جيمس مدرستنا الثانوية الإنجليزية، دبي
GEMS Our Own English High School, Dubai

POLICY – TEACHING AND LEARNING

Approved by:	Principal, Vice Principals, Heads of Sections
Review due by:	March, 2026

Introduction

This Teaching and Learning Policy sets out GEMS OOD's clear, coherent, and consistent approach to teaching and learning across all phases. It is designed to ensure consistency, high expectations and sustain excellence across the school.

The policy flows logically from vision and purpose, through pedagogical approach, to classroom practice, professional development and quality assurance, enabling Governors to see clearly how strategic intent translates into day-to-day classroom impact.

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1. Purpose and Vision

At GEMS OOD, we believe that every student is entitled to consistently high-quality teaching that results in strong progress, deep learning and excellent personal development. High-quality teaching is the most significant in-school factor influencing student outcomes.

Learning is defined as a sustained change in long-term memory. Teaching is the expert design and delivery of learning experiences that ensure all students make rapid and sustained progress.

This policy ensures that teaching across the school is:

- Ambitious and inclusive
- Evidence-informed
- Consistent and coherent
- Closely aligned to curriculum intent.

2. Characteristics of Outstanding and Very Good Teaching

This section integrates expectations of the school's teaching practices and is used during Lesson Observations, ensuring full coherence between policy, professional development and evaluation.

Outstanding teaching is characterised by the following observable features:

- Teachers demonstrate expert subject knowledge and apply it confidently to deepen understanding and challenge thinking.
- Lessons are inspiring and motivating; teachers consistently celebrate success and foster a love of learning.
- Learning outcomes are clearly defined, measurable and precisely aligned to tasks and activities.
- Time and resources are expertly managed, maximising learning and eliminating wasted time.
- Interaction ensures students are active, focused and intellectually engaged throughout the lesson.
- Teachers use high-quality targeted questioning, skillfully balancing closed and open questions to probe understanding, extend thinking and promote reflection.
- Teaching meets the individual needs of almost all students, including students of determination, multilingual learners, and high-attaining students.

- Teachers provide high levels of challenge alongside excellent support, ensuring all students make strong progress.
- Students demonstrate independence, resilience and responsibility, working productively without constant teacher intervention.
- Students are encouraged to reflect on their learning, identify next steps and articulate what they find challenging.
- Critical thinking, problem-solving, innovation and independent learning skills are explicitly developed and embedded.

Very Good teaching demonstrates the following:

- Secure subject knowledge applied effectively.
- Clear, measurable learning outcomes that are mostly aligned with tasks and activities.
- Good pacing and effective use of time and resources.
- Questioning that includes a strong proportion of targeted open questions.
- Teaching strategies that meet the needs of most students.
- Students increasingly take responsibility for their own learning.

3. Mandatory Pedagogical Framework: Teach Like A GEM

Teach Like A GEM (TLAG) is the school's mandatory, non-negotiable pedagogical framework. It defines what high-quality teaching looks like in every classroom, in every subject and phase. All teachers are expected to plan, teach, assess and reflect through the Teach Like A GEM lens.

Teach Like A GEM aligns directly with UAE's Unified School Inspection Framework ensuring that teaching is:

- Consistently effective and engaging
- Rooted in strong subject knowledge
- Carefully sequenced and cumulative
- Explicit, structured and inclusive
- Designed to secure long-term learning and strong progress

TLAG is grounded in well-established research, including:

- Rosen Shine's Principles of Instruction
- Cognitive Load Theory
- Retrieval Practice, Spacing and Interleaving
- Explicit instruction, modelling and guided practice

Teachers are required to demonstrate a secure understanding of how students learn and remember. Lessons must therefore:

- Manage cognitive load effectively
- Prioritise attention and thinking
- Include regular opportunities for retrieval and practice
- Build knowledge systematically into long-term memory

The consistent and faithful implementation of Teach Like A GEM is a defining feature of Outstanding teaching at this school.

4. Curriculum Intent, Implementation and Impact Through Teach Like A GEM

Curriculum Intent

CBSE curriculum is ambitious, inclusive and coherently sequenced. Teach Like A GEM provides the pedagogical structure through which curriculum intent is realised in the classroom.

Leaders and teachers have a shared understanding that:

- Curriculum ambition must be matched by pedagogical precision
- Knowledge is foundational to skills and understanding
- Teaching must explicitly support students to remember more over time

Curriculum Implementation

All lessons are taught using Teach Like A GEM technique. Teachers are expected to:

- Plan learning using clear micro maps that reduce cognitive load
- Use explicit instruction and high-quality modelling

- Check for understanding frequently and respond immediately to misconceptions
- Build retrieval practice and spaced review into lessons and sequences of learning
- Maintain consistently high expectations for all learners

Teach Like A GEM techniques are used flexibly but purposefully and are evident in daily classroom practice.

