



الهيئة الوطنية
للمؤهلات وضمان جودة التعليم والتدريب
National Authority for Qualifications &
Quality Assurance of Education & Training

Directorate of Vocational Reviews Review Report

**Al-Mawred Institute
East Riffa
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date Reviewed: 8-10 April 2013

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Table of Contents

The Directorate of Vocational Reviews	1
Introduction	2
Description of the provision.....	2
Scope of the review	2
Table of review judgements awarded.....	3
Review judgements	4
Overall effectiveness.....	4
Learners' achievement.....	5
The quality of provision.....	6
Leadership and management.....	9
The provider's key strengths	11
Recommendations.....	12

The Directorate of Vocational Reviews

The Directorate of Vocational Reviews (DVR) is part of the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (QQA) that was officially set up in 2008 as an independent body governed and supervised by the Council of Ministers. Established to raise standards in vocational education and training, the DVR is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the quality of vocational provision, identifying strengths and areas for improvement, establishing success measures, spreading best practice and offering policy advice to key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education.

Reviews are based on the DVR's Review Framework, and carried out on providers' premises by teams of carefully selected and highly trained reviewers. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the planning of the review, and to represent them during review team meetings. Reviewers examine a range of evidence before arriving at a series of judgements and awarding grades for the quality of the provision.

Review grades are awarded on a four-point scale:

Grade description	Interpretation
1: Outstanding	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are at least good in all aspects and outstanding in the majority.
2: Good	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are at least satisfactory in all aspects and good in the majority. There may be some particularly successful approaches or outcomes.
3: Satisfactory	This describes a basic level of adequacy. There are no major areas of weakness which substantially affect what learners, or significant groups of learners, achieve. There may be some features which are good.
4: Inadequate	This describes situations where major weaknesses in some areas affect the outcomes for learners and outweigh any strengths in the provision.

Introduction

Description of the provision

Al-Mawred Institute is an educational institute, founded in October 2008 and licensed by the Ministry of Education. In August 2011, a new management team was appointed to manage the Institute. AL-Mawred Institute mainly offers educational programmes to students of different ages, six years and above. The educational programmes offered are; Mental Mathematics, Child building character and holiday programmes, additionally the institute offers a range of tutorial courses for school and university curriculum and English language programmes. In 2012, a total of 392 students were enrolled across different programmes.

Al-Mawred operates from a single branch in East Riffa. The organisation structure consists of a full time executive manager, and part-time assistant-manager responsible for the teaching staff and a registrar officer. The institute has a pool of 15 part-time teachers in different specialisms; utilised on regular basis.

Scope of the review

This review was conducted over a three days period, by a team of three reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed lessons, analysed data about the courses, examined students' written and other work, studies documents and the materials provided by the institute and met with staff, students, parents and teachers.

In the previous review, the overall effectiveness and leadership and management were judged as inadequate. There was insufficient evidence to judge students' achievement; other aspects of provision were judged as satisfactory.

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

Table of review judgements awarded

Overall Effectiveness	
How effective is the provision in raising learners' achievement and meeting the full range of learners' and stakeholders' needs?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
Learners' Achievement	
How well do learners achieve?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
Quality of Provision	
How effective is teaching and/or training in promoting learning?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
How well do programmes meet the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders?	Grade: 2 Good
How well are learners supported and guided to achieve better outcomes?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
Leadership and Management	
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The overall effectiveness of Al-Mawred's provision is satisfactory. All aspects of the provision are deemed satisfactory, except the effectiveness of programmes, which is judged as good. The Majority of students gain appropriate skills and relevant knowledge in tutorials and English courses, allowing them to make appropriate progress. Most students are self-motivated and enjoy their learning experience, especially in ACMAS (Abacus arithmetic for mental system), in which they are achieving well and are making good progress across different levels. However, in other courses, few of students are not progressing as expected. Al-Mawred's teachers are qualified, knowledgeable, and have the relevant qualification and teaching experience on their subjects and are able to engage and motivate students through the use of adequate questioning techniques and class activities.

Al-Mawred Institute offers sufficient range of tutorials, revision courses and general English language courses. The courses are appropriately designed to accommodate the different needs, abilities and aspirations of students. The ACMAS programme is the only externally accredited programme offered by the institute, which represents 9% of the total enrolment, and it is offered with four progression levels.

Appropriate support and guidance are provided to students by approachable teachers and management team. Health and safety policy and procedure are adequate to secure a safe and healthy environment for staff and students.

