



Keeping in Touch

Ref. No. KIT 004 – 19Dec24

On behalf of the Principal and CEO, Srivalsan Murugan

19 December 2024

Dear Parent,

"To appreciate the beauty of a snowflake, it is necessary to stand out in the cold." – Aristotle

As the crisp, cool air ushers in a new season, the world around us undergoes a poetic transformation. The vibrant hues of autumn yield to the quiet elegance of winter, where even the simplest moments are imbued with a sense of wonder. People, too, seem to embrace the season's grace, their movements slower, their smiles warmer against the gentle chill. It is a time for reunions and reflections, as expatriates return home to share in the joy of family, friendship and festive cheer. Truly, winter holds its own magic, one that inspires both celebration and gratitude.

In our corner of the world, this spirit of unity and excellence found its most striking expression in the annual concert, a spectacular adaptation of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. The event, held on December 12, 2024, at the Sheikh Zayed Multipurpose Hall, was a spectacular celebration of teamwork, talent, and creativity. The timeless lessons of Caesar's rise and fall were vividly brought to life, highlighting the dangers of unchecked ambition, the power of persuasion, and the fragile balance between friendship and betrayal. The production, brought to life in just 19 days, was a testament to what can be achieved through determination, collaboration, and vision. Featuring a cast of 104 students and 41 staff members, the stage came alive with drama, music, and dance, leaving the audience spellbound. The immersive experience not only captivated hearts but also proved that, while Rome wasn't built in a day, excellence can indeed be realized through passion and purpose.

The UAE National Day (Eid Al Etihad 53) celebrations at OOB commenced with a warm welcome and captivating poetic recitations by our Middle School and high school students. Distinguished guests, including representatives from Sharjah Indian School, Sharjah Education Authority, Al Shola Private School, and the Parents' Council, graced the occasion. A mesmerizing presentation titled 'The Life of the Desert' showcased the nation's heritage, while traditional dances like Al-Yola and Al-Razfa, along with flag-waving performances and a special segment by kindergarten students, filled the atmosphere with joy and patriotism.

The spirit of excellence was evident in all our endeavours. In addition to the vibrant celebrations, our primary and junior middle choir brought immense pride to OOB by securing the coveted overall trophy at the GLS Music Festival. Their exceptional performances in both solo and group categories showcased their dedication, talent, and unwavering passion for music. Adhib Zayaan (6C) delivered a winning solo performance at the GLS Music Festival. The remarkable achievements of our students stand as a testament to the hard work and guidance of our dedicated music teachers, Ms. Shereen Joji, Mr. Michael Mordi, and Ms. Samantha Attanayake.

This rich cultural experience, coupled with our commitment to fostering future leaders, is further exemplified by our participation in the FLIP Initiative (Future Leaders Impact Program – Sustainability Edition), a forward-thinking collaboration by Project U, under the aegis of SPEA and SEWA. Over four weeks, 15 of our students

will immerse themselves in real-world sustainability challenges through project-based learning and inquiry-driven approaches. This initiative will culminate in February 2025 with a showcase of impactful student-led projects at the Education Summit.

OOB proudly became an HP IDEA School. Eight dedicated teachers graduated as HP IDEA Fellows on December 5, 2024, guided by Ms. Bindu Gopalakrishnan (Head of Section, Middle School). This year-long fellowship led to the creation of the transformative EEE Program (Entrepreneurship, Environmental Engineering, and Emotional Well-being), nurturing innovation, sustainability, and resilience among our students. As our students delve into real-world sustainability challenges and our teachers embrace innovative approaches to education, we are empowering both to become catalysts for positive change, driving innovation, and shaping a sustainable future.

The Ace Scholar Ceremony 2024, held on December 18, celebrated academic excellence and dedication, awarding 45 exceptional students the prestigious Ace Scholar Neckties for students of grades 9 to 12. This year also saw the introduction of the Young Scholars Award, recognizing six talented Grade 8 students with Ace Scholar Badges for their extraordinary potential. A transformative change to the initiative was unveiled with the introduction of an impromptu essay-writing challenge for shortlisted students. Presented with five curated topics, participants showcased their critical thinking and creativity. Only those excelling in this stage earned the coveted Ace Scholar title.

