

The Patron's  
**ACCREDITATION**  
AND COMPLIANCE REPORT



SUPPORTING

**International  
British**  
SCHOOLS  
OVERSEAS

# CONTENTS

## COBIS COMPLIANCE REPORT

|                      |    |
|----------------------|----|
| 1.0 RECRUITMENT      | 4  |
| 2.0 STUDENT WELFARE  | 7  |
| 3.0 FACILITIES       | 11 |
| 4.0 GOVERNANCE       | 14 |
| 5.0 ETHOS AND VALUES | 17 |
| OVERALL OBSERVATIONS | 19 |



# COMPLIANCE REPORT

GEMS Wellington Academy, Silicon Oasis is compliant with the standards one to five of the COBIS Compliance system.

## 1.0 RECRUITMENT

The school has as a priority the recruitment of appropriately qualified and experienced staff.

### 1A

#### STANDARD

*The school recruitment process is fair and transparent and ensures that appropriate staff and volunteers are appointed. This applies to all staff teaching and non-teaching.*

#### FEEDBACK

The Academy provided a comprehensive range of supporting evidence, all of which demonstrates a robust, detailed and equally applied approach to the recruitment, not only of teachers, but also of all administration and support staff, Local Advisory Board (LAB) members, Parent Council (PC) members and volunteers.

Job advertisements for teaching and non-teaching staff are placed via the GEMS online application system which carries out the preliminary filtering and checking centrally. The Academy is then safe in the knowledge that those moving through the process are suitable candidates. Several members of staff have appropriate and up-to-date safer recruitment qualifications and it is they alone who carry out on-screen and face-to-face interviews as part of a panel.

All members of staff receive a letter of appointment which unambiguously sets out the headlines of their package; they also receive a detailed GEMS contract and a mandatory UAE Labour Law contract.

All required pre-employment checks are meticulously carried out (there were 46 new arrivals in August and so this is no mean feat). Individual hard-copy personnel files are scrupulously maintained, are complete in all respects and are easy to consult.

Furthermore, to judge from the 36 files looked at in detail, there is no discrepancy between the files and the Single Central Register (SCR).

The SCR is a large Excel spreadsheet containing a full range of pertinent information. The vast majority of the checks are carried out by the HR Manager who signs and dates entries accordingly. Where an assistant carries out a check, this is overseen by the HR Manager who also undertakes the telephone verification of written references for all successful applicants.

20 teachers' personnel files (out of a total of 305) covering all eight years of the Academy's lifetime were examined in detail. None was found to be deficient in any area.

There are 155 Teaching or Learning Support Assistants: 8 files were scrutinised, and all were in order. There



are 19 members of the Education Administration team (Assistant-, Vice- and Principals); 4 files were examined and found to be complete in all respects. There are 65 people in the Administration staff; the 4 files viewed were complete.

The remaining 130 members of the Academy Operations team (i.e. car or bus drivers and conductors, cleaners, security guards and lifeguards) are hired via a GEMS corporate pathway. The SCR shows that all relevant checks, including police checks, have been carried out; but these personnel files are held centrally off-site and were not seen.

There are 13 LAB members and 15 PC members, all of whom are included in the SCR and all of whom have had the relevant police checks completed.

There are valid concerns about the receipt of ICP Certificates in future, given the lack of a full postal service in Dubai. However, a solution is being sought.

## NEXT STEPS

In order to avoid the SCR becoming too cumbersome, and thus increasingly difficult to scrutinise, it is recommended that discussions take place with regard to keeping a single Excel workbook, as now, but having categories of employees under distinct tabs rather than in a continuous stream of names. COBIS recommends that a police check through the relevant authorities for existing members of staff be carried out every three years. It is noted that this might pose difficulties and delays for some.

