Inspection report

GEMS Metropole School

Motor City, Dubai
United Arab Emirates

Date	**21st – 23rd April 2025**
Inspection number	**20250421**

Contents		page
1	Purpose and scope of the inspection	2
2	Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
3	Overall effectiveness of the school	4
	3.1 What the school does well	4
	3.2 Points for improvement	5
4	The context of the school	6
	4.1 The British nature of the school	8
5	Standard 1 **The quality of education provided by the school**	9
	5.1 Curriculum	9
	5.2 Teaching and assessment	11
	5.3 Standards achieved by pupils	13
6	Standard 2 **The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**	16
7	Standard 3 **The welfare, health and safety of pupils**	18
8	Standard 4 **The suitability of the proprietor and staff**	20
9	Standard 5 **The premises and accommodation**	21
10	Standard 6 **The provision of information for parents, carers and others**	22
11	Standard 7 **The school's procedures for handling complaints**	24
12	Standard 8 **Leadership and management of the school**	25

1. Purpose and scope of the inspection

The Department for Education (DfE) has put in place a voluntary scheme for the inspection of British schools overseas (BSO), whereby schools are inspected against a common set of standards that BSO can choose to adopt.

The inspection and this report follow the DfE schedule for the inspection of British schools overseas.

The purpose of the inspection is to provide information to parents, teachers, senior managers and the school's management on the overall effectiveness of the school, the standard of education it provides and its compatibility with independent schools in the United Kingdom.

The inspection and report will cover the key areas of quality of the curriculum; quality of teaching and learning; the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils; their welfare, health and safety; the suitability of the proprietor and staff; the school's premises and accommodation; the school's complaints procedures; and leadership and management. If appropriate, there is a separate section on the quality of boarding provision. An essential part of the inspection is considering the extent to which the British character of the school is evident in its ethos, curriculum, teaching, care for pupils and pupils' achievements.

This inspection was completed by Penta International. Penta International is approved by the British government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas. As one of the leading inspection providers, Penta International reports to the DfE on the extent to which schools meet the standards for BSO.

During the inspection visit, 149 lesson observations took place. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Pupils' workbooks were seen in lessons, and discussions were held with the staff, parents and informally with students. The inspection took place over three days.

The lead inspector was Ciprian Ghisa. The team members were Lewis Baillie, Mel Davis, Michelle France, Jessie Joubert, Glyn Kilsby, Rhiannon Little, Jon McArthur and Morgan Whitfield.

2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

As a result of this inspection, the school has shown that it meets the standards for British schools overseas, except for those that cannot be achieved legally in the host country. These pertain to aspects of the UK Equality Act 2010. The relevant standards are:

Part 1 – '2(2)(d)(ii)- encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation as set out in the Equality Act 2010;'

and

Part 2 – '5(b)(vi)- encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

The school actively promotes tolerance and a respect for all human differences, within the confines of the law. This is embedded in the culture and ethos of the school. This judgement is endorsed by the British government and is valid for three years. The inspection process is quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

3. Overall effectiveness of the school

The GEMS Metropole School, Motor City (MTS) offers a high-quality education to students, who study in a safe and very well-resourced learning environment. The educational provision offers progression from the Early Years level to the end of the high school, thus ensuring continuity in the educational paths of the students. The school successfully integrates students with a large variety of educational needs, focusing on the consistent progress of all. The school develops a British ethos, while respecting and promoting the values and the traditions of UAE.

3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths at the school, including the:

- very positive relationships between the students and staff, in a caring environment where children feel safe, heard and supported;
- consistent focus on the promotion of mental health and wellbeing across the school;
- complex and dynamic pastoral systems that ensure an environment based on trust;
- safeguarding, health and safety systems which are very rigorous and well established across all areas of the school;
- genuinely fully inclusive community nature of the school, where all students feel valued and are able to thrive;
- inclusion, learning support assistant (LSA), teaching assistant (TA) and counselling teams which ensure that the needs of individual students are met, while offering solid support to the teaching staff across the school;
- breadth and depth of the extra-curricular (ECA) programme which is outstanding; the *Mustangs* programme is world class;
- embedded *High Performance Learning* (HPL) values and characteristics which ensure a consistent approach to teaching and learning across the school;
- large variety of curriculum pathways for KS4 and 5 students which allow the students to follow their particular dreams and interests;
- GEMS oversight which ensures excellent support, guidance and sharing of outstanding practice and resources;
- student behaviour and attitudes to learning, which are excellent;
- wide variety of leadership opportunities from which students benefit;
- passionate, energetic and positive middle leaders, teachers and learning support staff;

- excellent induction and CPD provision which supports teachers' constant development and ensures the achievement of the school's strategic goals;
- projects and partnerships, through which the school has become a real hub for the local community;
- senior leadership team's efficient and proactive approach to continuous improvement at all levels, institutional as well as for everyone's professional and personal development;
- highly effective administration, support and maintenance teams, that ensure that all safety and maintenance regulations and procedures are kept at a very high standard.

