



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

Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews Review Report

**Al Falah Private School – Riffa Branch – Boys Section
Riffa– Central Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date of Review: 2-4 December 2013

SP043-C1-R043

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Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews

The Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews (DPS) 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. It is established to raise standards in education and training.

The DPS is responsible for:

- evaluating and reporting on the quality of provision in all private schools and kindergartens
- establishing success measures
- spreading best practice
- making recommendations for private school/kindergarten improvements.

Review involves monitoring standards and evaluating the quality of provision against a clear set of indicators. The reviews are independent, objective and transparent. They provide important information for private schools and kindergartens about their strengths and areas for improvement to assist in focusing efforts and resources as part of the cycle of school improvement in order to raise standards.

Review grades are awarded a four-point scale:

Grade description	Interpretation
Outstanding (1)	Outcomes or provision are at least good in all areas and outstanding in the majority.
Good (2)	Outcomes or provision are at least satisfactory in all areas and good in the majority.
Satisfactory (3)	A basic level of adequacy. There are no major weaknesses, or the majority of areas are satisfactory. Some areas may be good.
Inadequate (4)	There are major weaknesses or the majority of areas are inadequate.

Introduction

This review was conducted over three days by a team of nine reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed lessons and other activities, examined students' written and other work, analysed data concerning the school's performance and other documents, and talked with staff, students and parents. This report summarises their findings and recommendations.

Characteristics of the school

School's name	Al Falah Private School – Riffa Branch – Boys Section												
School's type	Private												
Year of establishment	1990												
Age range of students	9-18 Years												
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)	Primary				Middle				High				
	4-6				7-9				10-12				
Number of students	Boys	413	Girls	-				Total	413				
Students' social background	Most students belong to good income families												
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Classes	-	-	-	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Town /Village	Riffa												
Governorate	Central Governorate												
Number of administrative staff	4												
Number of teaching staff	37												
Curriculum	MoE curriculum, Islamic Culture curriculum for the primary and secondary phases only, Islamic curriculum for the primary phase and grades 7 and 8												
Main language(s) of instruction	Arabic												
Principal's tenure	8 years												
External assessment and examinations	MoE examinations for grade 9												
Accreditation (if applicable)	None												
Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification	Outstanding	Gifted & Talented				Physical Disabilities				Learning Difficulties			
	124	17				-				20			
Major recent changes in the school	-												

Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	4 : Inadequate			
The school's capacity to improve	4 : Inadequate			
	Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	3	4	4	4
Students' personal development	3	3	3	3
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	3	4	4	4
The quality of the curriculum implementation	3	3	3	3
The quality of support and guidance for students	3	3	3	3
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	4	4	4	4

Key:

- 1: Outstanding
- 2: Good
- 3: Satisfactory
- 4: Inadequate

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

- How effective is the school in meeting the needs of students and their parents?**

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Overall effectiveness is inadequate. Academic achievement is inadequate in one third of observed lessons. Students fail to gain the standards and required skills in core subjects, particularly in the intermediate and secondary schools as a result of ineffective teaching and learning strategies, poor class management, lack of learning support and ineffective use of assessment for learning. Although self-evaluation indicates some problems and needs for improvement, its use in developing the strategic plan and teachers' professional competency programmes is poor. Follow-up on the impact of training on teachers' performance is insufficient. Some extracurricular activities are provided to enhance the learning experience and the school is active in the local community. It promotes understanding of Bahrain's heritage and culture and monitors students' behaviour and personal development, reflecting in students' feeling safe at school. Parents and students are satisfied with the school.

- How strong is the school's capacity to improve?**

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The school's capacity to improve is inadequate. Despite that the senior leadership is stable, with a clear vision focused on improving learning outcomes and enhancing Islamic values. This reflects in students' personal development. However, the school's self-evaluation isn't comprehensive, with insufficient use of its results in identifying improvements and development priorities. This results in imprecise strategic planning that lacks clear performance indicators, timeframes and descriptions of roles and responsibilities, particularly in teaching and learning processes. Though the school organises a number of teacher training workshops, their impact varies. Changes in teaching staff also affect the expected progress of students. Other challenges include the inappropriate school buildings and lack of appropriate utilities and learning resources to meet the various students' needs. All this limits the school's capacity to improve.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Students achieve high pass rates between 98% and 100% in internal examinations in core subjects. However, in 2012/13 they vary in the MoE's examinations for grade 9, especially in mathematics and science. Proficiency and pass rates are consistent in most core subjects in primary school and grade 11, but vary in the other grades, especially in the intermediate school. Proficiency rates are low in Arabic in grade 6, and mathematics and science in grade 9. Proficiency rates and pass rates reflect the levels of most students in a limited number of lessons where effective teaching and learning processes are used. However, this is not reflected in most lessons. 'One third of core subjects' lessons are 'inadequate', the result of poor class management and learning support while not catering for students' individual needs.

