



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

Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews Review Report

**Al Fajer Private School
Barbar – Northern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date of Review: 27-29 November 2018
SP066-C2-R061

Introduction

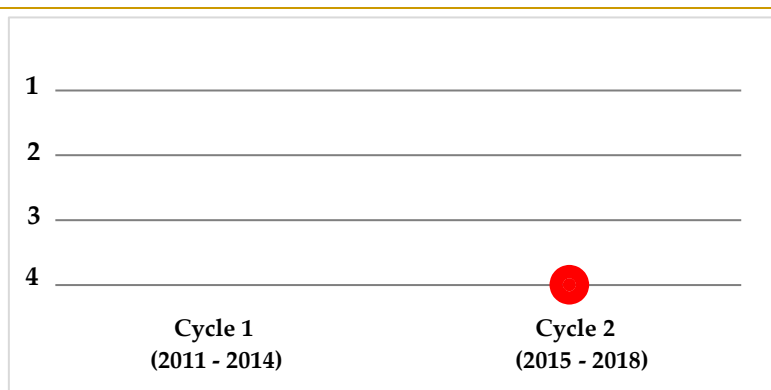
The Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews (DPS), which is a part of the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA), conducted this review over three days by a team of six reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed lessons and other activities, scrutinised students' written work 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	4	-	-	4
	Students' personal development	4	-	-	4
Quality of processes	Teaching and learning	4	-	-	4
	Students' support and guidance	4	-	-	4
Quality assurance of outcomes and processes	Leadership, management and governance	4	-	-	4
Capacity to improve		4			
The school's overall effectiveness		4			

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



1	Outstanding	2	Good	3	Satisfactory	4	Inadequate
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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 'Inadequate'

Judgement justifications

- The school's self-evaluation is not comprehensive and does not address improvement priorities. The strategic plan is too generic and is not linked to the self-evaluation results. The impact of professional development programmes on students' attainment in lessons is limited.
- Students' pass rates across all subjects are high in the 2017-2018 internal examinations. However, these rates are not reflected in their actual standards in lessons and written work in the majority of core subjects. Students make limited progress in developing understanding and skills.
- Teaching and learning strategies are ineffective in engaging students and developing their self-confidence. Managing students' learning time to ensure productivity in most lessons is ineffective. Assessment is inadequate in informing teaching and meeting the learning needs of all categories of students.
- The diagnosis of students' academic needs is not rigorous enough and the educational support provided to all categories of students in lessons and

supporting programmes is inconsistent in its impact.

- Students are disciplined and feel secure at school, which results in students and

parents being satisfied with the school's provision.

Main positive features

- Students are disciplined and feel safe and secure at school.

Recommendations

- Develop leadership, management and governance through:
 - a rigorous self-evaluation system to develop strategic planning with accurate improvement priorities
 - ensuring that the professional development programmes have a positive impact on students' attainment in lessons.
- Raise students' standards and basic skills in core subjects.
- Improve teaching and learning by:
 - implementing effective teaching and learning strategies that engage students and develop their self-confidence
 - managing lessons effectively to ensure productivity of students learning time
 - using assessment results to inform teaching and meet the learning needs of all categories of students.
- Provide effective support programmes that rigorously identify and meet students' different academic needs.

□ Capacity to improve 'Inadequate'

Judgement justifications

- The self-evaluation does not reflect the school's situation, which has an adverse impact on identifying school priorities in the strategic plan. The operational plan lacks accountability through assigning responsibilities, precise timeframes and clear success criteria to measure and monitor the progress of implementation.
- Monitoring the impact of professional development on teachers' performance is insufficient, affecting students' achievement which is inadequate in the majority of core subjects.
- The judgements in the school's Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) do not match with the review team judgements in all aspects.

- The school faces a number of challenges, including students' weak academic standards and the instability of the teaching staff which is a major obstacle in

developing the teaching faculty to have the required impact on classroom practices.

Quality of outcomes

□ Students' academic achievement 'Inadequate'