3.2 Points for improvement

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following development points:

i. To further develop the quality of teaching and learning, ensuring that the specific strategies of enquiry-based learning are consistently applied across all divisions of the school.

ii. To further develop the use of rich progress data across all subjects, supporting planning, differentiation, and individualised challenge for all students.

iii. To continue to develop the inclusion team and the LSA team across all divisions of the school in order to be able to fully support the needs of all students in a continuously growing community.

4. The context of the school

Full name of school	GEMS Metropole School, Motor City				
Address	Honsho Rd. Motor City, Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE)				
Telephone number/s	+971 4 550 7200				
Website address	https://www.gemsmetropoleschool-dubai.com/en				
Key email address	principal_mts@gemsedu.com				
Headteacher/ principal	Mr. Nav Iqbal				
Chair of board/proprietor	Mr. Matthew Burfield				
Age range	3-18 years				
Total number of pupils	**4,104**	**Boys**	**2,113**	**Girls**	**1,991**
Numbers by age	*0-2 years*	N/A	*12-16 years*	1356	
	3-5 years	743	*17-18 years*	140	
	6-11 years	1855	*18+ years*	10	
Total number of part-time children	0				

GEMS Metropole School (MTS) is a British international school situated in Motor City, Dubai. The school is a member of the GEMS group of schools and was established in 2014. MTS offers education to 4104 students aged 3 to 18 years and is generally 11 form entry. Overall, there are 112 different nationalities represented in the school population, the largest ethnic group of students being Egyptian. Other notable groups include those from India, Britain, Pakistan, Jordan, Lebanon and the United States of America.

The school is split into four distinct sections: The Forest School (FS1 – Year 2), The Values School (Years 3 – 6), The Active School (Years 7 – 9) and The Futures School (Years 10 -13). The school is BSO accredited and a member of the BSME network. The school principal is a BSME country representative, assisting the development of BSME schools across Dubai and a Brand Ambassador within GEMS Education.

MTS is an HPL World Class school, illustrating its progressive approach to education. It was awarded *World Class Status* for HPL in 2024, followed by *International Research Schools* status in 2025. The school won the BPTA Award (Best Practice with Teaching Assistants Award) and the Eco-Schools – Green Flag Award.

4.1 British nature of the school

MTS has a strong British feel and ethos:

- The school delivers the English national curriculum (ENC) and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum. In KS4-5, students take GCSE, IGCSE, iBTEC and A-Levels qualifications. The school offers blended alternative pathways for students including access to the ASDAN programme.
- The school is organised into key stages (KS) and year groups, and the academic calendar replicates that of a British school.
- Assessments are UK sourced and benchmarked against UK standards.
- The school promotes British values through the school's vision, curriculum activities, displays and events.
- The pastoral systems reflect UK best practice.
- The school's leadership structure, board of governors, and the internal systems replicate those of a UK school.
- British practice is evident in approaches to performance management, staff target setting and annual review meetings.
- Almost all of the teachers within the school are British qualified and trained, or with extended experience in UK schools.
- The school has a uniform policy, reflecting the British ethos.
- The school delivers a variety of extracurricular activities, aligning with British cultural values.
- The school's house point, school council and rewards system reflect those used in English schools.
- British values are recognisable in student conduct in and around the school.

5. Standard 1
The quality of education provided by the school

The school has met the standard: the quality of education is outstanding.

5.1 Curriculum

The curriculum at MTS meets the BSO requirements and is outstanding.

It provides students with a rich, well-structured, and inclusive educational experience that prepares them exceptionally well for the next stages of education, employment, and life. It is structured around five curriculum strands (LEADS) and aligned with the school's Four School Model: Forest, Values, Active, and Future Schools. This framework supports holistic development and ensures a consistent approach throughout the school.

The school follows the NCE, with thoughtful international adaptations that reflect its UAE context alongside the Ministry of Education (MOE) framework for Arabic, Islamic Education as well as Moral, Social and Cultural Studies. The curriculum is both innovative and inclusive, promoting academic achievement, personal growth, and global citizenship. It is underpinned by a creative, enquiry-based pedagogy that cultivates curiosity and a love of learning across all key stages.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and KS1, the curriculum is enhanced by the Curiosity Approach, providing an engaging and exploratory start to children's education. As students progress through the school, the curriculum builds on this foundation through enquiry-based learning and the HPL programme. This structured approach ensures clear progression and challenge through anchor tasks, staggered starts, and graded learning activities. Comprehensive support and scaffolding are in place for second language learners, with a strong focus on basic language acquisition to ensure all students can access and engage meaningfully with the curriculum. Learning is further enriched through the creative use of outdoor spaces, including weekly forest school sessions, which promote exploration, communication, and teamwork. The overall provision inspires a love of learning and supports high levels of engagement, independence, and achievement for all learners.

From Year 3 onwards, students benefit from high-quality specialist teaching in sport, drama, modern foreign languages, Arabic and Islamic education. The Arabic department has made notable adaptations to ensure accessibility and progress for all learners.

