



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

Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews Review Report

Ahlia School
Al Qurraya – Northern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date of Review: 5-7 March 2018
SP060-C2-R052

Introduction

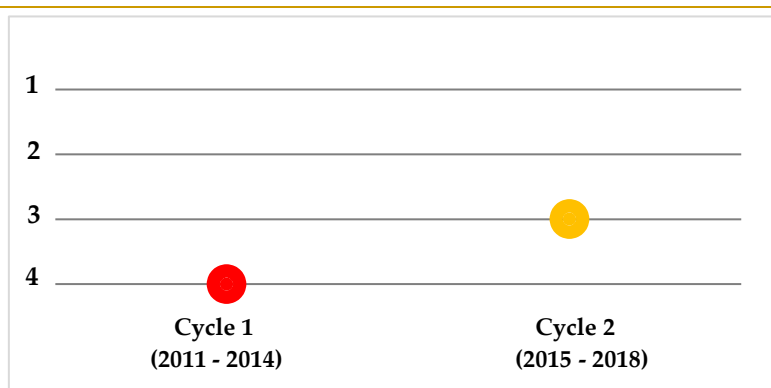
The Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews (DPS), which is a part of the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA), conducted this review over three days by a team of five reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed lessons and other activities, scrutinised students' written work and analysed the school's performance data and other documents. They met with staff members, students and parents. This Report summarises their findings and recommendations.

Summary of review judgements

Outstanding	1	Good	2	Satisfactory	3	Inadequate	4
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Aspect		Grade			
		Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Quality of outcomes	Students' academic achievement	3	3	3	3
	Students' personal development	2	2	3	2
Quality of processes	Teaching and learning	3	3	3	3
	Students' support and guidance	3	3	3	3
Quality assurance of outcomes and processes	Leadership, management and governance	3	3	3	3
Capacity to improve		3			
The school's overall effectiveness		3			

The chart demonstrates the school's overall effectiveness throughout the review cycles.



School Report

Percentile words used in relation to different judgements

Grade	Relative words used	Interpretation
Outstanding	All / Almost all	Indicates completeness and comprehensiveness/about to reach completeness and comprehensiveness.
	The vast majority	Indicates an amount that exceeds most.
Good	Most	Indicates an amount that exceeds majority.
Satisfactory	Majority / Adequate / Suitable / Variable	Indicates more than average.
Inadequate	Minority / Few	Indicates less than average.
	Limited	Indicates less than minority.
	Very limited	Indicates scarcity/rarity.
	None	Indicates unavailability/nothing.

School's overall effectiveness 'Satisfactory'

Judgement justifications

- Students achieve high pass and proficiency rates in internal examinations. However, they only achieve satisfactory standards and make adequate progress in lessons and their written work. Their standards in various external examinations are generally satisfactory.
- Despite the use of various teaching and learning activities and resources in the majority of lessons, their impact is mostly satisfactory. This is due to the inconsistent use of learning time and erratic support provided to students owing to the limited constructive feedback and accurate correction provided in lessons and written work.
- The school provides adequate academic support to the different categories of students through various programmes. However, support provided to low achievers and non-Arabic speakers in Arabic lessons is less effective.
- The school carries out regular self-evaluation of its performance, but with varying use of the results to identify, prioritise and plan for school improvement. The different departmental plans are not consistently aligned to the strategic plan. Although periodic

monitoring takes place, it is not sufficiently systematic, due to the generalised key performance indicators and time frames.

- Most students embrace the values of citizenship and Bahraini culture well. They participate actively and take leading roles in the school's various activities and

in most lessons. However, this is less evident in the rest of the lessons, particularly in the High School.

- The school provides a safe and healthy environment for its students and staff which shows in students' and parents' satisfaction with the school.

Main positive features

- A friendly and collaborative ethos prevails across the school community.
- The school provides a safe and secure environment to its students and staff.
- Students embrace citizenship and cultural values.

Recommendations

- Improve leadership, management and governance by:
 - utilising the results of the self-evaluation processes to inform and align the different school plans, focussing on monitoring mechanisms through clear performance indicators
 - monitoring the impact of the professional development programmes on classroom practices consistently across the school.
- Raise students' academic achievement by improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies, focussing on:
 - effective use of learning time
 - students' active participation and opportunities for taking leading roles
 - providing constructive and accurate feedback when assessing students, particularly in lessons and written work.
- Further improve the support programmes provided to students of different needs and abilities, particularly to the low achievers and non-Arabic speakers.