## 1B

### STANDARD

*All staff within the school including volunteers, and supply staff meets high standards of child protection and the safeguarding of students.*

### FEEDBACK

There are no concerns about the fullness and appropriateness of the Safeguarding and Child Protection policies, procedures and approaches. In interviews, members of both the teaching and the administration staff were clear about what to do if there was a concern and readily talked about the entirely supportive role played by the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and the Assistant DSLs. They were equally clear about the regular updates carried out, and this is borne out by the evidence provided. There are differences between the Primary and Secondary schools insofar as the way in which concerns are brought to the attention of the relevant person, but both approaches are effective, and both do include a conversation. It is worthy of note that key written Safeguarding and Child Protection documents are translated into Arabic and that, when necessary, spoken messages delivered during staff briefings are also translated.

All of those in positions of responsibility receive training (online and face-to-face) in line with the recommended renewal periods and to the required level of expertise. These colleagues deliver thorough updates as part of both the August induction programme for new staff (and at other times of the academic year, as necessary) and



the annual refresher session for all staff.

Safeguarding and Child Protection case files are stored securely within the GEMS online Safeguarding system, to which only those with responsibilities in this area have access. Discussions with LAB members, one of whom deals *inter alia* with Safeguarding and Child Protection at corporate level (and is trained to Level 3), provided reassurance that whilst such matters are not common, they are always taken seriously and always acted upon as quickly as possible. Safeguarding is a standing item on LAB meeting agendas.

Not only does the Academy have very sound working relationships with a number of local, specialist external agencies, but also it has its own team of fully and highly qualified counsellors whose work is invaluable.

## NEXT STEPS

Maintain the current high level of all-round support and give some consideration to refining still further the methods for reporting concerns.



## 2.0 STUDENT WELFARE

The school provides a safe and supportive environment for all young people.

2A

### STANDARD

*The school provides a pastoral structure that meets the needs of all students and promotes their personal development.*

### FEEDBACK

The breadth and depth of the pastoral structure is commendable and is reflected in both theory and practice. The finely woven support net means that, even in such a large school (both physically and in terms of the population of students), a caring adult is never very far away. In interviews, students were aware of how to raise a concern and to whom they could address it. They spoke warmly of the support that their teachers give them both pastorally and academically. Parents were equally fulsome in their praise for members of staff who deal with their children in such a positive way. During the visit, several lunchtime meetings between tutors, parents and students in the Secondary school were observed (at a distance) and it was plain to see that these were friendly and appreciated.

In the Secondary school, tutor groups (Years 7 – 10 and Years 11 – 13), which are no larger than 20 in number and often smaller, are vertical and sit within each of the four houses. Tutors are the first point of contact for parents, students and colleagues for concerns and for relaying good news. In the Primary school, the class teacher is the point of contact and the classes are based within each of the four houses.

The house system is a tried and trusted one, promoting companionship and healthy competition in a wide range of areas and in a secure pastoral structure. Of note is the strength of attachment and allegiance that members of each house feel; and, also, the top-to-bottom support and care demonstrated openly by older members of each house in the Secondary school, and then beyond into and within the Primary school. Peer mentoring is a strong feature in both schools. The house system lies at the heart of much of what the Academy does well, but the Phase and Year Leaders, and Assistant Principals, all of whom have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, also contribute greatly, ensuring that academic concerns are attended to without delay. This flows naturally into the whole- Academy focus on wellbeing and mindfulness, both of which are well-established and for which the Academy is widely recognised. There is an equally effective student-led house leadership structure, epitomised by the Head Girl and Head Boy, who are tremendous advertisements for their peers in terms of commitment to the Academy, for their organised minds and for their outward-looking, positive philosophy.

A comprehensive termly and year-long programme for PSHE and for Social and Moral education is in place at all levels. Anti-social behaviour is rare, because of the pro-active nature of the Academy staff and their high levels of expectation. Healthy eating is established from the outset in EYFS and maintained throughout – the onsite cafés and canteens serve an array of tempting, healthy meals, snacks and drinks at mid-morning break and at lunchtime. A lot of work is done early in each academic year to ensure that children and their parents



understand the importance of having breakfast at home.