Preparing students for their high-school experience, the school offers a broad and imaginative curriculum allowing students to pursue multiple academic and/or

vocational pathways. An extensive range of subjects are available for students in KS4-5, equivalent to the offering of any British independent school. The curriculum structure is flexible and allows students to select a blend of courses that combine A-levels with iBTEC, available in applied science, business IT and sport. These combinations allow students to build a personalised range of courses to suit their interests and strengths.

The option choices are underpinned by a range of core lessons including PE, moral, social and cultural education and, where required, Arabic and Islamic Studies. All students in Year 12 completed a week's work experience with one of 45 local employers. There is an extensive careers programme supported by a full-time careers' guidance counsellor. Almost all students from the school successfully access universities throughout the world, with over one third of students securing Russell Group or equivalent placements.

Inclusivity is a significant strength. The curriculum is highly responsive to the needs of students with additional learning needs and those for whom English is an additional language. A range of supportive measures, including high-quality first teaching, in-class support, targeted intervention sessions, specialist occupational health and speech and language therapy, learning support assistants, individual learning plans (IEPs), co-teaching approaches, and differentiated learning pathways (ASDAN and iBTEC), ensures that the curriculum remains accessible and appropriate to meet individual needs. Gifted and more able pupils are well supported through targeted enrichment and extension.

The use of assessment data is exemplary. Teachers and leaders use data effectively to review and refine the curriculum, ensuring it remains relevant and impactful. Collaborative planning opportunities such as core curriculum focus groups (CCFG) are scheduled across the school to ensure the quality of the spiral progression. Thus, transitions between key stages are seamless and successful in preparing students for the next stage of their learning.

Students benefit from an exceptional enrichment programme, with over 200 extra-curricular activities offered each term. The introduction of the 'Mustangs' competitive sports squad has significantly increased sports participation by 70%. The school's extensive facilities, including a strength and conditioning gym, boxing area, and dance studio, recovery lab, nutrition lab, further enhance this offer. The Duke of Edinburgh programme is implemented for the high-school students as well.

Digital learning is seamlessly integrated into the curriculum. Platforms such as *Microsoft Teams* and coding tools like *Scratch* are used effectively to support and extend pupils' learning experiences.

The school maintains strong and purposeful links with the wider community. Regular feedback opportunities and a range of community-focused events further support pupil success and parental engagement.

5.2 Teaching and assessment

The school meets the standards of quality of teaching and assessment; they are outstanding.

MTS teaching and assessment practices are outstanding. Lessons are carefully planned, informed by data, engaging, and differentiated to meet the needs of all students. The school's commitment to high-quality feed-back, inclusive practices, and continuous professional development ensures that every student receives the appropriate support they need to succeed.

In the EYFS and KS1, teachers expertly apply the Curiosity Approach to create a rich, stimulating environment where children are encouraged to explore, question, and discover through well-planned, play-based experiences. This approach lays the foundation for enquiry-based learning and the development of HPL skills in subsequent key stages. Teachers mostly demonstrate strong subject knowledge, high expectations, and a deep understanding of individual learning needs, including effective scaffolding for children with English as an additional language. Planning is consistent with clear links to curriculum objectives. Learning outcomes are mostly communicated clearly, and children are encouraged to engage with their learning through self-assessment, exploration, and collaboration. Assessment is continuous and effectively tracked and reported through the *ARC Pathways* platform. Evidence shows that assessment is used effectively to inform planning and next steps, ensuring rapid and sustained progress. Effective, timely feedback drives progress, while embedded differentiation encourages pupils to take ownership of their learning. Phonics teaching is well-targeted and forms a strong foundation for early reading. A structured writing programme supports progression in literacy from Year 1 through to Year 6.

Teaching and assessment in KS2 and 3 are outstanding and fully aligned with UK standards. Lessons are well planned, differentiated, and underpinned by data-informed strategies. Teachers use a wide range of formative assessments (e.g. quizzes, peer and self-assessments) and summative tasks to evaluate student progress. Assessment is tracked in *Go4Schools* and *Power BI*, with data analysed at class, group and individual level to inform teaching. Regular data reviews involving teachers and key stakeholders ensure that teaching practices are consistently adapted to meet student needs, enabling informed planning, timely interventions, and sustained improvements in academic outcomes.

Feedback is a strength: students receive regular high-quality verbal and written feedback that drives improvement and self-awareness. In the best lessons the dialogue between the teacher and student was organic and built succession in learning. Student passports and IEPs are used in collaboration with support staff and the inclusion team to personalise learning.

Teachers apply questioning techniques to probe understanding and deepen learning. Classroom environments support learning with displays that celebrate student outcomes and reinforce core concepts. Support staff and specialist interventions ensure students with SEND, EAL, and MAGT make progress comparable to their peers.

Positive and respectful teacher-student relationships are evident throughout all subjects, fostering a nurturing and stimulating learning atmosphere.

