



هيئة جودة التعليم والتدريب
Education & Training Quality Authority
Kingdom of Bahrain - مملكة البحرين

Directorate of Vocational Reviews

Review Report

Berlitz Training Centre
Manama
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date Reviewed: 17-20 October 2016

VO058-C3-R039

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Introduction

The Directorate of Vocational Reviews (DVR), which is a part of the Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA), conducted this review over four days, by a team of five reviewers. For this review, reviewers observed training sessions and other related activities, analysed data about the courses and qualifications learners achieve, examined learners' written and other work, examined documents and the materials provided by the provider and meet with learners, employers, trainers, management and support staff.

In the previous review the overall effectiveness of Berlitz Training Centre was judged as good, as were all Main Questions of the provision except the quality of programmes which was judged as outstanding.

This Report summarises reviewers' findings and their recommendations about what the provider should do to improve.

Grading scale:

Outstanding	1	Good	2	Satisfactory	3	Inadequate	4
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Table of review judgements awarded

Main Question	Judgement
Learners' achievement	Outstanding (1)
Quality of teaching / training and assessment	Good (2)
Quality of programmes	Outstanding (1)
Quality of support and guidance	Outstanding (1)
Leadership, management and governance	Outstanding (1)
Capacity to improve	Outstanding (1)
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding (1)

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in raising learners' achievement and meeting the range of learners' and stakeholders' needs?

Grade: Outstanding (1)

The overall effectiveness of Berlitz Training Centre is outstanding, as are all aspects of its provision except quality of teaching/training and assessment which was judged as good. The Centre offers a comprehensive range of language and communication courses that are well developed and planned with clear structures. Courses are accredited by Berlitz Corporation, closely matching learners' and stakeholders' needs. Almost all trainers are native speakers, qualified, knowledgeable using a variety of training methods to engage most learners. However, in a few cases trainers insufficiently encourage learners to participate throughout the session. It is evident from the observed sessions that most learners acquire oral communication fluency and accuracy skills that gradually improve learners' conversation and critical thinking abilities throughout the course. The vast majority of learners progress very well from their starting point throughout the course and over the various levels. Furthermore, considerable progress is made by learners who continue to enrol with the Centre and reach advanced levels.

A highly effective support mechanism is provided to learners, enabling them to achieve better outcomes through a systematic counselling policy that follows up on learners' achievement and progress during the course. Local Instructor Supervisors (LIS) provide comprehensive and effective guidance that enables learners to improve their achievement and reach their full potential. Berlitz Training Centre's leadership and management has a holistic quality assurance system that focuses on maximising learners' achievement and leads to continuous quality improvement that closely monitors and continuously evaluates performance of the overall provision. Highly effective links are maintained with international partners and local stakeholders that enable the Centre to achieve their plans.

Capacity to improve

How strong is the provider's capacity to improve the quality of learning?

Grade: Outstanding (1)

Berlitz Training Centre has an outstanding capacity to improve, which has been maintained since the last review. Most of the areas of improvement that were highlighted by the review team on the last visit are addressed effectively by the management team, such as introducing robust verification and moderation processes across all aspect of the provision. Learners' progress in the beginner levels has improved, while extensive support is provided to all learners. Learners' achievement and enrollment are respectively improved and maintained for the past three years.

The Centre has a highly effective organisational structure covering physical and human resources. Competent and qualified full time staff are carefully recruited and deployed effectively. The management closely monitors and discusses learners' achievement and improvement actions are driven by this follow-up. Management maintains an effective approach for continuous self-evaluation processes, with yearly internal assessments carried out to ensure clear direction towards further improvements. Extensive policies and procedures are implemented effectively based on Berlitz International standards. The Self Evaluation Form (SEF) is sufficiently detailed and critical areas for improvement are identified accurately. Continuous and regular systematic collection of learners' and trainers' feedback is sought and actions are taken, such as the review and update of the pre-level 1 course curriculum. The Centre has a very useful web portal for all staff, stakeholders and learners that provides details on learners' attendance and their progress. Recently the Centre conducted a market survey and, based on its outcome, introduced new courses such as Sales Improvement and Customer Service courses.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: Outstanding (1)