Medical care is second to none: there are two full-time doctors and a team of nurses; each school has a dedicated, spacious and welcoming clinic with a range of specialist equipment and dispense medication for common ailments; those with particular medical needs are catered for; there are 8 defibrillators strategically placed across the campus (and so too are the staff trained in their use); daily logbooks and students' individual medical records are meticulously completed, and those elements of the information which need to be retained digitally are securely stored; and at least one nurse is in attendance at all 'home' sports fixtures.

## NEXT STEPS

Continue to build on the obvious strengths of the pastoral network and to extend the range of support offered.

## 2B

### STANDARD

*The school has provision for the health and safe supervision of all students to allow them to flourish in the school environment.*

### FEEDBACK

The required policies and procedures are all in place, up-to-date and thorough. There is an accurate record of the termly, planned school fire drills and of the planned annual Academy evacuation, in addition to the unannounced drills and real incidents. Lockdown procedures are regularly practised too. The registers for fire safety and first aid training are comprehensive. A notable number of teachers and administration staff have undergone relevant and periodic training and they all have current qualifications. First-aid-trained staff are located throughout both schools and there is clear signage indicating the six or so rooms in which those colleagues can be found on each of the floors, with further notices outside these rooms, to indicate whether or not the member of staff is in it. Evacuation procedures are known, and routes are clear. Exit gates are never far away (especially for the youngest children); assembly points are suitable for the local climate and do not impede access for emergency service vehicles.

Drop-off and pick-up routines work incredibly well, given the number of children, adults, buses, cars, bicycles and scooters involved. It was evident during the visit that everybody's safety is of paramount importance at all times.

The visitors' procedure is very secure; an acceptable form of identification must be provided in exchange for a colour-coded lanyard and badge which must be worn at all times by all adults on the campus. Staff badges are smart and allow access to all areas across the campus, but parents' and visitors' badges do not allow the wearers unaccompanied access beyond public areas of the Academy. Access to classroom corridors is carefully monitored and denied to all but members of staff during the school day. Clear signage informs everybody on the campus that CCTV is in place in all areas. Coverage will be complete once the swimming pool cameras have been installed later on in this academic year.



All facilities are in good shape and are well maintained. Any problems arising are immediately dealt with. There is a regular and detailed report to the LAB on all areas of health and safety.

## NEXT STEPS

Review the presentation of fire evacuation notices displayed in all rooms so that they are age-appropriate and easier to understand.

## 2C

### STANDARD

*The school ensures that through positive behaviour management students are supported in their learning and safety.*

### FEEDBACK

Students in the Academy could not be better supported, although this assessment might be contested by leadership teams who do not rest on their laurels. There is a constant ambition to serve and support students in the most effective way possible. Quite apart from the knowledgeable ELT, PLT and SLT personnel, the paperwork and structures underpinning the positive behaviour management of the children are carefully considered and detailed.

As with any school, discipline issues do arise and are addressed with a minimum of fuss and with the aim of a positive outcome. When there are serious matters affecting a student, his or her parents are involved at an early stage. Permanent exclusion is not often the final outcome, because decisions rest with, and judgements are made by, the KHDA; but that is not to say that cases are not presented to the KHDA that have the full support of the LAB. However, the Academy clearly prefers to manage troublesome and troubled students using its own various systems.

There is an emphasis on doing one's best and being suitably rewarded for that. Such recompense is more likely to be for the benefit of the house rather than the individual. As previously noted, such is the allegiance to the house that this is in itself a reason to celebrate. The Primary assembly for Onyx House that took place during the visit gave ample evidence of the achievements, the rewards and the celebrations and was a pleasure to witness. The reward scheme is undergoing a typically student-led review at the most senior end of the Secondary school, in order to make rewards more appealing, more tangible and, therefore, worth working hard for.

There are high expectations for attendance: any and all unexplained absences are followed up. Patterns for individuals are observed and addressed; once again, the target is a positive outcome.

