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National Authority for Qualifications &
Quality Assurance of Education & Training

Directorate of Vocational Reviews

Review Report

Berlitz Centre - Bahrain

Budaiya

Kingdom of Bahrain

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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

Berlitz Centre was established in 2011. It operates from a centre located in Budaiya and is licensed by the Ministry of Education to offer language programmes and tutorial courses to school children and self-sponsored adults. Berlitz Centre in Budaiya and Berlitz Training Centre in Adliya (licensed by the Ministry of Labour) together form Berlitz-Bahrain and work as a franchise of Berlitz Corporation (USA). The vast majority of courses on offer are approved and accredited by Berlitz Corporation. These cover ten levels in English language and several levels in other languages such as Arabic, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Japanese and Russian.

The courses on offer are delivered as private one-on-one, semi-private or small groups comprising up to six learners in a class. Approximately half of the learners are enrolled in the English language courses, slightly more than one third in Arabic language courses and less than 16% in other languages. Since its inception, the centre has enrolled a total of 593 learners; 244 in 2012, 237 in 2013 and 112 in 2014 up to the date of review. The majority of learners are children and teenagers.

The centre is managed by an acting director, who reports to the Berlitz-Bahrain management and is assisted by a team of full-time staff that includes two receptionists and a caretaker. The Centre also shares the services of a local instructional supervisor; a client relations supervisor and a pool of teachers with the sister company Berlitz Training Center.

Scope of the review

This review was conducted over four days, by a team of four reviewers. During the review, reviewers attended lessons and other related activities, analysed data about the courses and qualifications learners achieved, examined learners' written and other work, studied documents and the materials provided by the institute and met with staff, learners, parents and teachers.

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: 2 Good**
Learners' Achievement	
How well do learners achieve?	Grade: 2 Good
Quality of Provision	
How effective is teaching and/or training in promoting learning?	Grade: 2 Good
How well do programmes meet the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders?	Grade: 1 Outstanding
How well are learners supported and guided to achieve better outcomes?	Grade: 1 Outstanding
Leadership and Management	
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	Grade: 2 Good

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 2 Good

The overall effectiveness of Berlitz Centre is good, as are all other aspects of the provision except the quality of programmes and the support and guidance provided to learners, which are both outstanding. The centre offers very well structured, planned and resourced courses that closely match learners' needs and abilities and are enriched further with highly effective and relevant additional activities to enhance the learning experience. Parents and learners receive highly effective support and guidance prior to and during the course and are kept always informed. The courses are planned and delivered by qualified native speaking teachers who use a wide range of teaching methods and activities to engage and motivate learners through well-planned lessons that accommodate individual needs well. Most learners achieve course objectives successfully with the majority developing outstanding communication skills. The management and teachers share a well-focused vision aligned with that of Berlitz Corporation of helping learners to develop effective communication skills. Processes are well established with effective record keeping, however, the strategic and operation plans need to be more focused and informed by enhanced trend analysis to drive continuous improvement.

Berlitz Centre has an outstanding capacity to improve. The centre adopts well-defined procedures and processes guided by clear and comprehensive operation manual and guidance handbooks provided by Berlitz Corporation. The centre has developed mechanisms for continuous monitoring, verification and self-assessment of the provision with useful action plans and follow-ups. Access to up-to-date regular feedback, technical expertise and rich learning resources are readily provided to the management by the manager of the Instruction Franchise Europe, North Africa and the Middle East from the Berlin office. The provider's data management system, although not yet fully integrated, enables the management to maintain effective records and produce useful trends analysis to inform decision-making. The centre is highly responsive to demands and expanded its offerings of communication courses to cover a wide range of languages offered within the Berlitz framework such as the choice of dialects for the spoken Arabic language. Recently, the centre has started providing learners with access to learning modules through smartphones applications in addition to the Berlitz English website. The centre maintains good repeat business but fluctuating enrolment due to circumstances around the area where the centre is located.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade : 2 Good

Learners' achievement is good overall. The majority of learners develop and acquire outstanding communication skills and confidently practice the gained skills. Learners are able to proceed successfully to the next levels, maintain their performance and gain extra language skills that closely match their needs and abilities. From the observed lessons, the vast majority of learners show a high level of confidence and demonstrate a high ability to work independently. Learners are self-motivated, enjoy their activities and show a good level of understanding of the language they are learning and practicing. In the more effective lessons, learners reflected appropriately on how well they are progressing. However, in a few cases learners needed teachers' support, especially in the beginner level.

Most learners achieve course objectives successfully and pass the examination. The Learners' Performance Data (LPD) submitted for the last two years shows high overall retention and success rates of 96% and 95% respectively. The success rate for the English language courses is 92% and 97% for 2012 and 2013 respectively, and similarly for the Arabic language courses, which is 96% and 95% respectively. In addition, from the provided samples of learners' work and the achievement records, the majority of learners progress well throughout the course and gain very useful skills. An analysis of learners' grades reveals that learners' average score is 85% with the majority of learners attaining grades of or above 80%.

