GEMS Founders Masdar City Annual Report for the Academic Year 2025-2026

PRINCIPAL	Albie Huyser
SCHOOL	GEMS Founders School, Masdar City
ACADEMIC YEAR	2025 – 2026

SCHOOL INFORMATION

GENERAL INFORMATION

Location	Masdar City-Abu Dhabi
Opening year of School	2024
Maximum Capacity	2,100
Principal- Date appointed	January 2024
Language of instruction	English
Last inspection date	12 May 2025
Inspection authority	BSO
Overall Rating	Good with outstanding features

STUDENTS

Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age range	3-13
Grades or year groups	FS1 to Year 9
Number of students on roll	1668
Number of Emirati students	268
% of Emirati students	16
Number of students of determination	87
% of students of determination	5.2%
Largest nationality group of students	Indian, Emirati, Pakistani

TEACHERS & LEADERS

Number of teachers	99
Largest nationality group of teachers	Indian
Number of teaching assistants	40
Teacher-student ratio (PTR)	1:17.2
Number of guidance counsellors	2
Number of SEND Teachers	3
Teacher turnover %	18%
Number of Senior Leaders	5

CURRICULUM

Educational Permit/ License	UK
Main Curriculum	UK
External Tests and Examinations	CAT4, NGRT, AST/GL PT
Accreditation	BSME, BSO
Membership	BSME, AOBSO, TASS
Candidacy	

INSPECTION - SCHOOL JOURNEY 2015-2025

ADEK									
2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2022-2023	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
BSO									
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N//A	N/A

Theme 1: Values and Ethics

Term 3 and end-of-year academic data confirm that GFA has maintained a strong trajectory of improvement and has successfully delivered against the priorities identified in the 2025–2026 Annual School Review.

Throughout the academic year, the school has strengthened its assessment systems, embedded data-informed decision-making, and demonstrated measurable improvements in student achievement, literacy outcomes, and teaching consistency. The effective use of CAT4, NGRT, GL and internal assessment data has enabled leaders and teachers to identify learning needs early, implement targeted interventions and adapt curriculum delivery to maximise student progress.

Reading remains a significant strength, with a 13% increase in reading fluency across Years 2–9, significantly exceeding the school's annual target. The successful implementation of Read Like a GEM (RLAG), ReadingWise, DEAR and assessment-led interventions has accelerated progress and strengthened literacy outcomes across all phases.

Year 6 and Year 9 have emerged as the strongest-performing cohorts, demonstrating strong attainment, progress and readiness for transition into Secondary and Key Stage 4 pathways. Reading interventions are now directly aligned to NGRT outcomes, ensuring greater precision in support and improved impact for identified students.

The school continues to demonstrate positive value-added outcomes, with students increasingly performing above baseline cognitive expectations. Academic outcomes are securely **Good**, with emerging **Very Good** features in literacy, assessment-informed teaching, intervention effectiveness and curriculum implementation. The school is well-positioned to further strengthen attainment, National Agenda readiness and GCSE provision in 2026–2027.

CAT4 baseline data indicate that several cohorts entered the school slightly below international averages. However, assessment outcomes throughout the year demonstrate positive value-added performance, with students increasingly performing above baseline cognitive expectations.

Assessment and Intervention Impact
Key Achievements

- All students completed rigorous baseline assessments.
- CAT4 assessments completed for all students in Years 3–9.
- NGRT assessment programme embedded across Years 2–9.
- GL assessment analysis used to adapt curriculum planning and delivery.
- Power BI dashboards support ongoing progress monitoring.
- Assessment data is used to identify, monitor and support targeted student groups.

Assessment systems are now securely embedded and increasingly precise, enabling leaders and teachers to make informed decisions that improve student outcomes and accelerate progress.

Key Strengths

- 13% increase in reading fluency across Years 2–9.
- Strong value-added performance against CAT4 baseline data.
- Effective use of CAT4, NGRT, GL and internal assessment data.
- Reading interventions directly linked to assessment outcomes.
- Embedded TLAG and RLAG frameworks.
- Strong assessment-informed curriculum adaptation.
- Year 6 and Year 9 identified as the strongest-performing cohorts.
- Positive stakeholder feedback regarding student achievement and progress.

Areas for Development

- Increase the proportion of students working above curriculum expectations.
- Further strengthen challenge and stretch opportunities for higher-attaining students.
- Continue accelerating progress for targeted SEND and vulnerable groups.
- Strengthen analytical reading and higher-order thinking skills.
- Further develop teacher and middle leader data literacy.
- Deepen triangulation of CAT4, NGRT, PASS and GL data to maximise student outcomes.

Theme 2: Student Protection

Wellbeing remains a significant strength of GFA and continues to underpin both academic success and the school's overall culture. Throughout 2025–2026, the school has maintained a proactive and preventative approach to student, staff, and parent wellbeing, ensuring that wellbeing is embedded in daily practice, safeguarding systems, leadership structures, and community engagement initiatives.