Bharath Shailesh Karnik of 12B has received the esteemed 6 Ace Scholar Award. This recognition reflects his exceptional academic achievements, dedication, and consistent hard work. His commitment to excellence serves as an inspiring example for his peers. The Student Council remains committed to fostering excellence and innovation, ushering in a new era for the Ace Scholar initiative.

Outstanding academic performance was recognized with the Young Scholar badge, awarded to Grade 8 achievers: Ashmit Hari (8F), Arnesh Sinha (8B), Rathan Ramakrishna (8B), Gautam Sagar (8G), and Philip Thomas Chummar (8D).

By fostering a holistic approach to education, we empower our students to reach their full potential. This is evident in the recent achievements of our students, who have once again brought honour to our school by excelling at the prestigious Sheikh Sultan Award Celebrating the Spirit of Youth, launched in 2019 under the patronage of His Highness Dr. Sheikh Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qassimi. The award recognizes outstanding achievements in volunteering, skill development, adventure, and fitness and wellness. In its 4th cycle, with a record 939 applications, eight OOB students were among the 42 Gold awardees celebrated at the Al Badi Palace on December 14, 2024. The honoured students are: Shreyas Baliga (10G), Aditya Rajesh (10G), Prasandhip Jawahar (10F), Amarnath Sreevalsan (9A), Harith Mohamed (10H), Hamad Baig (8F), Rohith Saldanha (10B), Drupad Ranjith (10E) were among the 42 Gold awardees celebrated at the Al Badi Palace on December 14, 2024. A special mention must go to Ms. Shemitha, our dedicated Award Coordinator, whose unwavering commitment and meticulous efforts played a key role in guiding and mentoring these students.

Dedication to personal growth and community service is further epitomized by 64 intrepid students, who recently embarked on an extraordinary adventure as part of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award. This transformative experience blended outdoor exploration with personal growth, as participants honed their navigation and teamwork skills through activities like hiking, nature walks and camping. The journey encouraged students to push their limits, build confidence and develop lifelong abilities.

As our students continue to explore new horizons, grade 10 students attended Stream Selection Orientation on December 14, 2024. This event was designed to empower them to make informed choices about their academic and career paths, offering them the opportunity to explore their passions, gain valuable insights and take the first step towards their dream careers.

Building on this foundation of exploration and growth, our students continue to make us proud with their exceptional talents and accomplishments across academics, arts, leadership, and innovation:

Rubik's Cube and KenKen Championships: Rithvik Sudhakar (2D) earned 2nd place in the Rubik's Cube competition, while Advay Sumith (4B) and Adhinav Rajesh Kumar (4A) earned national ranks 28 and 57, respectively, in the KenKen Championships.

Literary Contributions and Environmental Initiatives: Shaurya Menghani (2E) released his book '*Velvet Explores Space*' and contributed 630 kg of paper to EEG's eco-campaign, earning the honor of planting a tree.

Math Prodigies and Abacus Champion: Aayush Supal (4E) excelled with 2nd place in the 2024 Global Mental Math Olympiad, World Rank 3 in the Mental Math World Cup, and ranked 16th in the Mandatory Challenge. Aaditya Arun (4E) won the 'Champion' title in Level 6 Abacus at the 12th International Brainobrain Competition Championship. Aayush also planted 5 trees at the "For Our Emirates, We Plant" event.

Literary Brilliance: Anirudh Ganesh (6G) won the 'Voices of Future Generations' award for his story, *The Cyber Protectors: Al Nur's Cure*.

Chess Champion: Rohit Sudhakar (5G) showcased strategic excellence by winning 1st place in the chess tournament organized by the Dubai Priyadarshini volunteering team held at NI Model School, Dubai.