The policy for dealing with complaints is known about by parents, but, in interview, some queried the need for such a policy. That, in itself, speaks volumes for the effective communication and respectful relationships in general between the Academy and its parents and their children.

Participation in the duty rota for the adequate supervision of children before, during and after the school day is part of the routine for all members of the teaching staff, including the most senior of them. Their presence is



particularly valued by parents at drop-off and pick-up times, because they know that they can approach them and raise queries.

## NEXT STEPS

Maintain, review and enhance current practices.

## 2D

### STANDARD

*The school ensures that off-site activities are appropriate and safe.*

### FEEDBACK

Students benefit from a wide range of off-site day visits both within Dubai and to other Emirates, and from residential trips which are often further afield. The underlying policies and procedures are up-to-date and thoroughly drawn-up. The two members of the teaching staff with the major responsibilities have experience of organising and participating in day and in residential trips, and the colleague responsible for the administration of all off-site activities has a lot of experience in this area, too. All of them feel comfortable and supported in doing their work.

Trips that go beyond the Emirates, or which are residential, are delegated to *Camps International* for the safe risk assessment and supervision of children participating in activities. Academy staff who accompany groups are always in addition to trained activity leaders, but all will have an appropriate level of experience in supervision. The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award scheme is well supported by students at all three levels and those members of staff involved in the scheme are all qualified to lead expeditions.

## NEXT STEPS

The Academy might consider, for those with overall responsibility for off-site activities, the benefit of having a UK recognised qualification, such as that offered by the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) or the Outdoor Education Advisors Panel (OEAP).



## 3.0 FACILITIES

The school provides all students with access to an environment conducive to learning and that keeps them safe.

### 3A

#### STANDARD

*Accommodation supports the learning needs of students.*

#### FEEDBACK

All of the locally required permissions to operate are in place, including a current fire certificate. All of the Academy's many facilities are superb and readily support the learning needs of all students. There is an annual CapEx budget which allows priority to be given to identified areas in any given year.

Classrooms and specialist areas are all light, airy and air-conditioned and guarantee more than enough space for even the largest of classes (27 is the maximum, but the average is below this). Colourful decoration is being re-evaluated, in order to avoid sensory overload. The calmer, more neutral palette is effective, especially in the younger years. Corridors and communal spaces are wide and unencumbered, allowing not only for break-out spaces, but also for the free flow of large numbers of children during the 'rush hours' of arrival and departure. Furniture is robust, age appropriate and well-looked-after. The Academy has a BYOD (increasingly BYOI) approach and supports this with ample provision of class laptops and tablets. Advanced smart boards are in all teaching areas and form part of the day-to-day teaching toolkit.

Academy students enjoy an enviable range of specialist areas: in the Primary school there are outdoor 'desert and jungle' play areas and a special adventure garden (as part of the Forest Schools initiative), all of which are amply shaded for the climate. When the weather is unbearably hot, there are several indoor spaces for safe play too. The Secondary school enjoys similarly large shaded play spaces and a variety of shaded all-weather sports fields (and access to a local stadium for grass pitches). There are two Primary swimming pools and a Secondary pool. There are sports halls in both schools and a conditioning suite in the Secondary school.

There is a well-resourced Arabic library and two further, equally well-resourced libraries in the Primary school; the Secondary school has an extensive library with dedicated areas for Modern Languages, for comfortable reading and for online research. There is a large post-16 common room and several smaller workspaces. There are well-resourced laboratories and workshops, including art, wood- and metalwork, textiles and food technology in the Secondary school. As in other areas, there is an evident emphasis on Health and Safety in these rooms and all potential risks have been assessed and mitigated.

There are drama studios and dance studios in both schools and a 750-seat professional standard auditorium in the Secondary school. There are innovative blended learning plazas in both schools. In short, the Academy offers, and makes full use of, multiple opportunities for enhanced teaching and learning at all stages of the students' time in it.