The school's commitment to wellbeing has been externally validated through the achievement of **ADEK Wellbeing Gold Status**, while stakeholder feedback continues to highlight the positive relationships, supportive environment and strong sense of belonging experienced across the school.

Student Wellbeing

- Upstrive wellbeing monitoring embedded across the school.
- Weekly well-being monitoring and follow-up processes established.
- Student-led and counsellor-led wellbeing assemblies delivered.
- Wake Up Shake Up sessions promoting positive wellbeing habits.
- Strong pastoral and counselling provision supporting emotional wellbeing.
- Structured interventions for attendance, mental health and safeguarding concerns.
- Students consistently report feeling safe, supported and valued within the school community.

Impact

- Improved student engagement and sense of belonging.

- Early identification and support for well-being concerns.
- Positive attitudes to learning and behaviour across all phases.
- Strong attendance and participation rates.
- Increased confidence in reporting concerns and accessing support.

Safeguarding and Wellbeing Integration
Wellbeing continues to be closely aligned with safeguarding systems and pastoral care.
Evidence

- Strong safeguarding culture and reporting systems.
- Daily attendance verification processes.
- Weekly welfare checks for targeted students.
- Counselling and mental health support programmes.
- Upstrive monitoring supports early intervention.
- Collaborative working between Safeguarding, Inclusion and Wellbeing teams.

This integrated approach ensures that students receive timely and appropriate support while promoting a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment.

Strategic Priorities 2026–2027

- Further strengthen student wellbeing and belonging initiatives.
- Expand student leadership opportunities linked to wellbeing.
- Continue enhancing staff wellbeing and engagement programmes.
- Strengthen preventative mental health education and awareness.
- Increase parent participation in wellbeing initiatives.
- Maintain strong attendance, safeguarding and pastoral outcomes.

Well-being is a significant strength of GFA and remains central to the school's culture of excellence. Students, staff and families benefit from a comprehensive and proactive wellbeing framework that promotes safety, belonging, engagement and personal growth. Supported by robust safeguarding systems, strong pastoral care, effective wellbeing programmes and positive stakeholder feedback, wellbeing continues to have a measurable impact on student success and community confidence.

Theme 3: Employment

Term 3 has been focused on securing high-quality staff to support continued enrolment growth, Primary expansion and the successful launch of Key Stage 4 in 2026–2027. Workforce planning has remained closely aligned to strategic priorities, ensuring the school is appropriately staffed to meet future curriculum, operational and student needs.
Significant progress has been made in recruitment, leadership succession planning and staff wellbeing, strengthening the school's capacity to sustain improvement and support future growth.

Recruitment has focused on strengthening teaching capacity, supporting Primary expansion, enhancing leadership capacity and ensuring readiness for GCSE implementation.

Strategic Staffing Developments

- New Head of EYFS appointed.
- New Assistant Head Teachers appointed.
- Primary expansion from 36 to 43 classes fully staffed.
- Specialist staffing secured to support Key Stage 4 implementation.
- Strong collaboration between HR and school leadership to ensure strategic workforce planning.

Compliance and Governance

- Single Central Record (SCR) compliance stands at **98%**.
- Safeguarding recruitment procedures remain robust and fully aligned with GEMS and ADEK expectations.
- Induction and onboarding processes are in place to support new staff joining in August 2026.

Staff Wellbeing and Retention

Staff wellbeing continues to be prioritised through a range of initiatives designed to strengthen engagement, morale and retention.
Key initiatives include:

- Lifesaver Award recognition programme.
- Pass the Boat staff appreciation initiative.
- Active May wellbeing campaign.
- Staff wellbeing committee.
- Open-door leadership approach.
- Professional development through Steplab coaching and leadership programmes.

The school continues to focus on building a positive workplace culture that supports staff wellbeing, professional growth and long-term retention.

Recruitment and workforce planning have been highly effective during Term 3, ensuring the school is well-positioned to support future growth, curriculum expansion, and Key Stage 4 implementation. Significant progress has been made in securing high-quality staff, strengthening leadership capacity and maintaining strong safeguarding compliance.
While staff retention remains an ongoing priority, the school has established strong foundations through strategic recruitment, staff wellbeing initiatives and professional development opportunities.

Leadership and Management remain a significant strength of GFA and have continued to strengthen throughout Term 3. The school has demonstrated clear strategic direction, strong governance, effective school improvement planning and increasing leadership capacity, all of which have contributed to positive outcomes across academic achievement, wellbeing, safeguarding and operational performance.

During 2025–2026, leadership teams have successfully delivered the priorities outlined within the School Development Plan, Annual School Review and Strategic Improvement Visits. The school has maintained a strong focus on accountability, data-informed decision-making, stakeholder engagement and future readiness, particularly in preparation for Key Stage 4 implementation and future inspection frameworks.

