught in FS1 at GEMS Metropole and runs throughout the teaching of Phonics Sets 1-5. In FS2, children work within Set 1-3. Here, learners are introduced to phonemes/sounds and graphemes/letters systematically. They also learn to develop and apply blending and segmenting skills for reading and writing.

In KS1, children work within Sets 4 and 5. The coherently planned sequence of lessons within Set 4 allows opportunities for children to apply their phonics knowledge and skills as the prime approach to reading and spelling. It focuses on phonetically decodable two-syllable and three-syllable words and the alternative ways of pronouncing and representing the long vowel phonemes. Furthermore, children will develop their ability to attempt to read and spell increasingly complex words. By Set 5, children explore spelling patterns and grammar while also developing a breadth of knowledge, skills and understanding in the recognition and spelling of common exception words.

The GEMS Metropole Phonics Scheme intends to not only provide children with opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding essential for reading and writing, but also, to develop each child's confidence, resilience and engagement in phonics lessons and a love for reading and writing.





## What Phonics looks like in FS1?

In FS1, we first begin by listening to sounds in our natural world. Listening is a key part of phonics. We continue with listening and begin to recognise words that rhyme. In Term 2 we follow an adaptation of the Read Write Inc phonics programme. We systematically teach and plan following the RWI order of sounds. We learn a new sound each week, the children will be shown the sound, be introduced to the correct pronunciation and will then be shown a rhyme to support them with the letter formation.





## Foundation Stage 1: Curriculum

### Mathematics

In Mathematics, we provide children with a high quality learning environment that supports children with ample opportunities to develop and enhance their skills in counting, awareness of shapes, patterns, understanding numbers and number problems. We use natural resources as manipulatives to help develop number sense and accurate counting. This year in Mathematics, the children will be developing their understanding of numbers to 5.

In Gems Metropole, staff use their knowledge and expertise to plan Mathematical activities, in and outside the classroom through practical hands on activities. In lessons we provide children with the opportunity to solve problems practically and with a purpose. Our highly skilled staff tailor learning to meet the needs of all children through addressing common misconceptions while supporting new concepts.

### Understanding Of The World

We are passionate about providing our children with the opportunity to observe objects and materials. Each classroom has been specifically designed to enable children the space to investigate and explore in a scientific way. Children are taught key skills in predicting, observing, testing and recording to help them make sense of the world around them.

Throughout the Foundation Stage, our designated investigation areas provide children with open-ended opportunities to make links with other areas of the curriculum, while using the many resources that are readily available. We are exceptionally proud of how our children are able to find things out for themselves.

### Expressive Arts and Design

Expressive arts and design involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. It also provides opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, design and technology.



## Foundation Stage 1: Communications

### Parent Workshop Information

Across the year we will be providing many opportunities for you to learn about how children learn specific concepts in FS2. Just in case you are unable to make these dates, we will record so you can access it all year round.

### Resources To Support My Child

Please see below a list of websites that you might find helpful when supporting your child's learning at home.

**Ictgames** - For literacy and math's games

**Topmarks** - For literacy and math's games

**Phonics Play** - For support with early Phonics listening

## FS1 Communication

Over the year we will communicate with you in a variety of ways. You can expect to receive communication for your children in the following ways:

### Class Email

Each week your child's class teacher will email out information specific to your child's class. This will include learning that has happened that week as well as what will be coming up in the following week. It will also detail any upcoming events, trips or important information.

### Weekly Infant Newsletter

Every Friday you will have access to the infant newsletter. This includes information relevant to the infant school and can be accessed through GEMS Connect as well as through your email.

### Head of Primary Newsletter

This will be received bi-weekly and will be available on GEMS Connect. This newsletter contains a wider view of what is happening within the school.

### GEMS Connect / School Reports

You will receive two reports each term which will be available on GEMS Connect for you to review & download.



## Student Wellbeing

At GEMS Metropole School, we are committed to promoting and supporting the positive mental health and wellbeing of our students. We recognise that mental health and emotional wellbeing is just as important as physical health. Individuals are better prepared for a happier fulfilled life when they are healthy, safe and thriving.

GEMS Metropole School supports the UAE vision for wellbeing by sharing the following vision:

**‘We are proactive in promoting wellbeing, allowing us all to personally thrive’.**

This vision is based on a proactive, positive psychology model, reinforced through the PERMAH framework allowing our community to build their personal sense of happiness and wellbeing, rather than a reactive only approach. Across the school we achieve this through LEAD time, assemblies, happiness rooms, pastoral curriculum, school events, Metropole Mustangs, School Farm and through the 4 school model we have here at GEMS Metropole.



Reflecting on what is going well in our life and spending time with people we care for.

Participating in activities we enjoy and love.

Demonstrating our school values to build positive, caring and supportive relationships.

Ensuring activities and opportunities are linked to the outside world and grow our understanding of being people of others.

Setting personal targets and persevering until they are achieved and celebrating this.

Be active and knowledgeable about the importance of healthy and active lifestyles.