In KS4 and 5, students respond well to the high expectations of teachers. Students make full use of their own devices to access information and are skilled in understanding the reliability and validity of different websites and data sources. Lessons are carefully planned and use student progress and ability data to ensure that individual needs are met. In some lessons there can be an over-reliance on digital devices. More opportunities need to be developed to promote student discussion about their learning. This will support deeper understanding, collaboration and critical thinking skills. Students show an impressive level of maturity and are supportive and respectful with each other.

Teaching is carefully matched to the needs of students with particular support for those with additional learning needs across all school. A particular highlight was an observation of the ASDAN group working confidently and independently to prepare a hot meal. Students appeared comfortable in their surroundings, indicating familiarity and confidence in working within the food laboratory environment. Each student was supported by a Learning Support Assistant (LSA); however, LSAs were present to facilitate and guide rather than to take over the activity. Students independently operated the cookers and conducted themselves safely and responsibly. The teaching incorporated a variety of resources and methods tailored to individual needs. These included PECS, video materials, targeted questioning, and modelling, all aimed at promoting and supporting independence throughout the session.

5.3 Standards achieved by pupils

The standards achieved by students at MTS are outstanding.

Since the last BSO inspection, the school has made considerable and sustained progress. The school continues to grow rapidly in student numbers, yet it remains fully inclusive, with robust systems in place to ensure that all learners make excellent progress over time. Academic progress is carefully monitored, the teachers and school leaders having access to a wealth of data offered by the rigorous tracking documents and regular system of internal and external assessments. The use of *Go4Schools* platform offers an extraordinary tool for data management. Student progress is effectively supported across the school by individual developmental feedback as well as by effective self-assessment and peer-assessment which were evident in most lessons. The school makes highly effective use of both baseline and summative data to set targets, determine priorities, and implement timely interventions. This includes extensive use of standardised assessments such as GL and CAT4. The accuracy and impact of assessment systems are evident in pupil outcomes which demonstrate sustained improvement over time.

The leadership structure is a key factor in the school's success. Year group leaders work collaboratively with the Inclusion team to monitor and support the progress of all pupil groups, including boys, girls, pupils with SEND, and those for whom English is an additional language (EAL). The progress made by these groups is consistently strong, demonstrating the school's commitment to equity and high achievement.

Assessment information is used diagnostically to shape teaching and learning. The school's adoption of the High Performance Learning (HPL) framework ensures that students are appropriately challenged. The 'Bronze' level tasks align with age-related expectations from the English National Curriculum, while many pupils successfully engage with higher-tier challenges, leading to outstanding progress in several areas.

In EYFS, the proportion of children achieving a *Good Level of Development* (GLD) has shown sustained improvement, rising to 81.3% in 2024. This is significantly above the national average of 67.7% and reflects the school's effective strategies for securing strong early outcomes. Notably, the most marked progress has been seen in the prime areas of communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, and physical development. These areas, which were previously below UK expectations, have now risen above them for the first time in three years.

The school's EYFS programme effectively supports students who speak English as an additional language, offering opportunities to develop speech and language skills through programmes such as the *Read Write Inc* phonics scheme and drawing club. Phonics instruction is delivered consistently, and students are regularly assessed and supported to ensure steady progress.

The school has recently introduced ARC Pathway, a data analysis and tracking system tailored to the EYFS. This system supports practitioners in making accurate assessments of children's development across all areas of learning, enabling timely identification of gaps and targeted next steps. Its implementation reflects the school's commitment to high-quality early education and staff use the insights from ARC Pathway to inform planning, tailor provision, and ensure that learning is effectively matched to children's needs, in line with the EYFS framework and the school's drive for continuous improvement.

The transition from EYFS into Year 1 is highly effective. It is underpinned by the thorough exchange and analysis of data from the ELGs at the end of FS2. The pedagogical style of learning from EYFS is deliberately sustained into the early part of Year 1, supporting a smooth and developmentally appropriate progression. A further benchmark check is conducted six weeks into the academic year, which enables teachers to adapt provision responsively.

The school participates in regular external moderation through a cluster of 14 local schools, which ensures the accuracy and robustness of teacher assessments and outcomes.

Students of all abilities make good progress in KS1, with many achieving outcomes that exceed UK national expectations. By the end of Year 2, attainment in reading, writing, and mathematics is at or above age-related expectations for the vast majority of pupils. The most recent assessment data demonstrates particularly strong outcomes, with pupils exceeding UK averages by 26% in writing, 24% in reading, and 14% in mathematics.

KS3 curriculum is informed through internal assessments, *GL Progress Tests*, and international benchmarks (e.g., TIMSS, PISA) which confirm standards significantly exceed local and global averages. Differentiation is embedded through tiered tasks (Bronze to Platinum), supporting inclusive and stretch learning. Blended alternative pathways (including ASDAN) are accessible for selected KS3 students requiring a tailored curriculum.