Strategic Priorities Delivered

- Successful implementation of the 2025–2026 School Development Plan.
- Strong progress against Annual School Review priorities.
- Positive outcomes from ADEK Monitoring and Strategic Improvement Visits.
- Continued alignment with GEMS Education priorities, UAE National Agenda requirements and ADEK expectations.
- Successful preparation for Key Stage 4 and GCSE implementation.

Leadership teams have effectively utilised CAT4, NGRT, GL, PASS and internal assessment data to inform strategic planning, monitor progress and strengthen accountability across all phases.
The use of Power BI dashboards and regular monitoring cycles has enabled leaders to identify strengths, address areas for development and respond proactively to emerging priorities.

Leadership Capacity and Development

- Middle leadership capacity strengthened through targeted professional development.
- Additional leadership appointments secured to support school growth.
- Steplab coaching and instructional leadership programmes embedded.
- Strong collaboration across the Founders network and GEMS Education.
- Executive leaders continue to support succession planning and talent development.

Leadership Development Priorities

- Continued focus on data literacy and assessment-informed leadership.
- Further strengthening subject leadership, particularly within Arabic and Islamic Education.
- Expanding leadership pathways and succession planning opportunities.
- Developing future leaders through coaching and mentoring programmes.

Governance and Stakeholder Engagement

- Strong governance oversight through GEMS Education and Local Advisory Board structures.
- Regular monitoring of school performance, risk and compliance.
- Clear accountability systems aligned to school priorities.
- Effective use of stakeholder feedback to inform school improvement planning.

Stakeholder Confidence

- Parent NPS improved from 50 to 53.
- Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA) achieved.
- Active Friends of Founders Parent Council and Emirati Parent Committee.
- Strong parental engagement and community confidence.
- Zero competitor leavers during Term 3.

Inspection and External Validation

- Positive ADEK Monitoring Visit outcomes.
- Successful Strategic Improvement Visits completed.

- ADEK Wellbeing Gold Status maintained.
- IQM Centre of Excellence maintained.
- Excellent HSE Audit with Zero Non-Conformities.
- Successful achievement of LPPA.

These external validations provide strong evidence of effective leadership, governance and school improvement.

Operational Leadership

- Current enrolment of 1,668 students.
- Projected enrolment of 2, 100 students for 2026–2027.
- Successful recruitment of 42 new staff members.
- Primary expansion from 36 to 43 classes.
- Strong financial performance with EBITDA remaining above target.
- Robust safeguarding, compliance and risk management systems.

Leadership has successfully aligned operational planning, staffing, facilities and financial management to support future growth and sustainability.

Leadership and Management continue to be a significant strength of the school. Leaders at all levels demonstrate a clear vision, a strong commitment to continuous improvement, and an unwavering focus on student outcomes, well-being, and stakeholder engagement. The successful delivery of strategic priorities, strengthening of leadership capacity, positive external validation and preparation for future growth demonstrate the school's increasing maturity and effectiveness.

Theme 4: School Operation

Audit outcomes and external validations provide strong evidence that the school operates at a high level of compliance, effectiveness and organisational maturity. The achievement of an Excellent HSE Audit, LPPA accreditation, IQM Centre of Excellence status and positive monitoring outcomes reflects the school's commitment to continuous improvement and excellence across all aspects of school life.

- The school demonstrates highly effective systems, strong governance and a culture of accountability, resulting in excellent outcomes across compliance, wellbeing, safeguarding and stakeholder engagement.
- 53 buses currently operate across Abu Dhabi and the surrounding areas.
- 1,169 students utilise school transport services daily.
- Strong collaboration between the school, STS and regulatory authorities.
- Student safety procedures and supervision systems remain embedded.
- Ongoing monitoring of service quality, journey times and parent feedback.
- Effective communication channels established between the school, STS and families.

The school continues to work closely with Threads to ensure a positive customer experience and to maintain high levels of parent satisfaction with school uniform quality, availability, and service delivery. Throughout Term 3, strong collaboration between the school and the Threads team has enabled concerns to be addressed promptly, ensuring minimal disruption to students and families.

As enrolment continues to grow and preparations for the 2026–2027 academic year progress, maintaining efficient uniform provision remains a key priority. Regular communication channels have been established to monitor stock availability, manage parent enquiries and ensure issues are resolved quickly and effectively.

Service Highlights

- Ongoing collaboration with Threads to monitor service quality and customer satisfaction.
- Prompt resolution of parent concerns regarding uniform stock and availability.
- Regular communication between the school and the Threads management team.
- Support provided for new families joining the school.
- Preparation for increased demand associated with projected enrolment growth and Primary expansion.

Parent Experience

- Parent concerns are addressed efficiently through established communication channels.
- Uniform availability is closely monitored during key enrolment and transition periods.
- Positive partnership maintained between Threads and the school to support families.

- Continuous feedback used to improve service responsiveness and customer experience.

The partnership with Slices continues to provide an effective catering service that supports student wellbeing and the wider school community. Through ongoing collaboration, regular feedback and a commitment to continuous improvement, the school continues to ensure that catering provision meets the expectations of students and families.