The majority of students in the intermediate school master basic skills in Arabic, However, they are below standard in grade 10, particularly in grammar and reading aloud, due to ineffective teaching methods and the use of colloquial accents by some teachers. Achievements in reading, speaking and writing skills in English are as expected in the primary school, but below standards in the intermediate and secondary schools, especially in extended writing and speaking. The majority of students acquire sufficient algorithmic skills in mathematics but less so in multiplication tables, resulting in the inconsistent acquisition of skills in lessons, such as the inverse function in grade 12. The majority of students struggle with scientific concepts and knowledge in the intermediate school and grades 6 and 11, while grade 12 achieves better standards, such as solving word problems related to electricity in physics.

Students' results over the last 3 academic years from 2010-2013 show stable pass rates in core subjects in all phases. Sufficient progress is made in primary school lessons and in science in grade 12 as a result of effective teaching and learning methods. Progress is below expected standards in science in the intermediate school and English in the secondary school, resulting from insufficient learning support and students' weak basic skills. Progress varies in written work in most core subjects, with English being the poorest due to the use of activities that were inappropriate to students' levels.

Outstanding students take part in most lessons and school activities when they are given opportunity. Students with learning difficulties and low achievers make progress below their capabilities in lessons and in special programmes as a result of poor learning support in lessons and insufficient time given to students on remedial programmes.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Punctuality rates are high at 92%. The school has clear follow-up procedures with late students and encourages them to come on time and adhere to school's rules and regulations. The majority of students passionately participate in school activities such as the school broadcast committee which focuses on developing Islamic and national values, in addition to their participation in the scientific events and the Quran memorisation and recitation competition. However, this enthusiasm doesn't extend to lessons as few opportunities are provided for self-expression and most lessons are teacher-centric. Student display self-confidence in good lessons, reflecting in their active participation in activities and learning from each other. They adopt leadership roles in scouting activities and the student council and take part in national events.

The majority of students exhibit awareness when working together in effective lessons. They generally show respect to their peers and teachers as a result of the school's efforts to promote the positive values, with the exception of a limited number of lessons where behaviour is inappropriate and students caused chaos, indicating poor class management. Nevertheless, most students exhibit good behaviour and show interaction in some lessons and in group activities such as sport, due to the strong relationships among them and feeling safe at the school. Students show good understanding of Bahrain's culture and heritage through visits to locations such as Arad fort and Bahrain National Museum, whilst promoting religious values like allocating time for prayer. Students and the school management give daily advice in morning assembly to further enhance religious values.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Majority of teachers have secure subject knowledge, though this is not reflected adequately on their performance. In most lessons in the intermediate and secondary schools, teaching focuses on question and answer discussion in which the teacher is in the centre. Insufficient opportunities exist for students to effectively contribute in lessons. This lack of challenge adversely affects their motivation and development of higher-order thinking skills. This is reflected in students' limited acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding, particularly in English and science lessons. A number of teachers do employ available

materials and learning resources such as flash cards and whiteboards. They also use written activities and group work in lessons. However, their impact is not evident on students' achievement, except in some good and satisfactory lessons particularly in the primary school.

Class management is inadequate in most lessons. Time management is ineffective in a number of lessons. Teachers move quickly to new goals without making sure of students' understanding of all elements of lessons or verifying their learning. Also, teachers over-elaborate some elements of lessons and consequently the class ends without covering all lesson objectives. Some teachers concentrate on students' discipline and behaviour at the expense of the subject taught, such as in science with a negative impact on student's achievements and goal attainments in some lessons.

Few students are encouraged and motivated through praise or recognition, while low achievers are not given sufficient support in most lessons. This for example is reflected in mathematics with their failure to achieve the appropriate level of progress consistent with their abilities.

Homework is assigned but students' different needs generally are not catered for. Teachers follow up and mark homework but are inconsistent in providing feedback. This limits the enrichment of students' various experiences. In most lessons, teachers focus on verbal assessment, which is not clearly reflected in the progress made by students. A number of written assessments used by teachers have had no evident impact as they do not cater for students different abilities. Additionally, some assess aspects of lessons that have not been covered, as in some Arabic and science lessons. This limits their impact and use of assessment in supporting students' achievements.

□ How well does the implementation and enrichment of the curriculum meet the educational needs of the students?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school provides an adequate range of learning experiences for the majority of students, giving talented students the opportunities to take part in extracurricular activities. Those with learning difficulties are supported through programmes and material such as the Islamic Culture curriculum, or training on the TOEFL test in English for the secondary school students. The school reviews books, providing some summaries and remedial plans. However, implementation is inconsistent across departments. Links between subjects are limited, failing to ensure that lesson plans cater for a consistent curriculum.