Curriculum Impact

As a result of consistent Teach Like A GEM implementation:

- Students make excellent progress from their starting points
- Knowledge is secure, fluent and retained over time
- Students can explain their thinking clearly and apply learning independently
- Outcomes across subjects and phases are strong and sustained

5. Inclusive Practice and Personalised Learning

Inclusive teaching ensures that almost all students are appropriately challenged and supported.

Outstanding practice includes:

- Differentiation that is precise and responsive, not generic.
- Teaching strategies that fully meet the individual needs of students.
- Personalised challenge that enables students to exceed curriculum expectations.
- Support enables all groups of students to make strong or better than expected progress.
- Gifted learners are identified using a range of assessment data (CAT4, ASSET, NGRT, internal assessments and classroom performance, and teacher observations.
- Both Gifted and SoDs have ICPs and IEPs respectively to provide them with personalised challenges and support.

Inclusion is evident through outcomes, not just planning, and teachers work collaboratively with leaders, specialists and parents to support students with additional needs.

6. Classroom Climate, Behaviour and Relationships

The learning environment is highly positive and purposeful.

Outstanding practice is characterised by:

- A climate where students are enthusiastic, motivated and keen to learn.
- Clear routines that enable students to work independently and collaboratively.
- High levels of student interaction, collaboration and communication.
- Students making meaningful connections between learning, real-life contexts.
- The "Be A GEM" module is consistently implemented, with clear systems in place for recognising and reinforcing positive behaviour, as well as monitoring areas requiring further development

Behaviour consistently supports learning and reflects high levels of self-discipline and mutual respect.

7. Assessment for Learning and Progress

Assessment is a visible and integral part of every lesson and is used continuously to improve learning.

Outstanding practice includes:

- Learning outcomes that are used as a reference point for assessment throughout the lesson.
- Frequent checks for understanding using a variety of assessments for learning strategies.
- Teachers adapt teaching in response to assessment evidence in real time.
- Students understand success criteria and knowing how to improve their work.
- Assessment enabling almost all students to make better than expected progress in relation to curriculum standards.

Assessment is used not only to measure learning but to actively drive progress within the lesson.

8. Professional Development and Instructional Leadership Through Teach Like A GEM

Professional development is explicitly designed to secure mastery of Teach Like A GEM technique.

- Whole-school professional learning focuses on a shared Teach Like A GEM priority
- Practice clinics and Steplab allow staff to rehearse techniques in a low-stakes environment
- Instructional coaching provides personalised support to refine TLAG implementation
- Leaders model Teach Like A GEM techniques and language consistently

Professional development is sharply focused on improving classroom practice and directly contributes to consistently strong teaching across the school. Professional Development is evaluated for impact on classroom practice and student outcomes.

9. Quality Assurance and Fidelity to Teach Like A GEM

Quality assurance processes explicitly evaluate the fidelity and impact of Teach Like A GEM implementation.

- Drop-ins focus on agreed Teach Like A GEM techniques
- Lesson observations evaluate how effectively TLAG techniques support learning
- Feedback uses shared Teach Like A GEM and Steplab language
- Coaching and Support plans focus on improving consistency and precision of TLAG practice

Consistent and effective use of Teach Like A GEM is a core expectation and a key indicator of Very Good and Outstanding teaching.

10. Educational Technology

Technology is used purposefully to enhance learning.

- Students from Grade 3 to 12 bring their own device
- Digital tools support explanation, practice and feedback
- Technology improves access and inclusion
- Students develop digital fluency and independence

Technology use enhances, rather than replaces, high-quality teaching. E-Safety, digital wellbeing and responsible use of technology are explicitly promoted.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

- Teachers: Deliver consistently high-quality, inclusive teaching
- Middle Leaders: Monitor curriculum quality and support professional growth through Practice Clinics and Drop-ins.
- Senior Leaders: Ensure strategic alignment, impact and accountability
- Students: Engage positively and take responsibility for their learning
- Parents: Support learning through positive engagement, communication and reinforcement of school expectations.

12. Phase-Specific Policies

Phase 1: Kindergarten

• A positive, inclusive, and nurturing classroom climate is established through the consistent implementation of the *BE A GEM* module, with clearly defined systems for recognising and reinforcing positive behaviour, alongside structured monitoring processes to identify and address areas for further development.

• Assessment for learning is developmentally appropriate, with age-appropriate, child-friendly rubrics used to support self-assessment and peer assessment, fostering early learner reflection and ownership of learning.