Learners' achievement is outstanding at Berlitz Training Centre. Most learners consistently acquire a high level of proficiency and effective communication skills in English and Arabic. The skills developed and knowledge gained are effective in enhancing learners' oral communication fluency and accuracy, gradually improving learners' conversation and critical thinking skills throughout the course. The skills acquired show very well in the standards of understanding and knowledge gained. It is evident, including from the observed sessions, that learners produce work and end of course results that demonstrate the progress made throughout their course. Berlitz Training Centre has standardised and rigorous assessment methods that are used across all languages and levels, including the beginner levels. Learners' achievement is measured through continuous formative and summative assessments are closely linked to the course objectives. The Centre has a clear grading system with well-defined rubric for all different skills that is implemented consistently and uniformly across all trainers. Almost all learners at the Centre achieve course objectives successfully and most of them receive in a timely manner the course certificate that they aim for. Achievement rates for the vast majority of courses have clearly and noticeably improved over the last three years. Moreover, a significant number of learners achieve a high proficiency rate at advanced level, although a minority of slow learners do not reach their potential especially in the beginners' levels. Learners at Berlitz Training Centre are highly self-motivated and able to work confidently as individuals or groups. This is evident from energetic class discussions and lively stimulating activities observed. Learners have positive attitudes towards their learning and the majority of them reflect on what they need to do to improve further and are able to correct their own mistakes.

The vast majority of learners progress very well from their starting point, throughout the course and within the level. This is evident from the analysis of learners' individual progress reports that are issued twice during each course. Enormous progress is made by learners who are enrolled at advance levels and have been with the Centre for a long time. Almost all learners and employers interviewed find the courses very beneficial and useful, helping them to improve their communication skills and enhance their self-confidence. The vast majority of learners attend their sessions regularly, with the overall attendance rate ranging between 80%-90% over the last three years. However, a few learners do arrive late for their sessions.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching/training and assessment in promoting learning?

Grade: Good (2)

The effectiveness of training and assessment at Berlitz Training Centre is good overall. Trainers are qualified and very knowledgeable on the courses they deliver. Almost all trainers at the Centre are native speakers of the language they teach. They are trained on Berlitz teaching methodology before they join the Centre and are provided with the Berlitz Instructor Training (BIT) manual. They periodically attend well-structured on-line training that enriches their teaching experience. The majority of the sessions observed were delivered in a progressive and systematic manner, with good time management and being well planned. Sessions always start by sharing the lesson objectives or defining the topic of the unit and discussing homework. Trainers use the embedded lesson plans in the textbooks to produce very detailed and structured lesson plans, and the outcomes of prior learning and continuous assessment are sufficiently utilised to inform these lesson plans. Trainers use rigorous and systematic assessment methods and continuously measure learners' progress, assessing learners' achievement and understanding of course objectives. They use a range of effective training methods to engage and motivate learners such as PPP (Pronounce, Practice, Performance), role-play, games and in-class pair and group activities. During the observed sessions trainers used effective summative and formative assessment methods, and constructive verbal feedback is provided to learners. However, in the less successful sessions teaching methodology did not sufficiently engage learners.

Trainers at Berlitz Training Centre maintain very informative records about learners' performance and progress throughout their course. Two progress reports issued during the course by using clear and uniform rubric. Constructive feedback on areas for improvement is provided. However, a few written feedback related to the progress reports are not sufficiently detailed. Trainers also maintain records on learners' progress during the course in a detailed register titled 'Pedagogical cards'. Trainers succeed in stimulating self-learning, higher order and critical thinking by learners through extended questioning techniques, challenging learners' abilities, and the different needs of individual learners are effectively accommodated throughout the session. Trainers utilise the available learning resources and materials effectively, including DVD players, original textbooks and Berlitz passport magazine in order to facilitate and enhance learning.

How well do programmes meet the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders?

