

THE FOREST SCHOOL



CURRICULUM HANDBOOK

Foundation Stage 1

2024 - 2025

EXPLORING
LEADERSHIP



مدرسة جيمس متروبول
GEMS Metropole School
MOTOR CITY



EDUCATION



Introduction

Welcome to Infant School

On behalf of all of the staff at GEMS Metropole School, 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 Shepherd
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.

In FS1 we understand the importance of creating encouraging, real – life learning experiences. We believe in providing children with opportunities to explore, play, create and investigate through our carefully planned continuous provision areas and incredible Forest school! We create experiences for your child to be at the centre of their learning journey, filled with curiosity, awe and wonder. We are passionate about building relationships with our families so that we can work together to support, nurture and develop our children's potential.

We invite you to be involved in as much of our school life as possible and take part in our exciting Parent workshops. We look forward to working with our parents on this wonderful learning journey ahead!

Katy Anderson
Head of Foundation Stage 1





Infant Leadership Team



Emily Shepherd
Head of Infant School



Lucy Nicholls
Deputy Head of Primary
Achievements



Chris Ebbinkhuysen
Deputy Head of Primary
Pastoral



Erin Nelson
Assistant Head of Primary
FS1 and FS2



Debbie Simpson
Assistant Head of Primary
Year 1 and Year 2



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

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.

Prime Areas		Specific Areas	
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Building Relationships Managing Self Self-Regulations	Literacy	Reading Writing Comprehension
		Mathematics	Numbers Numerical Pattern
Physical Development	Gross Motor and Fine Motor Health and Self-care	Understanding the World	People, Culture and Communities The Natural World Past and Present
Communication and Language	Listening and Attention Understanding Speaking		Expressive Arts and Design

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 accredited as a World Class High Performance Learning school! 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 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 - Where we explore and discover!

Throughout the academic Year, Foundation Stage students 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 students 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 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 Overviews

Term 1: Who are we?

As the children start their educational journey at Metropole, during Term 1 they will begin to learn all about each other while exploring their new warm and nurturing learning environments, both indoors and outdoors. They look forward to building relationships with their new friends and teachers.

The children will be introduced to their class bear, who will accompany us throughout the year on all their learning adventures, and they will look forward to sharing and discussing these experiences as a class. They will start to explore and develop skills that support their learning and confidence in all areas of their development. The children will also learn how to collaborate in play and learning together.

During this term they will develop their communication and language skills; discussing their community, family traditions, and learning about the world around them. The children will learn to recognise and respect differences in beliefs and celebrations, promoting empathy and understanding, and fostering a culture of inclusivity.

As the children become comfortable in their familiar learning environments, we will invite their families to experience '*a day in the life*' at Metropole in Foundation Stage One.

Term 2: What are you curious about?

In Term 2, the children are encouraged to take ownership over their environment with lots of opportunities for self-selection. They will continue to engage in a rich and stimulating learning environment using both the indoor and outdoor environments. They continue to have the opportunity of exploring the wonders of the natural world in a collaborative way.

Children in FS1 will use and choose to play with intelligent resources. The use of loose parts and open-ended resources will provide them with endless opportunities for curiosity and play. They will be encouraged to pursue their interests, provided with opportunities that encourages them to be curious while sparking fascination with a focus on themselves and the world around them.

The children will continue to build confidence throughout all areas of their development, while learning how to collaborate in play and learning together. In FS1 the children will broaden their breath of understanding through communication and language skills as they explore while creating and building a love of learning in the discovery and joy in all sorts of ways.



Termly Overviews

Term 3: What adventure are you going on?

As we wrap up our final term in FS1, the journey keeps moving forward. They are continuing to build on their language and mark-making skills.

The children in Term 3 are using all their senses in hands-on exploration, talking about what they see with a wide vocabulary, and starting to fully grasp questions. Encouraging the children to continuously and regularly express their feelings at different times. Discuss right and wrong behaviors and how their actions can impact others.

FS1 children are approaching every opportunity with a love for learning. They're now using the skills they've developed in new situations. These abilities and attitudes toward learning will help them get ready for Foundation Stage 2.

By the end of this term, the children are excited to show the skills they've gained during their FS1 learning journey.