Judgement justifications

- In the 2017-2018 internal examinations, students achieved high pass rates in all core subjects. The proficiency rates are very high, ranging from 78% in Grade 4 Arabic to 100% in mathematics, science and English across the different grades.
 - Students' high results are not reflected in their standards in the majority of observed lessons and their work which are significantly lower, particularly in mathematics, science and Arabic.
 - Students have maintained high pass rates in internal examinations over the past three academic years from 2015-2016 to 2017-2018.
 - The quality of the internal examination papers is inconsistent. They do not sufficiently provide different levels of challenge. Moreover, noticeable inflated marks are awarded, particularly in Arabic, English and science.
 - In both mathematics and science, student's standards are below curriculum expectations. They have a weak understanding of key scientific concepts such as evaporation and earth layers. Their basic arithmetic skills are inconsistently developed and their problem-solving skills are poor.
- In Arabic, though students have secure oral skills, the majority are weak in writing, comprehension and text analysis.
 - In English, the majority of students have secure oral communication skills, but their writing skills are underdeveloped.
 - Students make limited progress in the majority of the lessons observed and in their written work, and their standards are significantly below expectations. This is particularly noticeable with low achievers due to ineffective teaching strategies and insufficient support provided in lessons. Adequate progress is achieved only by a small minority of students, mainly the high achievers in the better lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Students' standards in core subjects.
- Students' writing skills in English and Arabic, scientific knowledge, and problem solving in mathematics.
- The progress students make according to their different abilities in lessons and in their written work, particularly the low achievers.

□ Students' personal development 'Inadequate'

Judgement justifications

- Students confidently participate in the few better lessons and have opportunities to explain and present their answers, particularly in Arabic. However, they lack self-confidence and enthusiasm, thereby limiting the effectiveness of their participation in the majority of lessons. Additionally, only limited opportunities and encouragement are provided to students to participate enthusiastically, develop their self-confidence and assume leading roles.
- The majority of students participate adequately in some school activities such as the morning assembly, 'Library Friends' committee, musical affairs activities, Sports Day and a few external competitions such as the 'Spelling Bee'.
- The majority of students feel safe and secure at school, behave acceptably, and have adequate awareness in respecting school facilities. However, some inappropriate behaviour is noted in a few lessons, such as causing disruption and lack of respect for instructions mainly due to inadequate class management and the teaching methods which fail to engage students.
- Students have an appropriate understanding of Bahraini culture and heritage. They celebrate events such as National Day and International Women's Day. Islamic values are sufficiently understood and shown through reading the Qur'an and prayer in assembly, and the generally positive disposition in maintaining the school property.
- The majority of students attend school and lessons regularly and punctually as appropriate action is taken in case of late-comers.
- Students' collaborative working skills are generally not well developed. The few opportunities provided for group work are ineffective due to unclear roles and responsibilities.
- Students' independent learning skills are underdeveloped, as very few opportunities are provided to develop these skills.

Areas for improvement

- Students' effective participation and self confidence in taking responsibility and leadership roles.
- Students' independent learning skills.
- Students' ability to work collaboratively.

Quality of processes

□ Teaching and learning 'Inadequate'

Judgement justifications

- In the few better lessons, appropriate strategies are used such as role play, discussion and group work. However, ineffective strategies are used in the majority of lessons that fail to engage students and offer them active roles. This is particularly notable in mathematics and science, which hinders the development of students' understanding and skills.
 - Despite the use of resources such as videos and worksheets in most lessons, their effectiveness is limited to a minority of the better lessons.
 - Behaviour management is appropriate in the majority of lessons, except for a few lessons in lower grades where students are restless and not attracted towards the teaching strategies. The weak management of students' learning time limits the productivity of a significant proportion of lessons.
 - In a few better lessons, students are motivated through various methods such as stars and praise. In a few lessons, teachers give opportunities for the more able students to present their understanding. However, these methods are not used in the majority of lessons to motivate students in participating actively or to develop their confidence.
- Most teachers use verbal and written assessment methods to measure students' progress. However, in most lessons, oral assessment focuses on volunteers to participate. Written assessments in lessons and term examinations are below curriculum expectations and do not sufficiently challenge students' different abilities. Moreover, assessment results are not used effectively to inform teaching or meet students' varying learning needs.
 - Students' written work is checked regularly, and corrections are done adequately in Arabic. However, in other core subjects, correction is irregular, marking is inaccurate, and students' work lacks constructive feedback to enable them to improve.
 - In the vast majority of lessons, teaching is mostly directed to the more able students, with limited focus on differentiation and insufficient support to students who are experiencing difficulties.
 - In a very few better lessons, teachers challenge students' abilities. However, teaching does not promote higher order thinking in most lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Use of effective teaching strategies and resources that engage students and provide opportunities for them to actively participate in lessons.
- Class management to ensure productive use of learning time.

- Rigorous assessment as per curriculum expectations and the use of assessment results to inform teaching.
- Differentiation to meet students' different learning needs and support those who are experiencing difficulties.