Grade: Outstanding (1)

Programmes offered by Berlitz Training Centre are outstanding, closely matching learners' and stakeholders' needs. A highly relevant range of international language courses are accredited by Berlitz Corporation. While the language courses develop the different skills, the principle goal of Berlitz courses is to enhance the oral communication fluency and accuracy of learners. The Centre utilises highly successful mechanisms such as market surveys, direct client enquiries and trends' analyses, the outcomes of which are used very effectively to inform its provision offerings. As a result of recent market analysis, the Centre has introduced soft skills courses such as Sales Improvement and Customer Service.

Courses are explicitly designed and updated by Berlitz International to efficiently meet learners' goals. The 10-level Berlitz English courses are benchmarked to the Common European Framework. Berlitz- Bahrain introduced English pre-level 1 for English literacy skills for learners who were unable to meet level 1 Berlitz International English prerequisite requirements, and has also designed and updated Arabic levels 1 to 4. The courses offered are clearly planned, well-structured and, if required, customised to meet learners' needs. In English and soft skills courses the course content is modified or customised by using industry-specific terminology or templates for the presentation of learning objectives.

The Centre uses authentic course materials designed by Berlitz Corporation. In addition, a very effective range of highly relevant resources are provided to trainers (grammar books, instruction manual, CDs, illustration books) and learners (Berlitz website, mobile apps, Passport Magazine) to enhance teaching and learning experiences. Trainers enhance the learning experiences for learners by providing engaging activities such as off-site trips to a supermarket or coffee shop, or in-class simulation role-plays to allow learners to practice their language use in authentic situations.

Berlitz-Bahrain effectively implements access and entry level to all the English language courses by using different assessment tools such as the online listening test, written test and interview, of which the written test is mandatory for all learners. The outcomes of at least two assessments are used to assess learners' language ability and place them accurately in the appropriate levels.

How well are learners supported and guided?

Grade: Outstanding (1)

A highly effective support mechanism is in place at Berlitz Training Centre, accessible to all learners to enable them to achieve the best results. During the induction day the comprehensive policy and procedures are shared with learners and an informative orientation pack is provided to enable them to become familiar with the place, settle easily and know their duties and rights. Before the start of the course, learners and stakeholders have access to well-informed advice and guidance about course selection through brochures, leaflets and a very clear guide on the selection of course levels and comparison to the European Framework. The website is very informative and user friendly, though some links are missing. A systematic counselling policy is in place that closely follows and assists failed, weak and unpunctual learners; administrative staff provide a very good follow-up and the right actions are taken by the LIS through the effective use of the Action Request Form. Trainers in coordination with the LIS, arrange for learners who are under counselling to attend make-up classes to enable them to improve their levels. These are followed up constantly; for instance one learner made tremendous advances in mastering the language, making a huge difference in communicating confidently while presenting. Learners are given the chance to practice communication skills through the Berlitzenglish.com website after paying a nominal fee, helping in improving their language skills. There are a few opportunities for progression and career development, with a number of learners having been promoted due to their development of communication skills in English language.

Highly effective communication is maintained with stakeholders to update them on learners' performance. Berlitz-Bahrain prepare a detailed extra progress report on learners' performance that is sent to employers, although Berlitz International require one report only. The Centre is highly flexible in supporting the needs of learners and stakeholders in terms of time, venue and the availability of courses suited to the needs of both. Berlitz Bahrain mediate online distance learning registration with other Berlitz branches for language courses that are not available in the Bahrain Centre, like Turkish and Chinese. The Centre provides a welcoming learning environment that is fit for purpose with sufficient facilities. However, there are some issues with classroom sizes.

Leadership, management and governance

How effective are leadership, management and governance in raising achievement and improving the quality of the provision?

