

International School

GEMS Wellington Academy - Silicon Oasis in Dubai



BlueSky transforms performance monitoring and improves consistency in standards and reporting

The systematic approach to performance management enables leaders to track performance and boosts staff engagement

About the school

The GEMS Wellington Academy in Dubai serves the Dubai Silicon Oasis community and offers a holistic education for pupils from 4 to 18, incorporating the National Curriculum for England, International Baccalaureate, A-Levels and United Arab Emirates (UAE) Ministry of Education curriculum. It is part of GEMS Education, a group of 65 schools around the world, with more than 50 across the Middle East.

What were the challenges?

The key challenge was around performance management. In particular, there was a lack of consistency in how performance was monitored across the Academy. Allied to this was the problem of paperwork with documents stored in different places and in different formats, making the task of collating them too time-consuming. Leaders found it difficult to pull together all of the necessary information for their reports and to be sure that the information they had was of a consistent standard.

How is BlueSky supporting GEMS Wellington Academy?

BlueSky offered a more efficient way to manage performance evidence, making it more accessible but also more meaningful in terms of the way it could be used to drive improvement.

“It offers a systematic approach to performance management and enables staff to feel valued,” says Daniella Aschettino, Secondary Vice-Principal of the Academy, responsible for T & L, CPD and PM.

“ We adopted BlueSky because it offers a platform for staff and leaders to collaborate, monitor progress and evaluate performance.”

Daniella Aschettino, Secondary Vice-Principal
at GEMS Wellington Academy - Silicon Oasis in Dubai.

“Having all of the evidence in one place enables the teacher, their professional coach, mentor and line manager to work collaboratively to improve pedagogy.”

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“We now find it much easier to track staff performance and career objectives. The BlueSky Reports function also means we can easily put together reports which show us trends and gaps so that we can put interventions in place. BlueSky has also enabled the school to improve its long-term planning,” Daniella says.

“It helps us to be consistent in our systems and processes across the academy. For example, because all policies, documents and feedback are stored on BlueSky, it enables us to have a uniform approach to target-setting and monitoring performance because we can look across whole cohorts and groups of staff at a glance. It also means objectives for staff and teams can be clearly linked to the school development plan and to the UAE teaching standards. This all then feeds into the termly appraisal between the teacher and their professional coach to guide development.”

BlueSky’s flexibility means the academy has been able to tailor the functions to suit needs and its existing culture and practice, as well as introduce more transparency into the reporting process.

“For example, we have adapted the recording forms by shortening the statements and having a simpler rating bar because that suits our teacher development approach,” says Daniella. “I like the fact that different staff can access different forms, which has helped encourage our ‘open door observation’ culture. We have also updated our learning walk forms and uploaded them to BlueSky so that it is much faster to complete and this is encouraging more staff to use it for their walks.”

The academy is also using the BlueSky Projects module to help monitor the performance of staff causing concern.

“We can use it to monitor any staff who are not meeting expectations in their work,” Daniella says. “We store performance plans and lesson observation notes here, as well as any mentoring conversations we have. It is useful to have evidence in one place and it enables the teacher, their professional coach, mentor and line manager to work collaboratively to improve pedagogy.”

What’s next?

A positive response from their secondary staff in their feedback has led to BlueSky being adopted by the academy’s primary phase. Next, they plan to extend use of BlueSky to expand performance management further.

Daniella says: “Our next steps will include adopting the 360-evaluation facility, which could help us enhance our approach to monitoring and developing staff by providing even deeper insights.”

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Daniella Aschettino, Secondary Vice-Principal
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