The large majority of students obtain iGCSE and A-level results that are in line with, or exceed, national standards in the UK. Attainment is strongest for students who have been members of the school for three or more years. Achievement in iBTEC courses is also strong and above UK expectations. This allows students access to a broad range of vocational courses and careers.

For example, in GCSE English: 94% of entries achieved 9-4 (UK average 65.1%); 79% at 9-5 (UK average 45.3%); 6% of entries at grade 9 (UK average 5%). In GCSE mathematics: 89% of entries achieved 9-4 (UK average 64.6%); 74% at 9-5 (UK average 45.3%); 18% of entries at grade 9 (UK average 5%). In GCSE science: 82% of

entries (science combined) achieved 9-4; 76% at 9-5; 18% of entries secured a grade 9.

At A-Level, student performance significantly exceed the UK averages as follows: 88% of English entries achieved (A*-C), (UK average 76%); 75% of English entries achieved (A*- B) (UK average 27.6%); 85% of mathematics entries achieved (A* -C) (UK average 76.7%); 51% of mathematics entries achieved (A*-B) (UK average 30.7%); 82% of science entries achieved 9-4 (A*-C) (UK average 71%); 51% of science entries achieved (A*-B) (UK average 30.7%).

The majority of Level 3 students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) who sat GCSE examinations achieved at least one grade above their predicted outcomes, which is highly commendable. Notably, the most significant progress was observed in English as a second language (ESL), where each student achieved, on average, four grades above their expected level. This suggests that the moderation and standardisation processes used to determine predicted grades may benefit from a review, to ensure closer alignment between predictions and actual outcomes in this subject. The majority of SEND students who completed iBTEC qualifications achieved merit or distinction grades.

Students enjoy learning and show an impressive maturity in their approach to study. Learning skills are excellent and these are supported, for these older students, by the new sixth form facility that is flexible, attractive and welcoming. The majority of students engage in a range of voluntary and social activities. There is a powerful sense of community and many are outstanding ambassadors for the school and represent it at both national and international events.

The overall climate for learning is exceptional. Pupils demonstrate highly positive attitudes to their work, underpinned by the school's consistent application of High Performance Learning attributes and supported by internal initiatives such as the GEMStones and regular analysis of wellbeing through the PASS survey. These tools contribute significantly to the culture of aspiration and care within the school.

Attendance is another notable strength. Pupils' high levels of attendance reflect their strong sense of belonging and enjoyment of school. Rigorous monitoring systems ensure any issues are swiftly addressed, and parents are engaged as partners in maintaining excellent attendance rates.

6. *Standard 2* Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school meets the standard for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development: it is outstanding.

Student behaviour across the school is exemplary. Relationships between staff and students are characterised by mutual respect, trust, and care, contributing significantly to students' wellbeing and mental health. High expectations, the use of restorative practices, robust pastoral systems, and the consistent promotion of the school's core values underpin the positive behaviour culture observed.

The school adopts a highly proactive approach to wellbeing, ensuring that all members of the community are supported to flourish. Its wellbeing strategy is firmly grounded in positive psychology principles and aligned with the PERMAH framework. As a result, a culture of sustained happiness, personal growth, and resilience is promoted across the school, rather than relying solely on reactive support.

Emotional literacy is a key focus. Students develop the ability to confidently articulate and manage their emotions. From Year 3 onwards, platforms such as YouHQ and mindfulness strategies enable students to set personal goals, reflect meaningfully on their wellbeing, and access support with autonomy and self-awareness.

Reflective practices are embedded into daily school life through assemblies, thematic mornings, and moral, social and cultural studies (MSC), promoting strong self-awareness and supporting students' personal development.

Leadership and enrichment opportunities are extensive and highly valued across the school. A broad range of extracurricular activities enables students to develop leadership skills, personal agency, and a strong sense of engagement in a well-rounded education. Opportunities such as serving as 'HPL Leaders' or Student Council representatives allow students to actively contribute to shaping the school community, foster a sense of ownership, and make positive contributions to the wellbeing of their peers. The school's Mustang sports programme is of a world-class standard, offering inclusive and high-level opportunities that promote physical wellbeing, resilience, and character development.

The Al Noor Centre acts as a vibrant hub for cultural and religious education. Initiatives such as Diversity and Culture Week, International Day, and the Heritage Run successfully enhance students' understanding of global and local traditions, nurturing mutual respect and cultural appreciation.

Students are actively involved in community, fundraising, and global citizenship initiatives, including partnerships through the Global Committee. These opportunities deepen students' sense of responsibility, empathy, and global mindedness.

The school implements a clear, zero-tolerance approach to bullying and discrimination. Incidents are rare and are dealt with swiftly and effectively in line with established safeguarding and behaviour policies.

The school also follows MOE guidance and follows the school's diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) policy. The safeguarding team works alongside a DEI Lead to support all students and staff by the principles of the UK Equality Act 2010, as appropriate within the UAE context. A DEI-aligned curriculum, supported by pastoral initiatives and student voice structures, underpins this inclusive culture. The school is politically neutral and ensures all staff and students understand defamation laws, appropriate digital conduct, and photography and social media restrictions.