• The *Aiming High* target sheets are used systematically to promote children's awareness of learning goals, support early goal-setting, and encourage motivation and engagement with learning.

• Educational technology is used purposefully to support play-based pedagogy and the development of foundational skills, ensuring a balanced approach that prioritises hands-on, experiential learning and developmentally appropriate screen time.

• Teaching Assistants work collaboratively with teachers to support learning engagements through assistance with classroom routines, small-group and individual support, behaviour management, and the active engagement and wellbeing of all students.

• The Master Teacher provides mentorship, coaching, and professional training for new and

underperforming teachers, modelling exemplary classroom practice and supporting the consistent implementation of high-quality teaching and learning strategies.

Phase 2: Primary School

• Teaching and learning are supported by four Teaching and Learning Supervisors who act as subject experts, mentoring teachers and ensuring high-quality lesson delivery, alongside Heads of Department for Arabic and Hindi who provide subject-specific leadership and oversight.
• Ten Teaching Assistants provide additional classroom support to enhance teaching and learning, ensuring students receive personalised guidance, targeted assistance, and timely intervention.
• Teaching and Learning Supervisors and Heads of Department quality-assure teaching resources, lead TLAG training and content enhancement sessions, and conduct regular learning walks, including team teaching and micro-teaching to provide targeted instructional support.
• In-house workbooks are purposefully designed to ensure that core subject learning is engaging, appropriately challenging, and effective, supporting curriculum coherence and progression.
• Separate learning provisions are established for overseas new admission students to support beginner-level Arabic learning and to enhance English language proficiency, ensuring equitable access to the curriculum.
• Mending Gaps sessions, Remedial sessions, and Peer Pioneering sessions are implemented to address learning gaps and ensure consistent student progress.
• STEM, Life Skills, Financial Literacy, Skill Builder sessions, and related enrichment programmes are integrated into the curriculum to support holistic student development.

Phase 3: Middle School

• A clearly defined tiered leadership structure supports the academic programme and ensures equity of access for all students, strengthening consistency, accountability, and instructional quality.

• Heads of Department support the planning, delivery, and monitoring of Teach like a GEM (TLAG) principles, the CBSE and MOE curricula, ensuring lessons are intentionally designed to meet the needs of diverse learners, including Students of Determination and gifted learners, through inclusive and differentiated classroom practice.
• Special Educators are appointed for each grade and work collaboratively with class teachers to provide targeted learning support for Students of Determination, ensuring timely intervention and appropriate differentiation.
• Weekly and monthly departmental meetings promote the sharing of best practice, ensure curriculum alignment, and maintain consistency and standardisation across subjects to sustain high-quality teaching and learning.
• Academic Supervisors strengthen teaching and learning through ongoing lesson observations, coaching, and targeted professional development, providing teachers with constructive, actionable feedback to support reflective practice and improved student outcomes.

Phase 4: Senior School

• Teaching and learning are guided by the principles of *Teach Like A GEM (TLAG)* and informed by research-based practices, with a commitment to high academic standards, student-centred learning, and preparedness for Grade 12 Board Examinations.
• Teaching is purposeful, structured, and grounded in strong subject expertise, with instruction aligned to TLAG principles and focused on clarity, precision, and deep conceptual understanding.
• Teachers act as facilitators of learning, using explicit instruction, effective modelling of thinking processes, and consistent scaffolding to promote student independence, confidence, and engagement.
• Clear, measurable learning outcomes underpin all lesson planning and delivery, aligning with CBSE curriculum requirements and assessment objectives, guiding instructional strategies, and supporting progression from foundational knowledge to higher-order thinking.
• Learning outcomes are explicitly communicated and revisited throughout the learning cycle to reinforce understanding and support student progress.

•Instructional practices promote rigorous and inclusive learning through effective modelling, differentiated strategies, structured opportunities for practice, reflection, and timely feedback, ensuring responsiveness to diverse learner needs.

• High levels of subject competence are a non-negotiable expectation for all teachers, who demonstrate strong command of curriculum content, remain informed of assessment trends and board requirements, and engage in continuous professional development and reflective practice.

• The academic programme ensures comprehensive examination preparedness through systematic syllabus coverage, strategic revision planning, examination skill development, and regular performance tracking.

13. Review and Accountability

This policy is reviewed annually and is central to school self-evaluation, inspection readiness and continuous improvement.

It should be read alongside the *Behaviour, Assessment, Inclusion, Gifted and Appraisal policies.*

Approved by: Senior Leadership Team

Alignment: Unified School Inspection Framework– Outstanding / Very Good

Review Date: March 2026

Review team:

Principal

Vice Principals

Heads of Section

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Principal