Parent and Student Experience

- Positive feedback regarding food quality and service provision.
- Opportunities for parent engagement through tasting sessions and feedback opportunities.
- Continued review of menu options to ensure variety and inclusivity.
- Strong communication between the school and catering provider to address concerns efficiently.

Wellbeing Impact

- Supports the school's wellbeing agenda through healthy lifestyle promotion.
- Encourages positive eating habits among students.
- Contributes to student wellbeing, engagement and readiness to learn.
- Aligns with the school's commitment to providing a safe, healthy and supportive environment.

Theme 5: Buildings & Facilities

Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) remain a significant strength of GFA and are embedded within the school's culture of excellence. Throughout 2025–2026, the school maintained the highest standards of health, safety and operational compliance, ensuring a safe, secure and supportive learning environment for students, staff and visitors.

A major highlight during Term 3 was achieving an Excellent HSE Audit rating with Zero Non-Conformities, reflecting the effectiveness of leadership oversight, strong compliance systems, and a proactive safety culture. The school also achieved **100% completion of mandatory HSE training** for all staff, demonstrating a whole-school commitment to health and safety excellence.

Health and Safety Compliance
Key Achievements

- **Excellent HSE Audit Result – Zero Non-Conformities**
- 100% staff completion of mandatory HSE training.
- Comprehensive risk assessments completed across all operations and activities.
- Monthly HSE inspections and weekly fire safety inspections conducted.
- Robust emergency preparedness through fire drills, evacuation drills and lockdown procedures.
- Fully operational emergency response and crisis management plans.
- High compliance in fire safety systems, first aid provision and medical readiness.

Governance and Monitoring

- HSE Committee meetings are conducted regularly with documented actions.
- Monthly HSE communication and reporting systems embedded.
- Incident and near-miss reporting managed through HSE Guard.
- Investigations completed promptly with corrective actions implemented and monitored.
- Strong leadership oversight ensuring continuous compliance and improvement.

ADEK Compliance and School Readiness
The school remains fully compliant with ADEK health, safety and operational requirements.
Areas of Compliance

- Health and Safety Policy communicated to all stakeholders.
- Emergency Response and Crisis Management Plans are fully operational.
- Clinic records, allergy registers and individual care plans are maintained.
- First aiders, AED checks and medical systems compliant.
- Student welfare and supervision procedures are embedded across all phases.
- Third-floor classrooms, Science laboratories and Food Technology facilities approved and ready for Year 10 implementation.
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These systems provide assurance that the school is well prepared to support future growth and curriculum expansion.

The school's strong HSE systems continue to contribute positively to:

- Student and staff wellbeing.
- Safe and secure learning environments.
- Operational excellence and compliance.

- Stakeholder confidence.
- Successful school expansion and readiness for Key Stage 4.
- Effective risk management and emergency preparedness.

The successful audit outcomes demonstrate that health, safety and well-being are not viewed as compliance requirements alone but are fully integrated within the school's operational culture.

✓ Excellent HSE Audit with Zero Non-Conformities.
✓ 100% staff HSE training compliance.
✓ Strong safety culture driven by leadership commitment.
✓ Robust emergency preparedness and risk management systems.
✓ High compliance in medical, first aid and fire safety provision.
✓ Effective monitoring, reporting and governance systems.
✓ Strong readiness for future expansion and Year 10 implementation.
✓ Positive contribution to student and staff wellbeing.

Health, Safety and Environment systems are securely embedded and operate at a very high standard across the school. Strong leadership oversight, rigorous compliance processes and a proactive safety culture have resulted in excellent external validation and high levels of stakeholder confidence.
The achievement of an Excellent HSE Audit with Zero Non-Conformities demonstrates the school's commitment to maintaining the highest standards of safety, well-being, and operational excellence.

Theme 6: Educational Provision

SCHOOL'S STRENGTHS

GFA continues to demonstrate a strong culture of excellence, underpinned by effective leadership, improved academic outcomes, inclusive practices, and high levels of stakeholder confidence. The school has successfully embedded robust systems that support continuous improvement and position it strongly for future growth.

Key strengths include a **13% improvement in reading fluency**, strong value-added outcomes, and the successful implementation of **Teach Like a GEM (TLAG)** and **Read Like a GEM (RLAG)**, which have strengthened teaching consistency and student achievement. Assessment systems are now securely embedded, enabling effective intervention and curriculum adaptation based on CAT4, NGRT and GL data.

The school has established a highly inclusive learning environment through its **Sparkling GEMS** framework and maintains its **IQM Centre of Excellence** status. Students benefit from strong wellbeing, safeguarding, and pastoral systems, as reflected in the school's ADEK Wellbeing Gold Status, positive student engagement, and strong attendance.

Family and community engagement remain significant strengths. The achievement of the **Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA)**, improvement in Parent NPS from **50 to 53**, active parent leadership

groups and Family First initiatives demonstrate the school's commitment to meaningful partnerships with families.