The well-established house system, comprising four groups - Mercedes, Ferrari, Williams and McLaren - plays a significant role in fostering a strong sense of community, inclusion, and belonging across the school. It encourages healthy competition, promotes teamwork, and enhances student engagement through a wide range of collaborative activities and events. Each house reflects whole-school values, positively reinforcing the school's ethos and reward systems. As a result, students feel safe, valued, and respected within a cohesive and supportive environment.

Students enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in consistently high attendance and punctuality rates across all phases. High expectations in these areas are clearly established and consistently upheld by all staff, contributing to the positive culture of the school.

7. *Standard 3* The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The welfare, health and safety of the students in the school meets BSO requirements and is outstanding.

The school meets the regulatory requirements of the UAE. The welfare, health and safety of students is a priority for the leadership, teaching and support staff. Systems related to these are clear, visible throughout the school and embedded in school practice.

Safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront of daily practice at MTS. A strong, embedded culture of vigilance, support and early intervention is evident across all phases. The school aligns with UK safeguarding standards, UAE law while operating within the context of local governance and compliance requirements - meeting BSO expectations.

Safeguarding training is mandatory and tiered according to role, with all senior and middle leaders Level 3 trained, pastoral and support staff trained to Level 2, and all others to Level 1. A robust onboarding process and scheduled refresher training sessions ensure sustained safeguarding awareness.

Designated and deputy designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) meet weekly to monitor incidents, review patterns and lead on thematic trends. The school's safeguarding platform, 'Guard', provides a secure chronology of all concerns, linked to regular corporate safeguarding oversight. In 2023–24, the school logged 326 incidents and 59 allegations, managed through appropriate referral pathways. Allegations are recorded and investigated in line with HR, KHDA and external authority guidance, where required.

The school's safeguarding model represents international best practice, thoughtfully contextualised within the regulatory environment of the UAE.

Standards of behaviour are excellent, and nearly all students are considerate and respectful, towards each other and staff. Expectations regarding behaviour are high and are supported by clear behaviour and reward policies, with a strong emphasis on rewarding positive behaviour. Bullying is extremely rare and students report that it is dealt with promptly and fairly. Through specialist subject lessons and the pastoral system there is also importance placed on digital online safety. The significance that the school places on this, is underlined by the appointment of a designated digital safeguarding lead.

Student health is supported by the school's sport and fitness provision. This is particularly strong in Years 7 to 9, the Active School, where there is an emphasis on participation in sport and fitness activities. Healthy eating is promoted by the school's catering provider, *Slices*, and across the curriculum. The catering department has received a 'Gold A' award from Dubai municipality for hygiene and food safety. The school has a well-staffed clinic that has a full-

time doctor and six nurses. More than 70 staff are first aid trained and systems are in place for these to be contacted quickly in an emergency.

Site security is excellent, with all unlocked access points staffed. A coloured lanyard and ID checking system is used to ensure safety. Senior leaders and designated staff follow a duty rota to ensure the safe arrival and dismissal of students. These processes are safe, calm and orderly. More than 40 buses are used and each of these has a bus guardian, in addition to the driver, and all students have designated seats. A student ID RFID system is used to check students on and off the buses. Attendance and punctuality are monitored effectively, at the start of each day and in lessons, through the *Go4Schools* app, with any absence followed up promptly. Parents also have access to attendance information using the app.

Fire safety systems are strong, with safety equipment and signage clear and prominent throughout the school. Termly fire drills take place and an annual drill is completed with Dubai Civil Defence on site. There is also an annual lockdown drill, and the systems for this are displayed clearly around the school and by use of the school's online operations app.

Risk assessments are completed and recorded for all potentially hazardous in or out of school activities. In the science department, chemicals are stored safely, safety equipment is in place in laboratories and any hazardous materials are disposed of through Dubai Municipality.

Standards of maintenance and safety are high, with systems in place to ensure that any concerns are dealt with promptly. The school fully complies with Dubai Municipality and UAE health and safety requirements. There are scheduled daily, weekly and monthly maintenance checks on systems throughout the school. There is a strong sense of pride and attention to detail in regards to the quality and safety of equipment, buildings and resources throughout the school.

8. *Standard 4* The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The suitability of the proprietor and staff meets the standard for BSO.

The recruitment and the HR related processes are compliant with the guidelines defined by GEMS, making sure that all the safety, care and guidance requirements for all students and staff are met with full respect for the local standards as well. Governor oversight is effective, with termly safeguarding review meetings. All these are an example of best practice in the field.

A safe recruitment policy is in place and an equal opportunity statement is visible on the school website.

The school maintains a fully compliant single central record (SCR), which is audited regularly. It is very well organised, clear, rigorous and meets all the requirements of the BSO. All staff, including temporary, support, and contracted personnel, undergo rigorous safer recruitment checks. The school maintains detailed and updated records of all staff. Recruitment procedures include checks on the suitability of staff at all levels, including police checks in the country of origin, medical fitness, right to work in UAE, and their previous employment activity.