Capacity to improve 'Satisfactory'

Judgement justifications

- The school's performance has improved from 'inadequate' in the previous review to 'satisfactory' in the current review.
- Self-evaluation processes are regular and involve stakeholders. However, there are

inconsistencies in using the results to accurately inform planning.

- Students attain high pass and proficiency rates in internal examinations in most subjects and grades. However, their attainment in external examinations is mostly at the expected level.
- The school's judgements on its performance in the Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) differs in all aspects and criteria from the judgements of the review team.
- Relations in the school are friendly and an ethos of collaboration and loyalty is present, resulting in the low turnover of teachers.

- Various learning resources and facilities are available at the school which contribute to students' learning experiences, such as the newly refurbished science laboratory and the library. However, utilisation of these learning resources varies across the school.
- The school provides general professional development programmes and monitors teachers' performance through regular class visits. However, the impact is inconsistent across the school stages and departments.

Quality of outcomes

□ Students' academic achievement 'Satisfactory'

Judgement justifications

- Students' proficiency rates in the 2016-2017 internal examinations are high, except in Grade 4 English, Grade 5 mathematics and Grade 8 science, being 58%, 55% and 42% respectively. However, these high scores do not show in students' actual standards in lessons and their written work.
 - Students across the school have attained consistently high pass percentages in the internal examinations for the past three years. In the year 2016-2017, students achieved 100% pass rate across all grades and subjects.
 - In the 2015 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies (TIMSS), students' scores were low in numeracy, mathematics and science at Grade 4. Overall, their performance in numeracy is better than in mathematics and science.
 - In the 2016 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), the school's average was at the 'intermediate' level when compared to the international average.
 - In the BQA National examinations, students of Grade 6 performed well above the national average in English, and at the national average in Arabic despite the national average being low.
 - Students' standards are satisfactory across all grades and subjects. The majority of students have age appropriate fluency in languages, basic arithmetic skills and knowledge of scientific concepts.
- However, in mathematics and science, students' standards decline in the higher grades.
- The majority of students make appropriate progress in core subjects in lessons. However, in the less effective lessons, students' progress varies according to their different abilities, particularly the low achievers due to the insufficient support provided to them.
 - Internal examination papers mostly reflect age and curriculum expectations. Students' standards and progress in their written work in core subjects are appropriate, except for the underdeveloped English standards in High School which constitutes about 4% of the school population.
 - In Arabic, students' basic language skills are satisfactory. The majority of students speak with age appropriate fluency and read with comprehension. However, their writing skills are underdeveloped across the school.
 - In English, students understand new vocabulary and can read text with age-appropriate fluency and comprehension. Although their listening, speaking and reading skills are secure, their extended writing skills are underdeveloped across the school.
 - In mathematics, the majority of students have basic arithmetic skills. For example, Primary School students draw pictographs and identify solid figures, and Middle School students add integers

adequately. On the other hand, students' ability to apply reasoning and problem solving are not sufficiently developed.

- In Science, students have basic knowledge of facts such as the rotation of the earth

and types of rocks. However, their scientific inquiry and experimental skills are less developed due to insufficient opportunities.

Areas for improvement

- Students' progress according to their different abilities in core subjects, particularly the low achievers.
- Students' extended writing skills in both Arabic and English.
- Students' problem solving, reasoning, scientific inquiry and experimentation skills.

□ Students' personal development 'Good'

Judgement justifications

- Most students are self-confident and participate eagerly in more than half of the observed lessons, particularly in Primary and Middle Schools, but to a lesser extent in High School. They express their views freely, engage in class activities and discussions and take leadership roles in the better lessons, as student teachers, through role-play and by making presentations.
- Most students participate enthusiastically in various school events, such as 'Fun Day' and 'Sports Day'. Students actively participate in extracurricular activities and school clubs such as 'Public Speaking' and 'Do it Yourself' (DIY) clubs.
- Some students take the responsibility of guiding and educating their peers on keeping to the school's rules and regulations in the 'Counselling Friends Committee'.
- Students behave well, shown by their sense of responsibility, awareness in

adhering to school rules and showing respect to their teachers and peers. This reflects well on students' sense of emotional security at the school.