Al-Mawred has good capacity to improve. The management has taken a number of improvement initiatives including the implementation of the recommendations of the previous QQA's review. Moreover, the management is expanding the institute's business by planning to launch another branch in the third quarter of 2013 and obtaining approval from the Ministry of Education to conduct courses such as ACMAS, Smart Kids, LIFE (Living in Future Environment), telephone and e-mail English, English for business and office work and Everyday Survival English for adults. The institute has also introduced quality assurance procedure to ensure the quality of the provision, worked on improving the learning resources by introducing interactive boards in the classrooms with the support of Tamkeen, The Institute has sufficient and appropriate human and physical resources to undertake further improvement, maintain good relationship with stakeholders and appropriately address concerns raised by the students and their parents. There is a high increase in the number of enrolment (90% from 2011 to 2012) and repeat business is good over the last two years.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Students' achievement is satisfactory overall. Most of the students who attend Al-Mawred institute enjoy their learning experience, especially in ACMAS. Most of the students and parents interviewed stated that learning at the institute has reflected positively on their children's performance, helped them achieve a better grade and improved their participation at their school or university. From the lessons observed, and the scrutiny of students' work for ACMAS courses, students make good progress and achieve good skills across different levels of the course. The majority of students in tutorial and general English courses make satisfactory progress from their starting points and gain appropriate skills and relevant knowledge. Whereas, a few number of students in tutorial and general English courses do not progress as expected or achieve the course objectives. Furthermore, from the lessons observation, few of students reflect critically on how well they are learning and progressing.

Almost all students enrolled in ACMAS' externally accredited courses complete the different course requirements successfully and obtain the qualifications they aim for. Tutorial courses represent the largest proportion of 88% of total enrolment. The majority of students are self-motivated and participate effectively in class. In the majority of the sessions observed, students are able to work independently and present their class work confidently.

In tutorial courses, students' achievement is adequately measured during the observed lessons through different tests and class activities, which are suitably focused on the learning outcomes. However, no proper progress records are kept and students' prior attainments are not assessed to establish a starting point from which progress can be measured. In ACMAS and general English courses, the students are assessed based on their performance on various tests employed throughout the semester as well as a final test carried out at the end of each semester.

According to lessons observed and the attendance reports, most students attend regularly with average attendance rate of 93% for the last three years. However, from the lessons observed, there were a few cases of student arriving fifteen to twenty-five minutes late to lessons.

The quality of provision

How effective is teaching and/or training in promoting learning?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Al-Mawred's teachers are qualified, knowledgeable, and have the relevant qualification and teaching experiences for their respective subjects. The majority of them are employed also as teachers in the Ministry of Education. They have sufficient command of their subjects, which was reflected in the observed lessons through the accurate and clear explanation of the concepts and the effective responses to students' questions. Lessons generally start on time, with the teacher sharing lesson objectives with the students. Lesson plans prepared by the teachers for ACMAS courses are clear and fit for purpose. However, the lesson plans prepared for the general English course are basic. Tutorial courses do not always have well prepared lesson plans, and are not routinely informed by prior assessment of students. The majority of the observed lessons are appropriately planned with appropriate time and class management. Tutorial subjects' teachers keep track of the objectives to be covered in parallel with the school curriculum. In most lessons, different levels of exercises are utilised to appropriately address the individual needs of students.

In the majority of the observed lessons, teachers succeed in engaging and motivating students adequately through questioning techniques, class activities and exercises. Teachers use effective activities in ACMAS courses to engage and motivate all students. In some of the better lessons observed, teachers enable students to further their understanding by challenging their abilities.

During lessons observed, teachers check students' understanding sufficiently and provide useful verbal feedback. According to the narrow sample of students written work provided by the institute, assessment of written work is appropriate. However, feedback provided on the assessed work is not consistent as some teachers provide written feedback which is rigorous and useful while others provide very limited written feedback. Moreover, records of students' progress are not systematically maintained.

An adequate range of learning resources is used in classrooms such as; whiteboard, flashcards, abacus, cassette recorder, and relevant text books and materials.

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

Grade: 2 Good

Al-Mawred Institute offers good range of tutorial and revision courses that match school and university curricula. They provide useful revision classes to prepare students for examinations. Also the institute provides general English courses for beginners level. The courses are well designed to accommodate the needs, ability and aspiration of students. The tutorial courses cover wide range of learning levels from fourth primary, up to third intermediate, in addition to a few specialized courses for university students. The institute is aware of the government schools' and university's curricula and uses them properly to offer tutorial courses matching students' and parents' needs.

The institute is an approved centre for offering the externally- accredited programme ACMAS. This programme is offered with progression levels, which includes 13 levels for Beginner series and ten levels for Entry series. Each level consists of 24-guided hours, divided into 12 sessions during three months, each of which focuses on different skills. The levels are well structured, with clear course contents, and assessment criteria. The worksheets for students, teachers, and parents follow-up are well prepared. The ACMAS programme materials are prepared by ACMAS international organization based in Lebanon. The courses are reviewed and regularly updated. Feedback from Al-Mawred's teachers is communicated through the ACMAS annual conference.