Grade: Outstanding (1)

Outstanding leadership and management at Berlitz Training Centre is focused on continuous development and raising learners' achievement standards. The Centre management has a strategic view and understanding on how to develop and improve its overall provision. Management and staff are guided by a clear and focused vision and mission statements that govern their day-to-day duties. A detailed and comprehensive yearly plan contains clearly defined objectives that are related to learners' achievement and course development. These plans are regularly assessed and revised. Comprehensive procedures are used to monitor learners' achievement closely, and effective actions and arrangements are stated. Extensive policies and procedures are implemented effectively, based on Berlitz International standards. The Centre has a comprehensive quality assurance management system that enables continuous monitoring of the provision. Across all areas of the provision, assessment methods are efficiently, effectively and consistently executed. Rigorous internal and external audit procedures are carried out effectively and the verification process is consistently implemented. The Centre has an effective procedure to assess learners' prior attainment at the start of their courses and by the fourth session learners' levels are re-assessed and learners are placed in a more suitable level if needed.

There is an effective organisational structure, with clear roles and responsibilities that enable the provider to achieve its stated aims and objectives. Qualified staff are carefully selected, recruited, and deployed effectively. The Centre recruits qualified native speaking trainers that match the Berlitz Corporation requirement. They are well inducted into Berlitz International teaching and learning methodology and provided with a variety of training workshops and online modules. Their performance is monitored regularly through a critical lesson observations system using a form and detailed evaluative ratings that are shared with the trainers. Actions are based on these visits, including immediate training and development workshops. The Centre has clear job descriptions that indicate key responsibilities of each staff member, and useful annual appraisal system is in place with staff are always being kept informed.

As part of the Centre development an annual audit visit is conducted by Berlitz Corporation that follows Berlitz Training Centre guidelines on how to improve further and maintain performance. The Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) is sufficiently detailed, with some areas for improvement being identified accurately. Continuous follow-up of action planning is done through frequent discussion and regular meetings between staff and management.

A health and safety policy is in place and learners are made aware of the instructions at the start of their course. Premises are suitable, pleasant and free from hazard, with appropriate measures being in place. Learners and trainers feedback is systematically collected and aggregated, with immediate action being taken where required. A highly effective link is maintained with international partners and awarding bodies. However, employers' feedback is collected on an *ad hoc* basis.

The provider's key strengths

- The consistent development and progress of high level and effective communication skills in English and Arabic languages by learners.
- The rigorous and accurate assessment methods used by trainers, and constructive feedback provided to the learners on how to improve further.
- The well-structured and designed courses that meet the needs of learners and different stakeholders.
- The regular reporting of learners' performance and highly effective support and guidance provided to improve and achieve better outcomes.
- The robust and holistic system that closely monitors and continuously evaluates performance of all provision.
- The highly effective links with both international and local stakeholders.

Recommendations

In order to sustain improvement, Berlitz Training Centre should:

- further improve learners' achievement and progress for beginners' levels.
- ensure that learners are fully engaged throughout sessions by using effective teaching/training methods.

Appendix

Overview of the provision

Berlitz Training Centre is a franchise language Centre established at Bahrain in 2001. It offers language courses in English, Arabic, French, German, Russian, Spanish, Italian and others. At the start the Centre was licensed by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and then, from 2009, the Ministry of Labour and Social Development (MoLSD) has been the licensing body. The Centre provides training mainly in communication soft skills, to help learners improve their communications skills in different language. Most of the courses cover up to eight levels, each level being composed of 45 hours of group basis, and 35 hours on a private basis. These courses are accredited and approved by Berlitz Corporation.

Since the last BQA review conducted in April 2013 the provider has enrolled 4,222 learners, broken down as 1,326 in 2013, 1,038 in 2014, 1,371 in 2015, and 487 in 2016 up to the date of this review. Approximately 71% of learners are enrolled on English courses and 9% on Arabic courses. The learners are adults employed by private and government organisations.

Berlitz Training Centre is managed by a General Director reporting to the Board of Directors. It is managed by the Director and Local Instructional Supervisor (LIS). It also employs two language consultants, an LIS Assistant, 16 full time native speaker trainers, a Customer Relation Desk (CRD) Manager, two receptionist staff, and an office manager. Berlitz Training Centre operates from one location in Adlyia, Manama.