- Students' understanding of Bahrain's heritage and culture is well-developed. This is evident in their celebration of National Day, 'Bahrain First' festival, decoration of traditional corners, and trips conducted to sites such as the Military Museum. Students also show that they embrace the values of Islam through their respect for diversity and different views and opinions as well as participating actively in Quran competitions.
- Most students attend school regularly and understand the school's policy and procedures. They are encouraged by the 'Ahlan Wasahlan' programme and 'Attendance Tree', which aim to encourage regular attendance and punctuality by awarding prizes. However, absence rates are inconsistent

across some grades on days prior to public holidays.

- Students show adequate ability for independent learning in their projects, assignments and in the better lessons, through their use of the internet for

research, using dictionaries, analysing texts and utilising the reading corners.

- Students work and communicate together adequately in the better lessons and while interacting in the various committees and clubs such as the 'Students' Council'.

Areas for improvement

- Further participation with confidence and taking leadership roles, particularly in High School.
- Development of students' independent learning and communication skills.

Quality of processes

□ Teaching and learning 'Satisfactory'

Judgement justifications

- Although teachers implement various teaching and learning strategies in the better lessons, such as brainstorming, hands on activities, role-play, 'Think-Pair-Share' and the six thinking hats, the impact of the strategies in most lessons is inconsistent. Resources are used effectively in the better lessons, including the whiteboard, video clips, and charts.
 - Lessons are managed appropriately. This is evident in the presentation of planned activities. However, managing learning time varies in the majority of lessons due to the long lesson introductions and fast transitions of activities, particularly in High School.
 - Most students are encouraged and motivated through a variety of age-appropriate methods that attract and engage students in lessons. These include praise, stars and opportunities to give short presentations and discuss their views and opinions in lessons, particularly in the Primary and Middle Schools.
 - Various assessment methods are used effectively in the majority of lessons.
- These include oral whole class questions and differentiated individual written activities. However, the results of these activities are not consistently used to provide feedback and support to the different groups of students, especially the low achievers. This adversely affects their progress, particularly in High School.
- The majority of students' written work is not corrected regularly and at times lacks accuracy. Feedback to support students' improvement is limited in the written work.
 - Development of higher order thinking skills is adequate in the majority of lessons. For example, students are given the opportunity to analyse texts in language lessons, practice mental maths, and brainstorm and think critically during some science lessons.
 - Support is mostly limited to providing oral guidance to the whole class. Targeted support to low achievers and challenging the high achievers are inconsistent in most lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Constructive feedback to meet students' different needs, and accuracy of activities' correction in lessons and in their written work.
- Effective use of learning time, especially during transition between activities.
- Effective use of differentiated activities to challenge students and support the low achievers.

□ Students' support and guidance 'Satisfactory'

Judgement justifications

- The school meets students' academic needs appropriately. The majority of the outstanding students are engaged in the 'Ask Me' programme to support less able students. Gifted and talented students are involved in the enrichment projects such as 'Maths Challenge' and 'Techno'. The school also won the third prize in the 'Poetry Princess' competition.
 - Students with learning difficulties are adequately supported in the individual support programmes. However, the support provided to low achievers and non-Arabic speakers in their programmes is insufficient due to the inaccuracy of the individual educational plans, irregular support, and the fact that support sessions have only recently been implemented.
 - Students' personal needs are addressed well as indicated in the school presenting case studies on students facing problems. Adequate financial and emotional support is provided when needed. Behaviour enhancement programmes are conducted such as 'Ahlia Star of the Week', 'Champions Challenge' and 'Values Bank'.
 - Students' experiences are met well through the good range of extracurricular activities that meet their different interests and needs, in addition to the morning assembly and breaks activities. Various clubs that target different interests are provided, such as the photography, robotics and arts and crafts clubs.
- Students take part in internal activities such as the science fair and 'Play, Enjoy and Learn' programme and external competitions such as Model United Nations 'MUN'.
- The school conducts regular evacuation drills. Students with illness are cared for. Health awareness programmes are provided such as 'Watch It' for a healthy diet, 'Lose and Win' for fitness and the 'Young Paramedic'. The school is part of the Eco-School. Students' safe arrival and dismissal is well monitored.
 - New students are inducted appropriately through receiving them with gifts and cartoon figures as well as introducing them to the school facilities. A meeting with parents is held to familiarize them with the rules and policies. Students are prepared for the next stage of their education through visits to higher grades and through awareness lectures such as the Pre-International Baccalaureate 'Pre-IB' lecture. However, career guidance is not systematic enough to ensure seamless transition to further education and future choices.
 - The school provides suitable opportunities to develop students' life skills, such as problem solving through the series of 'Use Your Mind Effectively' workshops, participating in the 'Arab World Reading Challenge' and gardening activities. However, life skills opportunities are less evident in lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Meeting students' academic needs according to their different capabilities, particularly low achievers and non-Arabic speakers.
- Further development of life skills and experiences for students of different stages and categories.
- Preparing students for their next stage of education to ensure a seamless transition.

