



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 Hekma International School
Sanad - Capital Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date of Review: 20-22 April 2015

SP027-C2-R001

Introduction

The Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews (DPS), which is a part of the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (QQA), conducted this review over three days by a team of eight reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed lessons and other activities, scrutinized students' written works and analysed school's performance data and other documents. They spoke to the staff, students and parents. This report summarises their findings and recommendations.

Summary of review judgements

Outstanding 1

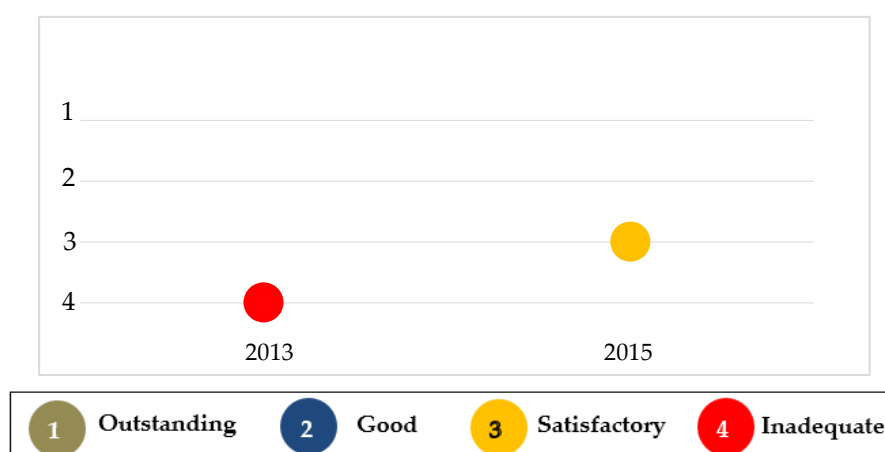
Good 2

Satisfactory 3

Inadequate 4

Aspect		Grade			
		Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Quality of outcomes	Students' academic achievement	3	3	3	3
	Students' personal development	3	3	3	3
Quality of processes	Teaching and learning	3	3	3	3
	Students' support and guidance	4	4	4	4
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

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory due to the adequate level of students' academic achievement, personal development and the satisfactory effectiveness of teaching and learning. • Students attain high pass rates in internal assessments. • The school needs to further improve teaching and learning, with a particular focus on raising students' academic achievement across the school particularly in Arabic. • The effectiveness of support and guidance is inadequate because more rigorous monitoring of students' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safety while using the transportation system is needed. • Self-evaluation is regular and involves all stakeholders. Strategic and action planning are inclusive, well-detailed and documented, with adequately effective systems to monitor implementation. • The school needs to develop a more robust monitoring system to ensure a stronger impact of professional development programmes on teachers' performance in lessons. • Assessment results need to be used more effectively to provide challenge and support to students of all abilities. |
|--|---|

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students' investigative and problem solving skills require more development. • Students' collaborative work and independent learning skills need to be further developed by providing more effective and meaningful opportunities in lessons. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are committed to the values of citizenship and show good levels of understanding of Bahraini culture. • The school enjoys strong links with the local community and whole society. • Most students and parents are satisfied with the education provided by the school. |
|--|--|

Main positive features

- Students' commitment to the values of citizenship and their understanding of Bahrain culture.
- School's links with the local community and whole society.

Recommendations

- Ensure students' safety while using the transportation system.
- Develop a rigorous monitoring system to ensure strong impact of professional development programmes on teachers' performance in lessons.
- Implement an effective tracking system of students' academic and personal development in order to have a stronger impact on their achievements.
- Further improve teaching and learning, focusing on:
 - raising students' academic achievement, particularly in Arabic
 - using assessment results effectively to provide support to students of different abilities
 - strengthening students' investigative and problem solving skills
 - developing students' independent and collaborative learning skills by providing more effective opportunities.

□ Capacity to improve 'Satisfactory'

Judgement justifications

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There have been some improvements in students' academic achievement and the effectiveness of teaching and learning since the last review in 2013. The majority of lessons are satisfactory and almost a third are good. A minority of lessons are inadequate, mainly in the teaching of Arabic. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's mission and vision are well shared. Self-evaluation is regular. Strategic and action planning are inclusive, with effective systems to monitor the success of planning. • The impact of professional development programmes on the performance of the majority of teachers is not yet sufficient to ensure high quality outcomes. |
|---|---|

- The school enjoys stability in its human resources along with clear plans for growth.
- An adequate range of extra-curricular activities is offered to the majority of students.