All teachers and support staff undertake rigorous performance management reviews, which are recorded on the BlueSky platform. These reviews track performance, development and progress against targets, to ensure all staff are continuously improving their practice.

Teachers benefit from an extensive, and highly effective induction and CPD programme ensuring that all members of staff are ready to meet the school's high expectations.

9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodations meet the BSO standards and are outstanding.

MTS provides a safe, inclusive, and enriching environment that supports both academic and personal development. Specialist learning environments include science laboratories, music rooms, a black box theatre, and well-equipped art and food technology rooms. Since the last inspection, the school has added an industry-standard catering kitchen, a hydroponics area, sixth form centre and quiet study pods to enhance independent study.

Outdoor learning and sustainability are embedded through Forest School areas and student gardens, promoting cross-curricular links with science, wellbeing, and environmental responsibility. The Al Noor Heritage and Cultural Centre serves as a dedicated community space for students, teachers, and families to engage with Islamic heritage and British values. Physical education is strongly supported by extensive facilities, including a full-size 4G Astro football pitch, outdoor athletics track, dance studios, a strength and conditioning suite, and an MMA gymnasium. These spaces are used effectively for both curriculum delivery, and extra-curriculars like the competitive Metropole Mustangs elite sports programmes.

The Sixth Form has benefitted from expanded and bespoke learning areas to accommodate increased enrolment and provide a focused environment to prepare for higher education. Across the school, learning environments are interactive and well-organised, with consistent use of working walls, and displays that support current learning and make student thinking visible. HPL characteristics and attributes are also prominently displayed.

To ensure accessibility, the school has implemented inclusive design features such as wheelchair-accessible routes, washrooms, and designated evacuation points, ensuring students of determination can access all learning areas safely and equitably.

Medical provision is strong, with a full-time doctor on site and support from *TruDoc*, a GEMS initiative providing access to specialist medical professionals. School spaces are dynamic and purposefully designed to enhance curriculum delivery, with well-established systems in place to ensure their effective management and use.

To support the school's growth and enhance its capacity, the school is considering the development of multi-functional spaces that can serve as auditoriums, community halls, and/or flexible learning areas; the shaded outdoor areas, to accommodate the highly active sporting activities all year round.

10. Standard 6
The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information for parents, carers and others is considered outstanding.

The school demonstrates a clear strength in the provision of information and communication, with robust systems in place that ensure parents are well-informed and actively engaged in their child's education.

The school's website provides comprehensive and supportive guidance for prospective, new and existing families, reflecting a commitment to transparency and user-friendly communication. It provides a wealth of material about the school and includes contact details, the name of the principal and the academic performance of the school. The inclusion of all necessary BSO-related information on the website, along with its regular updates and ease of access, reflects the school's proactive approach to keeping families informed.

The admissions process is clearly outlined and thoughtfully designed to meet the needs of both local and overseas families, supported by a wealth of accessible and up-to-date information on the school website. Families are warmly welcomed and are able to reach out regularly to the admissions team with any questions. As part of the transition, they are able to meet with and ask questions to class teachers and the leadership team.

There is a clear emphasis on building positive parent-school relationships, as seen through regular communications, structured parent-teacher meetings and the active Parent Ambassadors Group (PAG). The open-door policy, visible senior leadership team presence during drop-off and pick-up times, and accessibility of staff contribute to a welcoming environment where parents feel heard and valued.

Parents interviewed were extremely complimentary about the ease of communication with the school, the regularity and quality of information provided. One parent commented "communication is excellent and timely, using a range of channels: newsletters, coffee mornings, Instagram, Facebook, SMS (e.g., sandstorm alerts), class teacher emails, and weekly summaries. The newsletter opens with a principal's video message , part of the school's clear effort to reach and engage all parents".

Parents receive detailed written reports five times throughout the academic year, covering progress, achievement and holistic feedback, ensuring they are consistently aware of their child's development. The use of the *Go4Schools* platform to provide real-time updates on progress, attainment and areas for development is a strong feature that enhances transparency and allows parents to engage at their own convenience.

Multiple sharing of information and communication channels, including a detailed parent handbook, accessible staff contact information, and initiatives such as 'Happy Meet', demonstrate the school's commitment to responsive and inclusive communication.

The school effectively monitors parental satisfaction through regular surveys and has implemented a successful 'You said, we did' approach, with clear examples such as improved communication via the *Go4Schools* platform which is a direct result of parental feedback. Parents voiced their concern about the volume and frequency of emails being received which has seen a more streamlined approach where families can now expect any communication from the school to be sent on a Friday to include ARK updates from EYFS.

There is a well-represented and active PAG who meet monthly to discuss and action upcoming school events and initiatives to ensure they are able to offer their support. The PAG supports the whole school and wider community by offering their time to raise vital funds for charities such as Al Jalila Foundation.