Berlitz Centre has a clear attendance policy and good record keeping of attendance and punctuality for all courses. According to all the lessons observed learners attend regularly and punctually. The attendance and punctuality records indicate that the attendance rate is 83% and 86% for the years 2012 and 2013 respectively.

The quality of provision

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

Grade: 2 Good

Teachers at Berlitz Centre are knowledgeable and have command of the language they teach. Lessons are delivered using the 'Berlitz Method®' of teaching. Accordingly, teachers must undergo an on-line training programme (blended teaching) to be trained on providing

a learning experience that facilitate the achievement of the learner's language goals. They use effective teaching methods and activities to engage and motivate learners. This includes brainstorming, discussions, learning by exploring and role-playing. Teachers usually accommodate the different learning needs of learners by using controlled and less controlled activities. The less controlled activities are directed mainly towards mid-high achievers in which the higher order thinking skills of learners are tested. In the majority of lessons observed, teachers use challenging questions to further learners' understanding.

Lessons are well-planned and are based on the results of the effective language placement tests used. Furthermore, lessons are planned to cater for the different needs of learners and to ensure that individual goals are achieved. All lessons start on time with lesson objectives being shared and discussed with the learners and are timely managed. Assessment tools used in all courses are rigorous, directly linked to the course objectives and are used effectively to check individual learner's progress. During the lessons, learners are assessed continuously and effective verbal and written feedbacks are provided. In the majority of the courses, clear criteria are used for the marking and grading of students' work. However, the assessment evaluation criteria for the English Kids programme, in particular for the Starter and Beat levels, are not clearly defined; teachers use their own professional judgment.

Teachers at Berlitz Centre maintain and regularly update records of learners' progress for all courses through the 'Pedagogical cards', the 'Passport book' for kids and the two progress reports issued during the course. These records include constructive feedback along with learner's strengths and areas for development. Additionally, learners' proficiency level is monitored and evaluated through the level check tests demonstrated at the end of the course. The learning resources and lesson materials are effectively utilized to promote learning. This includes the use of data shows, games, flash cards, illustration books and textbooks.

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

Grade: 1 Outstanding

Berlitz Centre offers a broad range of various language courses with progression levels for children and adults in addition to tutorial courses for private schools' language subjects. The institute offers a range of language courses such as English, Arabic, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Japanese and Russian languages. All course levels are aligned with the Common European Framework proficiency scale. Courses offered at Berlitz Centre are based on effective analysis of the market needs. The institute shows an ample understanding of the surrounding environment and requirements of the community it serves. A fit for purpose

analysis was conducted to identify potential competitors and stakeholders within the geographical area of the institute. Moreover, stakeholders' needs and requirements are sought at the end of each course and during the demonstration class sessions and the open-house days. Both learners and parents are highly satisfied with the range of programmes offered by Berlitz Centre.

The offered courses are meticulously planned, resourced and structured to match learners' needs and abilities closely. Furthermore, courses and their delivery are customised according to learners' needs when required. Course materials used are attractive and include interesting subjects that cover the essential language skills. The set of learning objectives are designed carefully to cater for different learners' needs and to improve their subject knowledge. Courses are resourced fully to guarantee effective programme delivery. This includes textbooks, illustration books, DVDs, CDs and flashcards. Courses are supported with highly effective and relevant additional activities that enrich the learning experience and enhance learners' communication skills. Extra worksheets, off-site activities and well-organised simulation sessions are provided to learners. In the simulation sessions, learners are given the opportunity to practice the targeted language in real life situations such as dealing with banks and asking for directions. Courses are reviewed continuously and regularly by Berlitz Corporation. Recently, the Arabic and French language programmes for kids have been revised; while the English language programme for teens has been changed into a more advanced and enriched programme. Berlitz-Bahrain has been very active in updating the Arabic programme in close collaboration with other Berlitz regional centres.

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

Grade: 1 Outstanding

Outstanding support and guidance is provided to learners to achieve better outcomes. Parents and learners receive highly effective support prior to and during the course where an effective orientation session is conducted on the first day of any course by Berlitz teachers to share course expected outcomes, assessment methods, attendance and punctuality policy, and health and safety instructions. The administrative staff members and teachers are approachable, cooperative and supportive. Parents are invited in advance to attend demonstration sessions and be exposed to the institute's way of learning. In addition, parents and learners have an access to an informative well-designed website, which is updated regularly. Through the website, learners are able to view the courses on offer and other services provided such as the online proficiency testing service where learners can test their pre-course attainment and abilities and the result is sent to the centre. Detailed and informative course outlines are shared with learners and parents prior to the start of a course. The centre offers flexible training arrangements that meet and accommodate learners' different needs such as private, semi-private and group sessions with flexibility in