Operationally, the school continues to perform strongly. The school achieved an **Excellent HSE Audit with Zero Non-Conformities**, maintains 100% compliance with safeguarding and HSE training, and has demonstrated strong enrolment growth, with projected enrolment exceeding budget expectations for 2026–2027.

The successful preparation for **Key Stage 4 and GCSE implementation**, combined with strong safeguarding systems, effective leadership, growing middle leadership capacity and a clear focus on UAE National Agenda priorities, positions the school well for continued improvement and future success.

Overall, GFA is securely Good with emerging Very Good and Outstanding features in literacy, wellbeing, inclusion, safeguarding, parent engagement and operational excellence.

STRONG GEMS FAMILY

Key Successes

Achieved the **Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA)**, recognising the school's commitment to outstanding parental engagement and partnership. Parent NPS improved from 50 to 53, supported by Family First initiatives, active parent leadership groups, weekly engagement opportunities and strong stakeholder collaboration.

FAMILY FIRST

Family First continues to be a defining strength of GFA and remains central to the school's commitment to building strong partnerships with parents, students and the wider community. Throughout 2025–2026, the school has successfully strengthened stakeholder engagement, enhanced parental confidence and established a culture where families are active partners in the educational journey.

A significant milestone this year was the achievement of the **Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA)**, recognising the school's commitment to meaningful parent engagement and collaborative decision-making. Parent confidence continues to grow, reflected in an improvement in Parent Net Promoter Score (NPS) from **50 to 53**, supported by Family First initiatives, active parent leadership groups, weekly engagement opportunities and responsive communication systems.

Family engagement structures are now firmly embedded through weekly Coffee Mornings, Heads of School drop-ins, Family First celebrations, parent workshops and regular opportunities for consultation and feedback. The establishment of the Emirati Parent Committee and the continued

success of the Friends of Founders Parent Council have further strengthened community partnerships and stakeholder voice.

The school has also demonstrated strong retention and market confidence. During Term 3, there were **zero competitor leavers**, with the majority of withdrawals linked to overseas relocation due to regional circumstances. Enrolment projections for 2026–2027 exceed budget expectations, reflecting growing confidence in the school's educational provision, culture and future direction.

✓ Leading Parent Partnership Award achieved.
✓ Parent NPS improved from 50 to 53.
✓ Strong Family First culture embedded across the school.
✓ Weekly parent engagement opportunities established.
✓ Active Friends of Founders Parent Council.
✓ Strong Emirati parent engagement.
✓ Zero competitor leavers during Term 3.
✓ Strong enrolment growth and stakeholder confidence.

Parental confidence in GFA continues to strengthen and remains a significant indicator of the school's positive culture, strong leadership and commitment to family engagement. During 2025–2026, the school successfully improved its Parent Net Promoter Score (NPS) from **50 to 53**, reflecting growing parental advocacy and confidence in the quality of education, wellbeing provision and overall school experience.

A significant achievement during Term 3 was the successful attainment of the **Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA)**, recognising the school's commitment to meaningful parental engagement, collaboration and communication. Parents consistently identify the school's caring culture, strong safeguarding systems, approachable leadership team, inclusive environment and improving academic outcomes as key strengths.

The Family First strategy continues to have a positive impact through weekly Coffee Mornings, Heads of School drop-ins, active parent leadership groups, community events and regular opportunities for consultation and feedback. The establishment of the Emirati Parent Committee and the continued success of the Friends of Founders Parent Council have further strengthened stakeholder voice and community partnerships.

Parental confidence is also reflected in the school's strong retention rates, continued enrolment growth and achievement of **zero competitor leavers during Term 3**. Families continue to value the school's responsiveness, visible leadership, well-being provision and commitment to supporting every child.

Moving forward, the school will continue to strengthen communication consistency, curriculum transparency and Secondary parent engagement while building on the strong foundations established through the Family First programme.

Parent Survey Evaluation

Parent feedback confirms strong confidence in the school's leadership, culture, wellbeing provision and educational direction, with increasing levels of advocacy and engagement across the school community.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

GROW – Community & People

(Leadership, communication, safeguarding, wellbeing, stakeholder engagement, staffing)

1. Leadership Capacity

1.1 Continue strengthening middle leadership accountability through deeper use of CAT4, NGRT, PASS and GL assessment data.
1.2 Further develop subject leadership capacity, particularly within Arabic and Islamic Education.
1.3 Strengthen succession planning and leadership development pathways across all phases.

2. Communication and Stakeholder Engagement

2.1 Further improve communication consistency across all phases.
2.2 Strengthen curriculum communication and academic reporting to parents.
2.3 Continue improving Secondary parental confidence through increased engagement and transparency.

3. Safeguarding and Wellbeing

3.1 Expand online safety and digital citizenship programmes.
3.2 Further strengthen preventative mental health and wellbeing provision.
3.3 Increase parent workshops focused on safeguarding, wellbeing and social media awareness.