The school is committed to ensuring communication evolves with the needs of the families it serves. Since the previous inspection, there are WhatsApp groups for each primary class to ensure that any important information or reminders that might be required are sent to parents via the class representative. Whilst this initiative has partially empowered a communication role to parents, it was reported that the WhatsApp parent groups can be overwhelming at times and as a result, some parents prefer to contact the school directly for accurate information.

There is a broad and diverse selection of informative events designed to encourage parental engagement, including the monthly 'Happy Majlis', options evenings, curriculum briefings, and workshops aimed at supporting their child's learning journey. These are complemented by additional enrichment opportunities and important safety sessions, such as those focused on internet wellbeing and online safety.

11. Standard 7
The school's procedure for handling complaints

The school's procedure for handling complaints at MTS meet in full the requirements of the BSO standards.

The school has embedded a strong culture of early identification of concerns through transparent and proactive communication channels with all stakeholders. A clearly documented complaints policy, fully aligned with BSO requirements, is publicly accessible on the school website, the parent handbook, parent annual contract and is regularly referenced in weekly newsletters and parent updates.

Staff receive comprehensive training to handle complaints fairly, professionally and in line with the school's robust escalation procedures, beginning with Stage 1 before any formal process is initiated. The school employs a tiered approach to managing concerns, distinguishing clearly between informal, formal, and escalation stages, ensuring clarity and consistency in response.

The policy defines each stage. Prior to stage 1 concerns and complaints are handled firstly by the relevant primary class teacher or lead teacher in secondary. Parents confirmed that this is the most likely course of action when they have a concern or complaint. They also stated that concerns are dealt with quickly at this stage and resolved promptly. All concerns are tracked by the parent relation executive and stored safely. A complaint may be escalated if an informal resolution is not made. The timeframes for the management of different types of complaints are distinctly set in the policy as well.

The use of a detailed complaints log allows for thorough recording, analysis, and identification of any trends, enabling the leadership team to implement preventative measures and avoid recurrence. Monthly 'Happy Meet' and 'Happy Majlis' events foster a proactive culture by encouraging community members to share positive feedback prior to raising suggestions, aiding in the early detection of emerging issues.

The role of the Class Representative WhatsApp groups extends beyond general communication, serving as a key tool for collating informal feedback and highlighting patterns that may warrant further attention. The Parent Representative Executive (PRE) is seen as a vital first point of contact, ensuring that informal concerns are resolved swiftly and do not escalate unnecessarily.

The school's approach reflects a deep understanding of the importance of open communication, early intervention, and structured procedures in fostering trust and ensuring that all concerns are addressed constructively.

12. *Standard 8* Leadership and management of the school

The school meets the standard for the quality of leadership and management and is outstanding.

Over the past three years, the school has passed through a period of deep and intensive development at all levels and all areas. This highly successful transformation is evidenced by the rapid increase of enrolments (now 4,104 students – a 35% increase since the last BSO inspection), the significant improvement of student outcomes, the high satisfaction degree of parents, the excellent reports across local inspections (joint first place across 44 GEMS schools in the last inspection), and the consistent application of all policies and procedures. The school has become a real hub for the local community.

This improvement process has been possible due to the implementation of ambitious strategic plans drawn by a very proactive, dynamic and experienced principal and SLT, constantly and effectively supported by the corporate and local governance. The school benefits from the strategic oversight, innovation, and shared resources of the GEMS group, enabling access to high-level training, safeguarding systems, digital platforms, and professional networks that enhance school performance and resilience.

School leaders have effectively managed rapid growth in student numbers, while maintaining high-quality provision and ensuring student and staff stability. The school has made significant effort to develop the leadership structures at all levels and in all areas of the school, demonstrating the benefits of a distributive leadership approach, based on trust and on the belief in everybody's ability to lead. The school will have to continue to develop middle leadership structures at all levels thus ensuring the consistency of teaching, learning and assessment processes across all divisions of the school.

Significant and strategic staffing changes have been implemented without disruption to learning; leadership succession planning and internal development have ensured consistency. The rapid integration of the new members of staff is an illustration of the effective induction, mentoring and coaching capacity of the leadership teams at all levels.

Leaders use data intelligently to inform strategic priorities, personalise learning, and evaluate the impact of teaching and interventions at every phase. A robust digital tracking platform is in place, enabling leaders to monitor academic progress, pastoral indicators, and early intervention impact in real time. Regular lesson observations, learning walks, and student voice are triangulated to provide developmental feedback to staff and ensure high teaching standards.

Leadership decisions are consistently grounded in what is best for students, evidenced by a strong wellbeing provision, a sense of belonging, and excellent pastoral care. Students achieve significantly above what might be expected for a mid-range fee school, with strong external

exam results and global university placements. Behaviour is exemplary and managed proactively through a visible leadership presence, embedded rewards systems, and detailed behavioural tracking. Attendance is rigorously monitored; strategic actions have led to improvements and a culture of students excited to learn and to come to school.

The school exceeds expectations for its category through ambitious curriculum development, enhanced enrichment, and outstanding facilities that rival premium-tier schools.