□ Students' support and guidance 'Inadequate'

Judgement justifications

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has no clear mechanism to accurately identify students' academic needs or the gifted and talented students. However, some of the talented students in music and arts are provided with opportunities to participate in the morning assembly. • The school provides opportunities for the outstanding students to participate in external competitions such as the 'Spelling Bee', as well as honouring the top of the class with the 'Goblet' award. • The school recently implemented the 'STAR360' programme, which measures students' standards in early literacy, reading and mathematics. Based on the results, remedial sessions are provided to students facing academic difficulties. However, the impact is still yet to be evident in improving students' levels due to the weak standards of students in the majority of lessons, particularly the low achievers. • Students are supported when facing personal issues like family matters. Students who misbehave are counselled and the 'Money Programme' focuses on increasing positive behaviour. Students are counselled individually when needed. • An adequate range of annual days are held to enrich students' experiences. | <p>These include 'Art Day' and 'Earth Day', as well as field trips to the National museum, civil defence and the 'Tree of Life'. However, extracurricular activities are not provided regularly, nor do students have the chance to select activities which meet their interests and needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school takes measures to ensure the safety of students and staff, such as regular maintenance, conducting evacuation drills, organising students' dismissal and a school nurse to follow up on health conditions. • Students' orientation includes a tour of the premises, play activities and a parental meeting. However, students are not prepared for the next stage of their education due to their poor standards. • Students with hearing aids are appropriately supported in class, where they are seated appropriately and an extra battery set is kept just in case needed. • Students' life skills are better developed in computer lessons and in some of the school annual events such as 'Career Day' and 'Baking'. However, their independent, cooperative learning and critical thinking skills are not developed in or outside lessons. |
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Areas for improvement

- Meeting the learning needs of all categories of students, particularly the low achievers.
- Preparing students academically for their next stage of education.
- Promoting students' life skills.

Quality assurance of outcomes and processes

□ Leadership, management and governance 'Inadequate'

Judgement justifications

- The self-evaluation process is not comprehensive and lacks the rigorous involvement of the stakeholders. The school's five-year strategic plan aims for school's improvement, but is too generic and lacks sufficient links to the self-evaluation results. The operational plan is not shared and lacks accountability through assigning responsibilities, precise timeframes and clear success criteria to measure and monitor the progress of implementation.
- Although the curriculum is reviewed and subject outlines are available, age-appropriate standards are not considered in actual teaching or activities allocation. This affects the development of students' understanding and skills and limits their progress.
- Several in-house professional development programmes are provided to teachers on various topics including classroom management and differentiation. However, the effectiveness of these programmes on teaching practices is insufficient, hence ineffective classroom practices are observed in one third of the lessons.
- Relations between the staff and leadership are positive. An open-door policy and monetary incentives that motivate staff are in place. The staff structure is in place and delegation of responsibilities is as needed. However, with a significant proportion of the teaching staff joining in the current year, the impact of training programmes and implementation of improvements are limited.
- Senior management conducts regular lesson observations and feedback is provided, though not promptly. However, its impact on teaching and learning is limited in the majority of lessons observed.
- The school utilises its available resources and facilities to accommodate students' needs. This includes the computer lab, library and art and music room. Laptops and TVs are available for teachers. Despite the availability of these resources, they are not effectively used to promote students' learning.
- The school has adequate links with the local community, in addition to parental involvement through regular meetings. There are links with the Ministry of Health and visits to a number of local landmarks. These links support students to develop personally.
- Although the Board of Directors' financial support to the school is evident, the lack of diversity of experiences impacts the quality of the Board's contribution to strategic direction. The Board does not hold the school's leadership accountable for students' academic achievement.
- There is a significant mismatch between the judgements in the school's Self-

Evaluation Form (SEF) and the review team's judgements of the school's performance.

Areas for improvement

- Rigorous self-evaluation of the school's performance and use of its results to develop the strategic plan and monitor its impact on school improvement.
- Professional development programmes which are based on teachers' needs and measuring their impact on teaching practices and students' achievement as per curriculum standards.
- Utilisation of available resources and facilities to ensure conducive learning and broaden students' experiences.

Appendix: Characteristics of the school

Name of the school (Arabic)	مدرسة الفجر الخاصة													
Name of the school (English)	Al Fajer Private School													
Year of establishment	2013													
Address	Building 1788, Road 85, Block 520, Budaiya Highway													
Town / Village / Governorate	Barbar / Northern													
School's Contacts	17550011				Fax				17550065					
School's e-mail	alfajerprivateschool@gmail.com													
School's website	www.fajerschool.com													
Age range of students	6-10 years													
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)	Primary				Middle				High					
	1-5				-				-					
Number of students	Boys		92		Girls		56		Total		148			
Students' social background	Most students are from average income families													
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	Classes	3	2	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Number of administrative staff	16													
Number of teaching staff	28													
Curriculum	American													
Main language(s) of instruction	Arabic and English													
Principal's tenure in the school	5 Years													
External assessment and examinations	-													
Accreditation (if applicable)	-													
Major recent changes in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of a Vice Principal, Academic Coordinators, IT specialist, and additional administrative staff. • Formation of IT department. • Implementation of Accelerated Reading Programme (STAR360). 													