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 learning opportunities in order to develop these areas. We focus on rhyme and stories which involves the use of communication and languages, learning and developmental areas, such as listening and understanding the stories, learning language and new vocabulary. Throughout the day-to-day 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 and general language use both in the indoor 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, tool use and accuracy and care when mark-making. Throughout the year students are encouraged and provided with different opportunities to develop the different physical development areas both indoors, outdoors and during P.E. lessons.

One predominant area is the strengthening and development of fine motor skills. We do this through providing different opportunities within the learning environment such as mark-making, 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 children's' 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 have and feel happy and safe and feel a sense of belonging 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 Drawing Club 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 Read Write Inc (RWI) phonics programme offers a coherently planned sequence of lessons that supports the effective teaching of phonics within Foundation Stage.

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 in Term 3 the children begin to work on Set 1. Here, learners are introduced to phonemes/sounds and graphemes/letters informally.

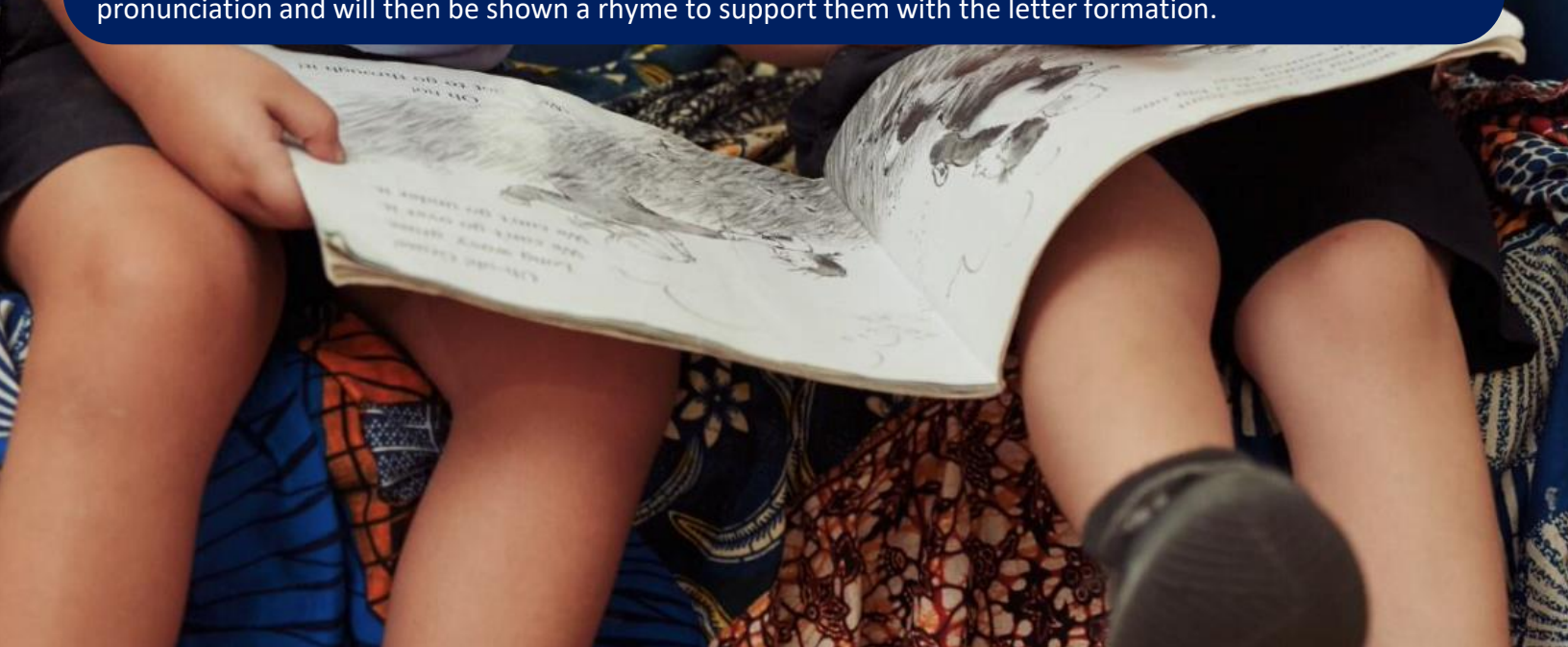
The GEMS Metropole RWI intends to not only provide children with opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding essential for reading and writing, but also, to develop each child's confidence, resilience and engagement in phonics and a love for reading and writing ready for when they transition up to FS2.





