

## Annual Report

### **“The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step” – Lao Tzu**

1. One such esteemed institution began its journey 30 years back in 1991 as Varkey International Private School. In 2002, the school was shifted to the current premises and in 2004, it was renamed as Our Own Indian School. This journey of 30 years has not been an easy road. Nevertheless, the school led by visionary leaders and dedicated staff withstood all those challenges. Be it the VIPS or OIS, the school has never stopped shaping minds of thousands of students who have passed out of this school. It's a privilege for me as a Principal that I'm leading this esteemed institution in its 30th year.
2. I begin my report by paying homage to a woman whose brilliance like a 'bright star' became the guiding light for countless many. Acclaimed as one of the finest educational institutions of our generation, her legacy, the GEMS Foundation, is a testament to her enduring passion for teaching.  
  
May you rest in peace Madam Varkey.
3. You will all agree with me that year 2020 has become a year of no comparison. Like every other school, OIS also continued its journey of learning. It was as though we moved fast forward in to future, in the world of online and hybrid education. Sports day, assemblies, celebration of special days, everything moved swiftly to the virtual platform. Centre of all this were our teachers who like true superheroes adapted to the new circumstances. They unlearned what they knew and relearned new skills. Today, they are catering to the needs of both online and onsite students simultaneously.
4. Where pandemic limited the movements to the four walls of homes, our students went beyond the impossible and entered the phase of inquiry-based learning. Project@2020, the Project based learning programme gave students an authentic learning experience that helped them to develop the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills – Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Creativity and Communication. They collaborated and brainstormed to select their driving questions. They conducted surveys to collect data, created prototype and pitched their product as young entrepreneurs; and all this happened virtually.
5. I am delighted to share the TIMSS 2019 results with you today. Our students have performed exceptionally well and have attained the high international benchmark. We have exceeded our 2015 target in both Mathematics and Science in Grade 4 and 8 by nearly 50 points in all areas.
6. It gives me immense pleasure to announce that our school has been rated 'DEVELOPED' in the Distance Learning Evaluation and we have achieved a developed rating in all the 13 themes.
7. Three of our girls – Shruthi Satish, Oviya Shanmugham and Jasmine Baldev Raj were the proud recipients of Diana Awards, 2020 for taking exceptional social leadership roles.
8. We began the academic year 2021 with an innovative project 'Master Class Series', a unique and distinctive approach that is based on our understanding that 21<sup>st</sup> century learners prefer to learn from multiple sources.
9. I am delighted to inform you that our school is one out of 10 schools in UAE who are part of an innovation program led by HP Innovation and Digital Education Academy. This program provides the school with one year of immersive professional learning focused on developing blended and digitally-enhanced teaching practices, formulated by Harvard Graduate School of Education and University of Michigan. The focus area that our school have chosen for this innovation project is - 'How can we redesign assessments in a hybrid learning scenario to build student competencies and accountability?'

10. Two of our boys Sanjai Kumar Mani with 98.7% and Naveen Suresh Nair with 98% in the IIT JEE exams proved that there is no shortcut to success and only hard work, determination and perseverance will help you in attaining great heights.
11. It was again a proud moment for us when Aankan Bera of Grade 9 secured UAE Rank 1 and Aman Praveen Kumar of Grade 8 secured UAE Rank 3 in International Science Olympiad.
12. Please join me in congratulating Shruthi Satish of Grade 12, a proud recipient of the prestigious Sheikh Fathima Award that celebrates her academic performance, leadership skills, commitment to social responsibility and global citizenship
13. I am very happy to inform you that OIS has become a registered ASDAN Centre for short courses. It is an alternative pathway that help learners develop a wide range of abilities and life skills
14. In the year 2020, we bid farewell to one our senior most teacher Ms. Anitha Ajaykumar. Thank you Anitha ma'am for giving 29 years of your life for nurturing the young minds of this school. This school will always remember you with warm thoughts and memories.
15. In the summer of 2020, our senior students came up with the idea of starting summer clubs with varied topics ranging from astronomy, debate, reading, cooking, MUN, personality development, yoga, sewing etc. Interestingly, these clubs not only helped in engaging students during holidays, but also helped them in developing skills in diverse areas.
16. Regular physical fitness sessions held virtually in the evenings and talks by external experts were organized to ensure health and fitness of our staff during the lockdown period as a part of staff well being. Further to boost the morale and to celebrate the spirit of teamwork and togetherness, a 3-day badminton carnival with participation of SLT, teachers, admin, support staff and drivers was conducted in the month of November and March.
17. The year 2020 also saw the revival of school Alumni group 'Bandhan'. The first meeting of 'Bandhan' was quite unique as Head Boys and Head Girls from last 30 years met virtually along with the current Head Boy and Head Girl. It was a heart whelming experience to see how old students connected with each other and their teachers; and reminisce their old memories.
18. As an initiative by Bandhan, a Time Capsule has been initiated. It brought together our thirty senior most staff members, representatives of alumni, members of FOS, esteemed dignitaries, and a few students of Grade Two who wrote about their incredible experiences with OIS. These messages also envision their dream for the school and were dropped in the Time Capsule created in-house. This time capsule will be opened only at the 40th year celebration of the School, on 21st April 2031.

## Conclusion

I conclude my speech by thanking our parents for entrusting their faith in us with regard to the all-round development of their wards at GEMS Our Own Indian School, Dubai, even during the trying times of COVID 19.

This evening, I am truly grateful to the Ministry of Education and the Knowledge and Human Development Authority for their constant support and co-operation in ensuring that we continue to deliver quality at all levels.

I am eternally grateful to our Chairman, Mr. Sunny Varkey for having great faith in us. We are truly honoured to work for such a well-known educational entrepreneur and educational philanthropist.

A sincere thanks to our cluster lead Mr. Michael Guzder, Vice President, GEMS Education for being an integral part of this institution and for his constant guidance.

I also take this opportunity to express our gratitude to Ms. Nargish Khambhatta, Principal and CEO of GEMS Modern Academy, Vice President, GEMS Education for her guidance and support in all our endeavors as the Cluster Head last year.

I would also like to thank the members of our Local Advisory Board and the members of Friends of School for their critical inputs and support.

My report will be incomplete without the mention of my entire staff – teaching, non-teaching, and support staff who sustain my vision and drive the school at every step and every moment

I sincerely thank my senior leadership team for standing by me through all the innovations, and successes.

I conclude my report with a quote –

“Imagine with all your mind

Believe with all your heart

Achieve with all your might”

And we are all set to continue our journey...