4. Recruitment and Retention

4.1 Improve staff retention in line with GEMS benchmarks.
4.2 Continue strengthening staff wellbeing, engagement and recognition initiatives.
4.3 Complete recruitment and induction of remaining specialist positions for 2026–2027.

5. Community Partnerships

5.1 Strengthen partnerships with Masdar City and UAE organisations.
5.2 Expand entrepreneurship, innovation and enterprise opportunities.
5.3 Establish a structured GEMS for Life alumni network.

FLOURISH – Curriculum

(Curriculum design, implementation, inclusion, adaptation)

6. Arabic and Islamic Education

6.1 Raise attainment in Upper Primary and Secondary Arabic and Islamic Education.
6.2 Increase the proportion of students working above curriculum expectations.
6.3 Strengthen Arabic reading comprehension, extended writing and analytical thinking.
6.4 Continue improving curriculum coherence and assessment practices across all phases.

7. Curriculum Depth and Challenge
7.1 Increase challenge and stretch opportunities for higher-attaining students.
7.2 Embed greater depth learning across all phases.
7.3 Increase the proportion of students working significantly above curriculum standards.

8. Cross-Curricular Learning
8.1 Strengthen meaningful cross-curricular links across subjects.
8.2 Improve students' ability to transfer and articulate knowledge across disciplines.

9. Secondary Curriculum Development
9.1 Successfully implement Key Stage 4 and GCSE pathways.
9.2 Strengthen curriculum progression and academic guidance across Years 7–10.
9.3 Monitor curriculum impact through internal assessments and GL benchmarking outcomes.

10. Inclusion and SEND
10.1 Increase accelerated progress for Students of Determination.
10.2 Continue strengthening adaptive teaching practices.

10.3 Further develop challenge pathways for gifted and talented students.

11. Scientific Inquiry and Mathematical Reasoning
11.1 Expand enquiry-based learning opportunities in Science.
11.2 Strengthen reasoning and problem-solving skills in Mathematics.
11.3 Develop higher-order thinking skills aligned to TIMSS and PIRLS and future benchmarking assessments.

ACHIEVE – Outcomes
(Attainment, progress, national agenda, benchmarking, measurable impact)

12. Accelerated Progress
12.1 Increase the proportion of students making better-than-expected progress across all subjects.
12.2 Accelerate progress for targeted groups, including SEND and selected Phase 2 cohorts.

13. Secondary Outcomes
13.1 Increase accelerated progress across Years 7–10.
13.2 Continue strengthening Secondary academic confidence and parental engagement.
13.3 Monitor the impact of GCSE implementation and curriculum pathways.

14. National Agenda Readiness
14.1 Continue strengthening reading fluency, comprehension and analytical reading skills.
14.2 Embed TIMSS-style higher-order questioning and reasoning.
14.3 Maintain readiness for the National Identity Mark inspection.

15. Enrolment and Retention
15.1 Maintain strong re-enrolment rates and stakeholder confidence.
15.2 Continue proactive engagement with families to sustain zero competitor leavers and support enrolment growth.
15.3 Strengthen Family First initiatives to further improve retention and advocacy

Theme 7: Inclusion

Inclusion remains a strength at GFA and is central to the school's vision of ensuring every student is known, supported and challenged to achieve their full potential. The Sparkling GEMS framework continues to promote equity, wellbeing and personalised learning through a highly inclusive culture that values diversity and celebrates individual success.

The school serves a diverse community of 76 nationalities, comprising 87 Students of Determination, 16% Emirati students, and 99% EAL learners, requiring inclusive systems that are responsive, adaptive, and impactful. As a school with IQM status, we continue to strive to ensure that every child's needs are met and that we support our students to achieve their best.

Throughout 2025–2026, inclusion has become increasingly embedded within curriculum planning, assessment systems, well-being provision and pastoral support.

Impact on Learning

- Reading interventions are directly linked to NGRT outcomes.
- Adaptive teaching strategies are embedded across all phases.
- Early identification and intervention processes have been strengthened.
- Personalised learning plans support academic and well-being outcomes.
- Improved access to learning for SEND and EAL students.

Impact on Wellbeing

- Strong collaboration between Inclusion, Wellbeing and Safeguarding teams.
- Students report a strong sense of belonging and support.
- Parent partnerships continue to strengthen provision and student success.
- Inclusive practices contribute positively to engagement, attendance and participation.

Evidence of Success

Students of Determination

- Personalised support programmes embedded.
- Targeted interventions monitored through assessment systems.
- Increased access to curriculum and enrichment opportunities.

English as an Additional Language

- Vocabulary-rich teaching embedded across subjects.
- ReadingWise and NGRT data are used to inform interventions.
- Strong literacy gains evident across EAL cohorts.
- Reading fluency improved by 13% across Years 2–9.

External Validation

- IQM Centre of Excellence is maintained.
- Fully compliant during the ADEK Inclusion monitoring visit.
- Positive stakeholder feedback regarding inclusion provision.
- Strong parental confidence in personalised support and student wellbeing.

