



# Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA)

## Verification Report

School name:	GEMS Founders School, Dubai
School address and postcode:	PO Box 390498, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
School telephone:	+971 (0)4 519 5222
School website:	www.gemsfoundersschool-dubai.com
Head teacher:	Matthew Burfield
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LPPA coordinator:	Olivera Stankovic El Ghazal
LPPA coordinator's email:	o.stankovicelg_gfs@gemseduc.com
Award verifier:	Andy Taylor
Award adviser (if applicable):	School Led Approach
Date of verification:	10 <sup>th</sup> September 2019

### Commentary on the evidence provided:

- The portfolio evidences a wealth of evidence reflecting the extremely strong partnership the school has developed with the parent body. The key performance indicators of all the objectives have been evidenced and therefore meet the requirements of the award.
- The LPPA award has provided a framework against which the school can benchmark its practices; key areas on which to focus upon have been identified within the LPPA Action Plan.
- The core working party is representative of the school community and supported by other groups representing all stakeholders.
- School documentation, including the School Handbook, clearly evidences the importance of parents working as partners in their child's education and actively encourages them to participate in school events.
- The school, through a variety of methods, ensures the views of parents are sought. Leaders are very clear in their communication with the parent body how these views contribute to ongoing developments.
- All stakeholders have been kept well informed about the LPPA award and the progress made towards the objectives.

- The staff are extremely welcoming. Parents interviewed remarked on the fantastic work of the staff in the Reception area, whose interpersonal skills are both highly developed and effective.
- The school's website is very comprehensive and provides a range of documents to inform parents about curriculum coverage and suggests activities which can be carried out to support their child's learning. In addition, curriculum information sessions for parents are organised at the beginning of each school year.
- Staff produce a range of high-quality newsletters, reflecting the expectations of the school. A weekly newsletter to parents informs them, on a regular basis, how leaders have responded and acted upon feedback.
- End of Year Reports clearly identify what a pupil can do well and also, within the core subjects, what they need to focus upon to improve. The example provided in the portfolio really reflects the individual child and shows the class teacher know them well. This was also the view of all parents interviewed.
- In-school transition is another strength and as a result parents feel well informed and supported as their child progresses through school.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of the next steps to be taken to develop parental partnership even further.

#### **Strengths identified during verification:**

- Across all areas of the school, there is a consistent approach to informing and engaging parents. This is borne from a clear vision and direction from school leaders and the highly effective way in which the LPPA Co-ordinator guided developments.
- School leaders value the views of parents. This is evidenced by the way in which adaptations are made to current practices. The staggered start to Foundation Stage at the beginning of the academic year is an example of slight alterations following feedback from parents.
- Leaders have worked tenaciously to ensure parents are fully aware of the reasoning behind the school's approach to education. Over time, parents have come to fully understand and trust the methods used by the school and really celebrate and are proud of the school's inclusive ethos.
- The school's recruitment process, followed by an extensive induction, ensure that staff at GEMS Founders develop positive and effective relationships with parents. Mutual respect is clearly evident from the interviews with parents.
- All the staff interviewed demonstrated a commitment to working in partnership with the parents. They valued how working together, outcomes for pupils can be improved. All feel fully involved in the development of parental engagement activities. They value the contributions of parents, are very responsive to their needs and are flexible in their approaches.
- Parents are very appreciative of the staff and feel confident in approaching school if they have any queries or worries. They value the regular contact with staff and school leaders. They feel that communication is a real strength of the school.
- There is a wide range of workshops which parents can attend and following these, they are more confident in supporting their children adopting the same methods as the school.
- Parents are encouraged to be fully involved in school life and to be part of their child's learning journey throughout school. This was exemplified in the interviews, when parents were eager to share how the school promoted the love of reading and how parents could contribute to this.

**Impact:**

- Feedback from parents via the various methods used by the school, reflect the extremely positive relationship between the school and the parent body.
- There are many opportunities for parents to attend a variety of workshops and information sessions to both develop their own learning and also support the learning of their children. Some of these workshops have been organised following suggestions from parents. Documentation parents receive is helpful, informative and free from unnecessary educational jargon.
- At key points in the academic year and nearing significant milestones in a child's education, parents are fully informed through bespoke information sessions.
- The school uses a range of social media platforms and other applications to communicate with parents. Parents have direct access to key staff via email; any correspondence is replied to promptly. The school's communication methods are highly effective and really embrace and utilise modern technology.
- The induction schedule is very thorough and provides parents with a wealth of information. Because of this, parents feel well informed as their children start the school.
- All parents are sent an email from their child's new teacher prior to the beginning of the academic year. These are very well received.
- The school celebrates all aspects of students' achievements, including high attendance rates. In addition, other achievements not specifically connected to school, are recognised. Wider curricula opportunities are also celebrated. Parents are kept constantly up to date when pupils are aboard. Following the trips, parents are invited to presentations compiled and lead by pupils. Because this, parents can witness first hand, the positive effect of these opportunities.

**Areas for development:**

- To continue to gather feedback from parents via a range of informal events.
- To emphasise the importance of developing an effective partnership with parents as part of the content in the Employee Handbook.
- To ensure all stakeholders are aware of how the different aspect of the LPPA contribute to the overall strategic priorities of the school.

**Verifier recommendation:**

- GEMS Founders School, Dubai to be awarded the Leading Parent Partnership Award for Schools for a period of three years.

**Head teacher comments:**

The completion of the LPPA and the feedback received both during the visit and in this comprehensive report have continued to support the school improvement journey at GFS. The insightful nature of Andy Taylor during his visit and in the feedback has given us some really useful

ideas to continue our journey to outstanding. The LPPA was critical for us and was actually the first one that we considered as engaging with our growing community has always been a critical priority for us. Ms Oli, who lead the Award process, has worked tirelessly since we opened in September 2016 and this accreditation is really something to be incredibly proud of to show here achievement. It has also supported us in reinvigorating our will to continue to engage further in both formal and informal events with our parents as key stakeholders in the GFS community.

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