The Academy prides itself on the work of the Inclusion Department and rightly so. Children with educational and physical needs are catered for and can flourish. Those with physical disabilities can access all areas of the campus (evidence was uploaded to show how much the Academy does for its students) and also can have access to the full curriculum.

The entire campus is remarkably clean, tidy and well maintained. Drinking water stations are plentiful and all students have their own water bottles. Toilet facilities are age and gender appropriate, respecting privacy. There are separate facilities for students, and for staff and visitors, including changing tables for babies in the latter.

## NEXT STEPS

Maintain and develop the current level of provision.

## 3B

### STANDARD

*The site(s) provides a secure environment for students to enjoy.*

## FEEDBACK

The campus is split into a Primary site and a Secondary site with a one-way, two-lane public highway running between them. Therefore, safety considerations are always at the fore. There are traffic-calming bumps and raised, marked crossing points which are supervised by the security staff at peak times and also during the day, when groups of children need to go from one site to the other. There are several vehicle- and pedestrian-only entrances and exits for drop-off and pick-up, but a much more limited number of them are open during the school day; it is impossible to enter or leave without going through them. There is a high perimeter wall and sturdy railings round both sites. As noted elsewhere, at peak times the safe and efficient flow of cars, buses and people is commendable.

## NEXT STEPS

Maintain and continue to review, in order to improve yet further, the levels of vigilance and safety.

## 3C

### STANDARD

*The fabric of the school provides an effective working environment.*

## FEEDBACK

All areas of the Academy provide a most effective learning environment for its students and staff. Noise levels are low for the number of children in the two schools because thought has been given to noise reduction. Clever use is made of the many regularly changing display boards, television screens and gallery spaces in order to encourage children to take pride in their and their friends' creative work. Digital technology is in use to support learning in all areas and at all stages.



## NEXT STEPS

Maintain and further improve the already generous provisions for learning.

## 3D

### STANDARD

*Overall facilities meet the needs of all students including those with learning needs or physical disability.*

### FEEDBACK

The Academy is a leading light in several curriculum areas, for example performing arts, dance and a number of sports. With regard to Inclusion, which is another of its strengths, the Academy is working hard to become a centre of excellence. Very recently, it has been uniquely recognised by the UAE Special Olympics authorities for its work in Inclusion.

The Academy emphasises and has embedded the importance of wellbeing and mindfulness for all of its community, something which has also been recognised.

The Academy has amongst its students a number with physical disabilities, for whom there are ramps, wide doorways, lifts and evacuation chairs in the case of emergencies that prohibit the use of the lifts.

## NEXT STEPS

Continue to develop this important area.



## 4.0 GOVERNANCE

The school's governors/proprietor(s) work to support students and the work of the school.

### 4A

#### STANDARD

*All governors or proprietor(s) meet all the requirements for staff with access to young people reinforcing the importance of safeguarding within the school.*

#### FEEDBACK

All matters in this section of the Standard are in order. The SCR is complete for all governors, and police checks have been carried out. The annual Safeguarding and Child Protection training has been delivered and so all members are up-to-date and will be kept so in future.

There is a nominated governor (trained to Level 3) with responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection. Meetings with the DSLs take place at least once per term and more often if necessary. The LAB receives a Safeguarding and Child Protection report at each of its meetings.

#### NEXT STEPS

Maintain this level of best practice. Review as and when necessary.

### 4B

#### STANDARD

*Measures are in place for governors /proprietor to either register interests and/or manage conflicts of interest.*

#### FEEDBACK

The GEMS company policy is in place and is applied appropriately. In discussion with LAB members, no conflicts of interest were recalled during the period of its lifetime.

#### NEXT STEPS

Maintain this level of best practice.

Ensure that 'Conflict of Interest' is a standing item at the start of every LAB meeting and record in the minutes that there are either none or, if there are, how these conflicts are managed and resolved.

Review as and when necessary.



**4C****STANDARD**

*There are written procedures/protocols for the remit of the work of governors/proprietor(s).*

**FEEDBACK**

The GEMS company protocols and procedures are in place. These are reviewed and developed regularly.