Musical Achievements: Pranav Jith (5C) claimed the 'Child Kalakar' title at the Sur Taal Sangam Competition on November 26, 2024, organized by GMA.

Senior Middle Triumphs: Rathan Ramakrishna (8B) won 1st place in the My UAE Drawing Competition organized by Media One News Channel. Gokul Prasath (8B) ranked in the top 10 at the UAE Space Olympiad and excelled in the MSS Quiz alongside Amarnath Sreevalsan (9A).

Interschool Debate Competition: At the 25th interschool debate competition, organized in association with GEMS Our Own Indian School and the Consulate General of India, Dubai, Sarang Varma (9E) was the first runner-up in the 'Best Speaker – For the Motion' category. The debate topic was 'Gross National Product overrules Gross Domestic Happiness for a nation to prosper'.

Inter-School Quiz Competition: Bakir Bilal Zaman (10F) and Ahmed Saud (10F) secured the second runner-up position at the MSS-hosted quiz on December 3, 2024.

Young Innovators Take the Lead: Harshith Neeraj, Ahan Raj, and Nidhin Mothay Sunesh (10H) won top honours at the MASE competition for their groundbreaking Ocean Cleaning Innovation as a solution to marine pollution.

Student Leadership Conference: On December 5, 2024, Samford Sebin, Mohammed Ayaan, Vedas Kishore, and Avinash Mavanji, Grade 11 students, participated in a leadership workshop at GEMS World Academy, enhancing their vision, decision-making, and leadership skills.

The past month has been a whirlwind of activities at OOB, as our students engaged in a diverse range of experiences that fostered learning and sparked curiosity and creativity. From the thrill of hands-on science experiments on World Science Day to the rhythmic beats of International Artists' Day, our kindergarteners celebrated the beauty of learning. Souq Day transported us to vibrant marketplaces, immersing our students in Emirati heritage through cultural displays and authentic cuisine. Numeracy Week transformed math into an exciting adventure, with challenges like solving the Rubik's Cube igniting problem-solving skills. These experiences fostered a love of learning, creativity, and cultural awareness.

During Anti-Bullying Week (November 11-14), the Primary Department echoed the theme 'Choose Respect' with powerful student-created slogans, fostering a positive and inclusive school climate. A special Arabic assembly on November 13 highlighted accessibility and inclusion for Grades 1-4 through the theme of the White Cane. Our young environmentalists from Grades 2 and 4 actively contributed to making our campus greener by planting and caring for the school garden. Additionally, students from Grades 1-4 planted spring onions in the school vegetable patch, learning about nutrition and sustainable practices.

Beyond our school walls, we connected with the global community. Students across the school celebrated World Soil Day with an inspiring session led by renowned educator Stephen Ritz, who shared valuable insights on soil health, sustainability, and healthy living. The 'I Wish My Teacher Knew' survey as part of the well-being initiative in Middle School provided a platform for students to share their thoughts and feelings, strengthening the bond between students and teachers.

November was a month filled with kindness and joy. On Kindness Day (November 13), our students expressed gratitude by gifting a happiness kit to our dedicated ancillary staff. Children's Day (November 20) was a celebration of youth, marked by heartfelt performances and engaging activities orchestrated by our caring teachers, creating unforgettable memories.

As the year draws to its close, it casts a tapestry of cherished memories woven with remarkable achievements and moments of pride. With heartfelt gratitude, we reflect on the unwavering support of our parents and community, whose belief and partnership have been instrumental in our journey of excellence. As we stand on the threshold of a new year, we embrace its promise with hope and anticipation, eager for its endless opportunities.

Find us on Twitter@OOB GEMS or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/GEMSOurOwnBoys/> or on Instagram at (gems_oob) to catch all the happenings at OOB in real time.

Wishing you and your loved ones a joyous holiday season and a Happy New Year, brimming with happiness, peace, and success.

Thank you for your unwavering support of OOB!

Warm Regards,



Sofi Mathews
Middle School Supervisor- Grades 5 & 6