Strengths

✓ Inclusion is fully embedded within teaching, learning and wellbeing systems.
✓ Strong support for Students of Determination and EAL learners.

✓ Effective assessment-informed intervention strategies.
✓ Positive impact on literacy and reading outcomes.
✓ Strong partnership with families.
✓ High levels of student engagement, belonging and wellbeing.
✓ Collaborative approach between Inclusion, Safeguarding and Wellbeing teams.

Priorities Moving Forward

- Increase accelerated progress for targeted SEND learners.
- Further strengthen challenge pathways for higher-attaining students.
- Continue developing adaptive teaching practices.
- Strengthening intervention precision through assessment triangulation.
- Enhance Emirati student provision and National Identity initiatives.
- Maintain strong parent engagement and partnership.

Sparkling GEMS continues to be a defining feature of the school's Culture of Excellence. Inclusive systems are securely embedded; student wellbeing remains strong, and personalised support ensures that barriers to learning are reduced and opportunities for success are maximised.

The school demonstrates a highly inclusive culture in which students are supported academically, socially, and emotionally, enabling all learners to thrive and achieve their potential.

Theme 8: MoE Mandatory Subjects

KG MoE Subjects continue to provide strong foundations for language acquisition, cultural identity and early literacy development at GEMS Founders School – Masdar City. Throughout 2025–2026, the school successfully implemented the mandatory Arabic, Islamic Education and UAE Social Studies curriculum across FS1 and FS2, ensuring full compliance with ADEK and Ministry of Education requirements.

Teaching has been strengthened through curriculum planning, GEMS Centre of Excellence professional development and age-appropriate, play-based learning experiences that promote vocabulary development, oral communication and early cultural awareness. UAE values and National Identity are embedded within daily learning through storytelling, songs, celebrations and experiential activities.

Students demonstrate increasing confidence in using Arabic vocabulary, engaging in classroom conversations and participating in national and cultural events. Strong collaboration with families and the wider school community has further enriched children's understanding of UAE heritage and identity from the earliest years.

Key Highlights

- Full implementation of Arabic, Islamic Education and UAE Social Studies curriculum in FS1 and FS2.
- Curriculum fully compliant with ADEK and Ministry of Education requirements.
- Play-based approaches strengthening early language acquisition and communication.
- UAE National Identity is embedded through daily learning and cultural celebrations.

- Professional development completed through the GEMS Arabic Centre of Excellence.
- Positive parent feedback regarding children's language development and cultural awareness.

KG MoE Subjects provide a secure foundation for early language development, cultural identity and lifelong learning, supporting children's successful transition into Primary while strengthening the school's commitment to UAE National Agenda priorities.

Theme 9: MoE Mandatory Subjects

Arabic Language and Islamic Education

Arabic Language and Islamic Education remain key priorities within the school's improvement journey and continue to play a central role in promoting UAE National Identity, cultural understanding and student achievement. Throughout 2025–2026, the school has focused on strengthening curriculum implementation, improving teaching quality and ensuring full compliance with ADEK requirements.

Steady progress has been made across all phases, supported by increased curriculum oversight, targeted professional development and improved assessment practices. While attainment remains strongest in the lower primary phase, improving outcomes in Upper Primary and Secondary remains a strategic focus moving into 2026–2027.

Curriculum Compliance and Development

Strategic Priority	Outcome
Mandatory Arabic & Islamic Curriculum (FS–Y1)	Fully Implemented
ADEK Curriculum Compliance	Achieved
Arabic Centre of Excellence Training	Completed
Curriculum Planning and Sequencing	Strengthened
UAE National Identity Integration	Embedded Across School

Impact on Teaching and Learning

- Arabic and Islamic Education programmes are fully compliant with ADEK requirements.
- Timetables reflect the mandatory allocation of Arabic and Islamic lessons.
- Improved curriculum planning and lesson sequencing across phases.
- Greater focus on vocabulary development, reading and oral communication.
- Enhanced monitoring and support from school leaders and MOE teams.

Priorities Moving Forward

Priority Area	Focus 2026–2027
Arabic Attainment	Increase the proportion of students working above curriculum expectations
Islamic Education	Raise attainment in Upper Primary and Secondary phases
Literacy Development	Strengthen Arabic reading comprehension and extended writing
Teaching Quality	Continued targeted coaching and professional development
Assessment	Strengthen assessment analysis and intervention planning
National Identity	Further embed UAE culture and identity within daily learning experiences

The direction of travel is positive, with clear systems, leadership oversight and improvement strategies in place to further strengthen student outcomes and support National Agenda priorities.