timings. Courses are conducted in an inspiring, pleasant and well-resourced learning environment.
During the course, learners' achievement is monitored closely and the necessary assistance is provided to enable learners achieve the course outcomes. Teachers keep a daily record of learners' progress by using a register called pedagogical card '*pedcard*'. Teachers use the card to track the learner's progress, review what has been achieved, and identify weaknesses and the type of support needed. Moreover, the *pedcard* enables the learner to continue his/her studies even when travelling abroad with any Berlitz international centre. Effective counselling sessions are provided by teachers to help learners achieve better. Learners are made aware of their progress and what they need to do to improve through a useful progress report that contains individual constructive feedback. The progress report is issued twice, and is shared with parents in the middle of the course and at the end before the 'level check'. Berlitz Centre also uses another card titled '*passport card*' to share with parents their children's performance and achievement and what follow-up is expected from parents after each lesson. The centre shares with parents useful guidelines on what they can do to help their children progress well. In addition, the centre conducts an open-house where parents are invited to discuss with the teachers their children's achievement. Meetings with parents and learners confirmed that they are fully aware of the progress made.

Leadership and management

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

Grade: 2 Good

The management and teachers of Berlitz Centre have a well-focused vision aligned with that of Berlitz Corporation of helping learners to develop effective communication skills. Common practices are established well, with roles and responsibilities clearly identified. The centre has an appropriate management structure reinforced by Berlitz Europe office serving Europe, North Africa and the Middle East and the regional office in the UAE as well as the Berlitz-Bahrain management. Berlitz Centre has relevant strategic and operation plans that are incorporated with the plans of its sister company Berlitz Training Center in Adliya. However, these plans do not have KPIs specific to the Budaiya centre beyond the explicit enrolment targets. A well-developed recruitment procedure is followed for recruiting teachers who pass the Berlitz selection criteria and the compulsory initial training. Once recruited, teachers are well inducted on Berlitz methodology and are kept updated through the detailed operation manual and employee handbook, regular memorandums and quarterly meetings. Teachers' performance is monitored effectively through critical class observations that provide very useful feedback and recommendations. A range of very

relevant development and training opportunities are made available to teachers. This includes acquiring certifications through the on-line modules offered by Berlitz Corporation, attending in-house regular workshops as well as having access to the rich on-line Berlitz library for self-development.

Learners' achievement records, particularly for the adult learners, are well maintained in useful databases. These are monitored regularly and verified sufficiently by the management. Useful monthly and annual performance trend analysis are produced and monitored. However, the monitoring of learners' achievement in the children courses is not detailed enough. A range of effective placement tests are conducted, including the use of Berlitz on-line test as well as written and verbal assessment, to place learners on an appropriate level. This is verified through teachers reporting on the match between learners' ability and the level they are placed on after the fourth session and the placement is readjusted if needed. Feedback from learners and parents is collected systematically, aggregated and analysed. Items receiving lower ratings are highlighted and investigated through follow-up class visits and counselling when needed. The local instructional supervisor also meets learners after each lesson observation and gets direct feedback on their learning experience at the centre.

Effective links are maintained with Berlitz regional and the international offices as well as other Berlitz centres through visits, regular on-line conferencing on the Berlitz Corporation intranet and periodic events. In addition, links are maintained with some local institutions such as two private schools, the University of Bahrain and a few professional societies. The centre has established very useful measures for self-assessment. These include a very useful monthly training and quality report that is shared with the Berlitz Europe office in Berlin, teachers' annual feedback, end of year performance indicators and the annual Berlitz Franchise Quality Audit. The Self-evaluation Form (SEF) submitted for this review is informative, with a range of evidence; it identifies a number of relevant areas for development. However, the grades are slightly overestimated. The premises are free of obvious hazards. Health and safety measures and procedures are well in place and suitable guidance is provided to parents and learners. However, only informal risk assessment is conducted.

The provider's key strengths

- Most learners achieve course objectives successfully with the majority developing outstanding communication skills
- The wide range of teaching methods and activities that are used to engage and motivate learners through well-planned lessons that accommodate individual needs effectively
- The wide range of well-resourced courses that are meticulously planned, structured and highly meet learners' and stakeholders' needs
- The highly effective support received by parents and learners prior to and during the course
- The very effective self-assessment mechanism that is established within the centre and comprises various periodic quality reporting and audits
- The systematic collection of learners and parents feedback which is aggregated and analysed with identified issues highlighted and followed up
- The effective monitoring of teachers' performance through critical class observations and the relevant range of development and training activities provided to them.

Recommendations

In order to improve, Berlitz Centre should:

- enhance the assessment evaluation criteria for the kids programme particularly for the Starter and Beat

- introduce more streamlined and focused strategic and operation plans with explicit KPIs for the centre

- enhance the aggregation and the trend analysis of the achievement data of the kids programme and use its outcome to further improve the provision.