Quality assurance of outcomes and processes

□ Leadership, management and governance 'Satisfactory'

Judgement justifications

- The school's self-evaluation processes are regular and comprehensive. These include reviewing activities, results and the curriculum. However, the results are not consistently used to identify and prioritise improvement goals and inform the school's plans accurately. The school's evaluation of its situation in the Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) differs in all aspects from the judgements reached by the review team.
- Stakeholders are engaged in setting the three-year strategic plan, which focuses on raising students' achievements and improving school processes. The operational plan is linked adequately to the strategic goals. However, departmental plans are not aligned to the strategic and operational plans. Monitoring mechanisms are carried out periodically. However, key performance indicators and time frames in the school plans are mainly generic.
- The school has clear policies for the different aspects of its processes including health and safety, attendance, incentives and lesson observations. However, the review and update of these policies is erratic.
- Lesson observations are conducted regularly by the subject coordinators and occasionally by the senior leadership. However, the feedback provided to teachers varies in accuracy and follow up on areas for development.
- Professional development programmes are either provided for the whole teaching faculty or at department level, as needed. Workshops are presented on 'Differentiation', 'Strategies in Classroom Learning' and 'Work Scrutiny'. However, the impact of these programmes is inconsistent across the school stages and departments, particularly in High School.
- The staff enjoy the family-like ethos that prevails across the school due to the high sense of collaboration, support to staff and the open-door policy adopted by the senior leadership. Awards and incentives are given to teachers based on performance, which has resulted in the stability of most of the teaching staff.
- Responsibilities are delegated to teachers and coordinators in order to enhance their enthusiasm and loyalty, such as delegating the school processes coordination to the special needs specialist and the events coordination to a teacher.
- Learning resources are appropriately used in the majority of lessons. The school facilities and other resources such as the computer and science labs and the libraries are also suitably utilised, despite the lack of sufficient resources in the library and computers in the IT laboratory to meet students' needs.

- Well-established links with parents are used to enrich students' experiences through lectures and talks about morals and career guidance. The school has good links with the local community, such as the American Mission Hospital to provide health and awareness sessions, and participates with other schools in various competitions.
- The Board of Trustees provides appropriate strategic direction and financial support to the school. The senior leadership is held accountable for the school's performance through reviewing students' results. However, there are no specific indicators upon which performance is being monitored.

Areas for improvement

- Linking self-evaluation results to the different school plans to ensure all plans' alignment to priorities, and improving the monitoring mechanisms through clear performance indicators.
- Ensuring the consistent impact of the professional development programmes on classroom practices across the school.
- Making more effective use of the learning resources and facilities to enrich students' learning.

Appendix: Characteristics of the school

Name of the school (Arabic)	المدرسة الأهلية													
Name of the school (English)	Ahlia School													
Year of establishment	2010													
Address	Building 166, Road 45, Block 545													
Town / Village / Governorate	Al Qurraya / Northern													
School's Contacts	77476666				Fax		77476667							
School's e-mail	ahliaschool@ahlia.edu.bh													
School's website	www.ahliaschool.edu.bh													
Age range of students	6-14 years													
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)	Primary				Middle				High					
	1-5				6-8				9					
Number of students	Boys		224		Girls		197		Total		421			
Students' social background	Most students come from good income families													
Classes per grade	Grade		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Classes		4	4	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	-	-	-
Number of administrative staff	18													
Number of teaching staff	45													
Curriculum	American Common Core Standards													
Main language(s) of instruction	English & Arabic													
Director's tenure in the school	3 years													
External assessment and examinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trends in International Mathematics & Science Studies (TIMSS). • Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). • BQA national examinations for Grade 6 in Arabic and English. 													
Accreditation (if applicable)	-													
Major recent changes in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The appointment of a School Coordinator in 2017-2018. 													