**NEXT STEPS**

Maintain this level of best practice. Review as and when necessary.

**4D****STANDARD**

*There is appropriate induction for new governors.*

**FEEDBACK**

New LAB members undertake an appropriate, detailed induction programme overseen by Academy Executive Leadership Team (ELT). Additionally, all members are updated as necessary with regard to changes and developments in areas of governance.

**NEXT STEPS**

Maintain this level of best practice. Review as and when necessary.

**4E****STANDARD**

*Governors or proprietor(s) have a commitment to training or development.*

**FEEDBACK**

As part of its continuing commitment to raising the standard of governance in all of its schools, GEMS provides a programme of training and development for all LAB members. In interview, it was acknowledged that this is appreciated and that it has helped Academy members to improve their understanding of the part they play in its success.

**NEXT STEPS**

Maintain this level of best practice. Review as and when necessary.



**4F****STANDARD**

*The governors or proprietor(s) provide records of meetings and decisions as appropriate. Contact details for the governors/proprietor(s) are made available to parents.*

**FEEDBACK**

LAB meetings take place at least once per term and are properly recorded. When relevant, decisions taken are shared with parents.

The existence of the LAB and its functions is less well known about than the Parent Council's place and role. Whilst there is a route for parents to access GEMS for matters relating to governance, that for the local board is not yet clear.

**NEXT STEPS**

It is acknowledged that the LAB and its functions are in their infancy and are a work in progress. It is agreed that this significant area of interest to parents should merit, and will receive, further consideration and development at both GEMS and Academy levels.



## 5.0 ETHOS AND VALUES

The school has an evident British ethos and promotes internationalism.

5A

### STANDARD

*A British ethos is apparent and important to the school. This may involve reference to British values, freedoms and culture as far as it is permissible within the host country context.*

### FEEDBACK

There is plentiful evidence of a British ethos in all areas of the Academy. The overwhelming majority of the teaching staff are British or trained in the United Kingdom (approximately 95%). Many of the administration staff are British, or from the Commonwealth. The curriculum is British, from EYFS to BTEC and A Level. Many of the themes running through the PSHE and assembly programmes are rooted in British values. Several important dates are marked, for example, Remembrance Day, and other festivals are acknowledged, such as Christmas. West End musicals are performed alongside other plays, recitals and shows.

The British-style house system encourages friendly competition across a range of areas. It also allows students to take on positions of leadership and responsibility. The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award scheme also promotes more core values.

The Academy is very much aware of the opportunities that membership of COBIS will bring to its students and is looking forward to participating in as many of them as possible.

### NEXT STEPS

Maintain the current level of commitment and consider involvement in COBIS events, not only for students, but also for staff.

5B

### STANDARD

*The school promotes education for international understanding.*

### FEEDBACK

There are 114 nationalities represented in the Academy and so a genuine feeling of internationalism is evident and promoted throughout both schools. WSO is a veritable United Nations and celebrates this with a successful annual International Festival organised by the always-busy parent ambassadors. Other cultural or religious festivals, for example Diwali, are marked.



The Academy is recognised as an IB World School. Promoting international mindedness is, therefore, woven into the fabric of the Secondary school, in particular.

Unsurprisingly, there is a flourishing Model United Nations group affording students opportunities to participate in sessions locally and further afield. Also, both schools are able to call upon the expertise of many international parents in a wide range of areas, benefitting students of all ages.

There is an acute, active and respectful awareness of the host country's culture, traditions and religion.

Everybody stands still and remains silent for the National Anthem which is played every day at 7.45am.

In interview discussions, students know that they live in a privileged society. However, they also recognise the role that they have to play in helping those less fortunate than themselves by fundraising for charities (there was a 'Wear Something Pink' day in support of Breast Cancer during the visit) and by ensuring that they do their best to protect the environment through their engagement in a series of initiatives, such as the Academy-wide plastic collecting and recycling scheme.