GEMS Founders School – Masdar City

We see **genius** in every child

ARABIC LANGUAGE AND ISLAMIC EDUCATION

ACADEMIC YEAR 2025–2026 | TERM 3

Arabic Language and Islamic Education remain key pillars in developing students' identity, values and cultural understanding. We continue to strengthen teaching, learning and assessment to ensure all students make progress and achieve their full potential.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- FULL IMPLEMENTATION of mandatory Arabic, Islamic and Social Studies curriculum (FS–Y1)
- ARABIC TEACHERS: completed GEMS Centre of Excellence training
- IMPROVED VOCABULARY & ORAL LANGUAGE across all phases
- UAE NATIONAL IDENTITY embedded across the curriculum and school life
- POSITIVE STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK on students' personal development and cultural understanding

A CULTURAL LEGACY

THE EMIRATI WAY

OUR QASAM

OUR CELEBRATION

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Mandatory Arabic & Islamic Curriculum (FS–Y1)	FULLY IMPLEMENTED
ADEK Curriculum Compliance	ACHIEVED
Arabic Centre of Excellence Training	COMPLETED
UAE National Identity Integration	EMBEDDED

IMPACT ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Stronger curriculum planning and lesson sequencing across all phases.
- Improved vocabulary acquisition and oral communication skills.
- Enhanced monitoring, support and professional development for teachers.
- Greater focus on reading, comprehension and student engagement.
- Increased integration of UAE values, culture and National Identity in learning experiences.

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

- Full implementation of Arabic, Islamic and Social Studies curriculum in FS–Y1.
- Improved vocabulary development and oral language across phases.
- Reading interventions linked to NGRT outcomes.
- Increased opportunities for UAE national celebrations and cultural events.
- Positive feedback from parents and students on learning experiences.

PRIORITIES FOR 2026–2027

- Increase the proportion of students working above curriculum expectations in Arabic and Islamic Education.
- Strengthen Arabic reading comprehension and extended writing skills.
- Continue targeted coaching and professional development for teachers.
- Strengthen assessment analysis and intervention planning to raise attainment.
- Further embed UAE culture, heritage and Islamic values across all subjects.

Theme 10: End of Year Reflection

Term 3 marks the successful conclusion of a highly productive and transformative academic year for GFA. Building on the stability and progress achieved in Term 2, the school has continued its strong trajectory of improvement, delivering measurable impact across academic outcomes, wellbeing, inclusion, safeguarding, stakeholder engagement and operational excellence.

Academic outcomes have strengthened further through the effective use of CAT4, NGRT, GL and internal assessment data. Reading remains a significant strength, with a 13% improvement in reading fluency across Years 2–9, exceeding annual targets and validating the impact of Read Like a GEM (RLAG), ReadingWise and assessment-informed intervention strategies. Year 6 and Year 9 emerged as the strongest-performing cohorts, while Year 1 phonics outcomes demonstrated significant improvement from baseline. Assessment systems are now securely embedded, enabling increasingly precise intervention and curriculum adaptation.

The Culture of Excellence continues to be a defining feature of the school. The Be A GEM framework, Sparkling GEMS inclusion model, and robust wellbeing systems have contributed to high levels of student engagement, positive behaviour and strong stakeholder confidence. Safeguarding remains a significant strength, supported by a mature reporting culture, effective attendance monitoring and proactive wellbeing interventions. The school also maintained its ADEK Wellbeing Gold Status and IQM Centre of Excellence accreditation.

Family First has continued to have a significant impact on parental confidence and community engagement. The successful achievement of the Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA), together with an increase in Parent NPS from 50 to 53, reflects the strength of home-school partnerships and the school's commitment to stakeholder engagement. Enrolment growth remains strong, with projected enrolment of 2,100 students for 2026–2027, exceeding budget expectations, while the school achieved zero competitor leavers during Term 3.

Leadership and operational systems have continued to mature throughout the year. Leadership capacity has been strengthened through targeted recruitment, middle leadership development and increased accountability. The school successfully recruited 42 new staff members in preparation for future growth and the launch of Key Stage 4. Significant progress has also been made in curriculum readiness, staffing and facilities to support the introduction of GCSE pathways in 2026–2027.

Operational excellence remains a key strength. The school achieved an **Excellent HSE Audit rating with Zero Non-Conformities**, maintained 100% HSE training compliance and demonstrated strong governance, compliance and risk management systems. Financial performance remains robust, enrolment continues to exceed projections, and all major operational priorities have been successfully delivered.

As the school looks ahead to 2026–2027, key priorities will include:

- Increasing the proportion of students making better-than-expected progress.
- Further raising attainment for higher-attaining students.
- Strengthening Arabic and Islamic Education outcomes.
- Successfully launching Key Stage 4 and GCSE pathways.
- Continuing preparation for PIRLS and National Identity Mark requirements.

- Further developing leadership capacity and succession planning.
- Sustaining excellence in wellbeing, safeguarding, inclusion and parent engagement.

GFA ends the academic year in a strong position. The school has successfully delivered against its strategic priorities, strengthened outcomes across all key performance areas and established secure foundations for future growth. The direction of travel remains highly positive, and the school is well-positioned to continue its journey towards becoming one of the leading British curriculum schools in Abu Dhabi