Al-Mawred gauges the needs of stakeholders and local community through an effective market study, which is utilized to establish an effective relationship with the stakeholders to inform the provision offered programme. Most students and parents interviewed are highly satisfied with the range and selection of courses on offer, which are meeting the students' specific needs and aspiration and most of them enrol in additional courses with the institute.

The institute provides students with additional hands-on activities and site visits to enrich their learning experience, such as conducting educational and science visits and participating in international competition representing Bahrain. Courses are provided with a range of relevant resources to support learning, especially in the ACMAS and general English courses where resources such as abacas, flash cards, stories' books and audio system are readily available in the classroom.

How well are learners supported and guided to achieve better outcomes?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Students receive appropriate support and guidance at Al-Mawred. Teachers, staff and management are approachable and supportive to students and parents and responsive to parents' queries about their children's performance. Administration staffs follow up with parents regarding students' behaviour, attendance and tardiness. Basic information about course arrangements is available to students and parents. At the beginning of each ACMAS course; a useful induction session is carried out for the parents to illustrate the programme's objectives, methodology of teaching and assessing and how the programme will help their children improve their ability in mathematics. The outcome of the placement test in general English and a brief information on recommended course level is shared with parents in advance. However, detailed course outline per level is not shared with parents. Announcements and reminders are sent to parents through short messaging system, and letters. In addition to sharing test papers and results with students and their parents, the parents are updated on their children's performance informally or through reports that do not include detailed information about the learners' progress. That said, students attending tutorial courses are not always made aware of how well they are progressing or what they need to do to improve.

In ACMAS and general English courses students receive sufficient support from the institute to achieve better. Students get recreational trips as incentive if the whole group complete the assignments and other works required by the course within the specified time. Stakeholders have access to a good course information through the available course leaflets and on-line from the institute's suitable bilingual website.

The provider's learning environment is fit for purpose with eight classrooms, which are equipped with the necessary resources. In addition, they have a computer laboratory, which is used as a regular classroom. However, the size of the classrooms utilised for tutorial courses for university students is small for the number of enrolled students. Al-Mawred is highly flexible in rescheduling the course timing to suit the needs of their stakeholders.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Al-Mawred has an adequate strategic plan, developed based on SWOT analysis. It identifies areas addressing the improvement of students' achievement. Al-Mawred's has vision and mission statements that alludes to students' achievements. It is shared with staff and students. The institute has an appropriate quality assurance manual in place. The current organization structure for Al-Mawred is fit for purpose considering the number of enrolled students and the type of courses offered. There are suitable job descriptions for all the positions within the organization structure.

Al-Mawred uses an appropriate placement test for general English languages courses only. The results of these tests are used to place the students on the most appropriate level and course. No placement tests or initial assessment is carried out for other courses or subjects. On the other hand, the nature of ACMAS programme requires no placement test. A useful system is in place by the management to monitors learners' achievement for ACMAS and general English courses. Whereas learners' achievement in tutorial courses is monitored mainly at teacher's level.

Al-Mawred has an appropriate procedure to recruit part-time teachers. Teachers recruited are with different experience and background and are deployed according to their areas of teaching and specializations. Meetings are held between the teachers and managements regularly and effectively, where different issues related to students' achievements and improving provision are discussed. The quality of teaching is verified through an effective lesson observation scheme for ACMAS courses, whereas regular lesson observation form is used for general English and tutorial courses. Lesson observations are carried out regularly and the outcome of these visits are shared with the individual teacher and are followed up by the management. Training is provided regularly and as needed for ACMAS teachers, whereas for other teachers, the management provides only coaching and counselling as needed according to the outcomes of lesson observation.

The management maintains effective and close links with its stakeholders, local community and the international accrediting body. In addition, the institute approached almost all private schools and is offering ACMAS courses for some of them. A suitable procedure is in place to seek students' and parents' views after each course. Although the outcomes of these feedback are analysed, they do not trigger improvement actions. The institute maintains effective links with parents in updating them on issues related to their children progress,

attendance, misbehaviour and any changes related to class timing and teacher. However the responses and commitments of parents are not rigorous.

Basic health and safety measures are in place, and no obvious hazards to students and staff were noticed. However, the institute did not carry out formal risk assessments during 2012. The Provider's self-evaluation is informative generally, identifies a few areas for improvement, but the grades provided in the Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) overestimated the provision.

The provider's key strengths

The key strengths of the provider are:

- The well qualified teachers who have good command of their specialisms
- The highly effective gauging of local market needs with effective link with the stakeholders.

Recommendations

In order to improve, Al-Mawred Institute should:

- ensure that students' prior attainment is assessed for the offered courses and that the outcomes are effectively utilized
- improve assessment procedures specifically for tutorial courses and ensure that students are provided with sufficient feedback on how to improve further
- maintain students' progress records to ensure that all students and their parents are updated regularly and systematically
- analyse students' and parents' feedback and utilise its outcomes to improve the provision.