Students' understanding of their rights, duties and responsibilities is developed through the use of guidance posters that enhance positive behaviour. Programmes and lectures are organised, such as that delivered on violence in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior. The school disciplinary committee takes responsibility for student relations. A number of extracurricular activities support student aptitudes and interests and students participate enthusiastically and effectively in events such as sports and the scouting committee where students take part in the clearing the environment landscape. Internal and external competitions are held, like the short story writing competition organised in cooperation with the Women and Child Society.

The curriculum is enhanced through the use of the school environment for posting learning boards and displays that encourage learning. However, this is not carried into the classroom, some of them lacking an attractive and motivating learning environment.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school inducts new students through guidance programmes and familiarisation with school facilities. Parents of grade 4 students are invited to attend the induction day. Grade 10 students are introduced to secondary school requirements. Support for moving to higher education includes visits to institutes such as Bahrain University and Kingdom University and enabling students to acquire the necessary life skills needed to apply for the scholarship programme.

Individual guidance sessions and awareness lectures are provided, alongside enhanced behaviour programmes such as "Our values are our path" and "No to violence and addiction". Low achievers and special needs students are catered for through diagnostic tests and school test analyses, also the 'Al Falah night gathering' and 'Enhancement and improvement of student levels in Arabic' project, though the effects vary, limiting the value.

Students' personal development is monitored through following up behavioural problems and taking action to deal with repeat improper behaviour. Support is provided for students with special needs, including forming a special committee during examinations, though the impact varies as the support is through set sessions and the time provided to monitor their progress is limited.

Communication with parents is through the open day, alongside other irregular channels. Parents are satisfied with the school. The security and safety committee monitors school facilities and organises workshops about smoking hazards, healthy food and other matters

in cooperation with Kanoo Health Centre. An evacuation exercise is organised with the Civil Defence Directorate.

Leadership, management and governance

- How effective are leadership, management and governance in promoting high achievement, strong personal development and school improvement?**

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The school leaders have a vision that focuses on improving learning outcomes and enhancing Islamic values. This translates into aspects such as students' personal development. The school inspires and motivates its teaching and administrative staff and encourages close relationships. Some middle management responsibilities are delegated to coordinators, as middle managers are busy monitoring teachers' performance across all the Al Falah schools.

School departments evaluate their plans and activities, analyse students' results and conduct comparative analysis. Although performance is discussed in the school board meetings and committees, the school self-evaluation does not cover all work aspects and the staff concerned are not fully involved. Analysis results are not used in formulating the strategic plan, which has no clear and measurable key performance indicators, timeframes or clarification of roles and responsibilities for introducing the necessary improvements across the school, particularly in teaching and learning processes.

Teachers' performance is assessed through class observations and use of the results in identifying training needs. A number of training workshops such as 'Class Management' and the 'Six Hats' are conducted. There is a 'Peer Teacher' project but the impact varies due to the limited progress made by the majority of students in the intermediate and secondary schools, as well as insufficient teachers' professional competency programmes.

Available resources and facilities are used as much as possible, though the science laboratory is insufficiently used to enhance students' scientific and research skills. Again, the learning resource centre is not effectively employed to enhance students learning experience and develop their Arabic skills. Parents' and students' views are sought through their councils, and the school responds to their suggestions as much as possible, recent examples being amending examinations dates and opening an Arts stream.

The school has effective links with the local community, with invited speakers delivering talks at the school. A cooperation agreement has been signed with the Ministry of Social Development. The general director has a clear accountability system for the overall performance of the school, especially regarding students' results. Nevertheless, the impact of the support provided by the general administration is insubstantial in meeting students' learning needs and enhancing the quality of provision.

The school's main strengths

- Students' sense of security in the school and the development of their understanding of Bahrain's culture and heritage as well as Islamic values
- Provision of a wide range of extracurricular activities that match students' different aptitudes and interests, as well as communications with the local community.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- establish a comprehensive self-evaluation and use its results to form a strategic plan with clear and accurate KPIs that focus on school priorities for improvement and development
- raise students' academic achievement in core subjects and develop their basic skills in the intermediate and secondary schools in particular
- use various teaching strategies and learning resources to ensure:
 - the provision of support to students, taking into account their different abilities in lessons and written tasks
 - the use of assessments to diagnose and cater for students' different educational needs
 - more productive and effective class management.
- develop teachers' professional competency programmes and follow up their impact on teachers' performance to ensure their positive effect on students' academic progress.