## NEXT STEPS

Continue to maintain the current range of opportunities and continue to encourage all students to put forward their own initiatives.

## 5C

### STANDARD

*The school teaches the majority of subjects through the medium of English.*

## FEEDBACK

English is very obviously the language of the classroom, of the corridors and of the playground. At the same time, use of mother tongue languages is permitted: for instance, to enhance a student's understanding of new, or key, words and phrases. Staff are adamant that mother tongue languages must never be used to exclude others. This open-minded, tolerant approach is a fine example of how British international education can work successfully.

It is noteworthy, too, not only that the Academy is committed to offering Arabic to all students, but also that a bilingual, British-trained teacher is employed as the Arabic pedagogy coach in order to ensure that Arabic teachers can deliver their curriculum to the same high standard as the British one.

## NEXT STEPS

Maintain and develop the current high level of best practice.



## OVERALL OBSERVATIONS

Leadership of the Academy is strong and experienced, such that a period of sustained stability is now possible. The Academy is in its ninth year of operation, and its building programme is complete. It is virtually at capacity in terms of student numbers in a challenging market place and the academic provision has been enhanced by the addition of BTEC and A Levels, running alongside the IBDP and the IBCP, so that retention in Years 12 and 13 is now improving and numbers are very healthy indeed. Results at (I)GCSE and Post-16 are a fair reflection of the academic profiles of the students. The number going into Higher Education is buoyant and can be attributed not just to subject teachers, but also to the work of the Academy's HE and Careers advisors.

The Academy's approach to Inclusion is admirable, and during the visit there were opportunities to witness small group and one-to-one work with those who benefit from such assistance. The results are humbling. Equally important to the Academy is its enrichment programme, to which two hours every week on Monday afternoon are given over. There is a wide variety of options, including those not only for elite dance and drama performers and sports players, but also for 'subject champions' – those students whose passion for, and interest in, a subject lead them to be invited to undertake work that goes well beyond the curriculum. That programmes are in place in both the Primary and Secondary schools is a measure of the commitment to enquiry, to creativity and to high standards that the leadership teams have. However, the children who fill the middle ground cannot be left behind, and there is an awareness of this, too.

Members of the teaching staff are also committed to their own development; for example, in the last academic year 48 completed leadership training courses, 38 undertook mental health first aid courses and some 60 did so in wellbeing and mindfulness. Cascade training will now take place over the coming months, not only in the Academy, but also across the GEMS network.

The Academy is well supported by its parents: the 15-strong Parent Council looks at practical matters; and the Parent Ambassadors (not unlike a Parent Teacher Association) organise a range of events and look after families new to the Academy. The parents interviewed came from neither of these groups, but all recognised the value of the work that they do. In the same vein, they commented favourably and positively on the level of communication, the ease of contacting teachers and the swiftness of their following-up, the academic provision and the array of extra-curricular and off-site activities offered. They noted, too, the fact that their children look forward to going into school every day.

This visit was straightforward, because the preparatory phase was marked by a regular dialogue with those who took on the responsibility of populating the DWB. The timing of the visit in the first half of the first term also required policies and procedures uploaded in the previous academic year to be reviewed and updated ahead of the visit. Everything was done willingly and with speed and completeness.

All of this suggests that the Academy has much to contribute to COBIS for both staff and students: it has the facilities to host events for staff and students; and the knowledge and expertise amongst staff to become involved in training and professional development opportunities.

Over the coming months, the Executive Leadership Team might well wish to consider the further benefits of the Patron's Accreditation, because it is well placed to meet the requirements of this enhanced assessment.

|   |  |
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| Recommendation to COBIS Director of Accreditation | This is a highly efficient and well-run Academy which has much to offer to (as well as benefit from) COBIS membership at both student and staff levels. Therefore, I recommend that the school be granted COBIS Member status. |
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COBIS

COUNCIL OF  
BRITISH  
INTERNATIONAL  
SCHOOLS