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.



The Curiosity Approach



www.thecuriosityapproach.com

We are on a wonderful journey of discovering what awe and wonder is in FS2. We are working towards the Curiosity Approach accreditation. We use a play and child-led approach where the children become the centre of their own development and learning. They are encouraged to explore, experiment, and create, using engaging and open-ended resources. Their innate curiosity is awakened and sparked.

Following the EYFS framework the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning (CoTEL) draws upon values shared by The Curiosity Approach.

These are:

Playing and exploring – where children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’.

Active learning – where children concentrate and keep on trying, even when they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.

Creating and thinking critically - where children have and develop their own ideas, and can make links between them, and develop strategies for doing things.



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 support and facilitate mathematical activities in everything the children do whether that is inside or outside the classroom through practical hands-on experiences. 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 explore and be curious. Our learning environments has been specifically created to enable children the space to create opportunities of learning and ask 'why' and 'how' questions. Children are learning key skills as they engage, observe and tinker to help them make sense of the world around them.

Throughout the Foundation Stage 2, our learning spaces 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 can find things out for themselves and share this independently.

Expressive Arts and Design

Children at GEMS Metropole are encouraged to express themselves in a way that reflects their own personality, culture and identity. Children are exposed to a rich learning environment that encourages role-play, art and music. In Foundation Stage our teachers along with the children, adapt both the indoor and outdoor environment regularly to support children's interests. These adaptations encourage children to take on different roles where they fully immerse themselves through different means of expression.



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 communication.

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 the class teacher's weekly email.

Head of Infant School Newsletter

This will be received monthly and will be available on the website. This newsletter contains a wider view of what is happening within the school.

GO4Schools / School Reports

You will receive two reports each term which will be available on GO4Schools for you to review & download.



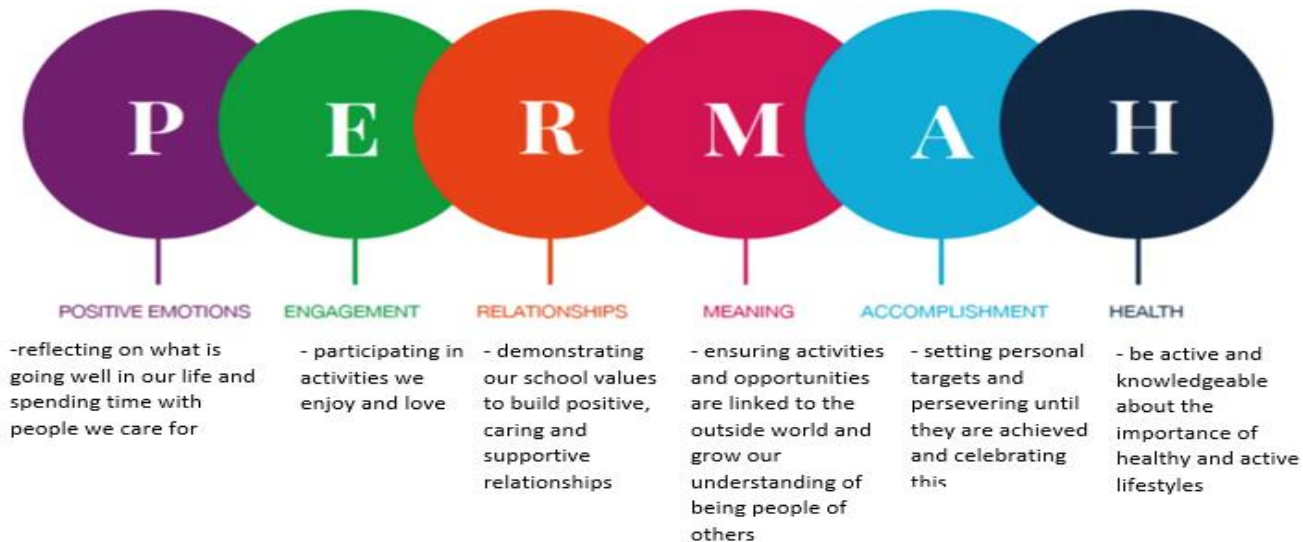
Student Wellbeing

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.







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