Quality of outcomes

□ Students' academic achievement 'Satisfactory'

Judgement justifications

- Over the last three years, the majority of students across the school have consistently achieved high pass rates in core subjects in internal examinations.
- Students' competency rates fluctuate over time, with a decline in Arabic in Middle School in 2013-2014.
- In most grades and subjects, the percentage of students attaining A and B grades has increased when compared with the school norms.
- In 2013-2014, the proportion of students attaining A and B grades by the end of Grade 12 school examinations has risen in English, mathematics and science.
- In the Stanford English Language Proficiency Test 2 (SELP 2), the performance levels of students improved in most grades in 2014, particularly in writing in High School.
- In Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) tests, students' mathematics scores are close to the international average. The school's averages in critical reading and writing are below the international averages.
- In Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), the school average for Grade 10 in critical reading is slightly above the international average. Scores in writing and in mathematics are below international averages.
- Grade 11 students' PSAT scores are below the international average in critical reading, writing and mathematics.
- Students' standards in lessons and in their work are satisfactory in core subjects across the school.
- In lessons, students make adequate progress in their knowledge and understanding. The progress of students in Middle School is slower than in the Elementary and High Schools.
- In English, students' speaking, listening and comprehension skills are in line with grade expectations across the school. Grade 1 students are able to use adjectives in sentences correctly; Middle and High School students have an extensive vocabulary and good comprehension skills.
- In mathematics, most students acquire a basic understanding of concepts. Grade 3 students can multiply 2-digit numbers; Grade 5 students compare fractions; Grade 6 students solve inequalities and Grade 12 students work on simple parametric equations.
- In science, students meet expected standards. Grade 4 students can explain the water cycle; Grade 10 students can explain redox reactions; Grade 11 students are able to compare and contrast C4 and C3 photosynthesis and explain types of inheritance.

Areas for improvement

- Arabic skills across the school.
- Students' progress in lessons in Middle School.
- Extended writing skills in English, particularly in Elementary.
- Investigative and experimental skills in science and the application of mathematical concepts across the school.

□ Students' personal development 'Satisfactory'

Judgement justifications

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most students show good understanding of Bahraini culture and Islamic values. They are committed to the values of citizenship. This is the result of the school's provision of a variety of activities that include taking students to the National Charter Monument and on Omras trips to Mecca.• Students attend school regularly and punctually, with daily attendance ranging between 90% and 97%.• The majority of students participate with confidence in activities and events outside lessons, such as speech contests, the Model United Nations and in committees such as Students' Council.• Students participate appropriately when opportunities are provided outside classrooms through competitions and sports.• The majority of students behave well, though there are a few cases of students disrupting classes and being disrespectful to the feelings of others, | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• such as talking in class and laughing at fellow students who fall over.• Generally, students feel safe in school though some may still feel concerned about being bullied particularly in the school grounds where, despite the school's best efforts in educating students, there are still some arguments. There have also been some instances of cyber-bullying.• There is some variation in the level of students' independent learning skills. In the majority of lessons, students find it difficult to work on their own and reach solutions, as greater emphasis is placed on teaching rather than learning.• Collaborative work is not so well-developed in the majority of lessons, with insufficient planned opportunities. Students relish those opportunities that are provided around the school, in projects such as the science fair and in committees such as the Cleaning Committee where students pick up litter and educate others about keeping the school clean. |
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Areas for improvement

- Students' self-confidence, active participation, ability to learn both independently and collaboratively in the majority of lessons.

Quality of processes

□ Teaching and learning 'Satisfactory'

Judgement justifications

- Teachers generally make sufficient use of the educational resources available. In most lessons, for example, teachers successfully enliven learning by using interactive white boards. In particular, good use is made of video clips to enhance learning.
- Strategies chosen for teaching and learning are adequate, though dominated by teacher exposition. Only in better lessons do teachers provide good opportunities for students to engage in collaborative work. In a good English lesson, for example, the class teacher skillfully questioned students about aspects of third person narrative; students were enthusiastic and provided good quality analyses of the two required characters.
- In almost all lessons teachers manage students' behaviour well. In many satisfactory lessons the students are passive and are not given the opportunity to engage sufficiently with their learning.
- Even though objectives are invariably shared at the beginning of lessons, it is only in the better lessons that these are referred to and checked at the end of the lesson.
- Although an adequate range of internal assessments is used, these are not used well enough to ensure that there is sufficient challenge in the tasks set. In consequence, in too many lessons higher ability students are under-challenged and lower ability students are not given enough support.
- Teachers generally mark students' work and sometimes positive and encouraging comments are made. Teachers rarely provide constructive comments about how students could improve and move to the next stage.
- Generally, students of all abilities are given similar work with the more able ones being given extension work rather than starting at a level to suit their abilities. This is not always the case; for example in a good science lesson where students were studying the relationship between position, motion and speed, the most able students were challenged well and were able to explain what happens when something moves.
- It is only in the better lessons that students are given opportunities to develop their higher order thinking skills. In a few good lessons, such as a Grade 10 English lesson, perceptive questioning demanded extended and thoughtful answers from students and they enjoyed working together to solve a problem.

Areas for improvement

- Teaching and learning strategies, to ensure more active student participation in lessons and reduce the proportion of time that teachers talk.
- Assessments to provide greater challenge in activities in order to promote stronger support for different ability students.
- Students' higher order thinking skills in lessons.

□ Students' support and guidance 'Inadequate'

Judgement justifications

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safety procedures relating to the transportation system are not rigorously implemented and followed at all times although the school has clear policies regarding health and safety inspections.• Special needs students from Grades 1 to 3 are supported by class visits and special inventory programmes. Other students are provided with one-to-one support whenever needed, as there are no systematic remedial programmes offered.• Special Arabic classes for non- native Arabic speakers are provided across the schools to develop students' language skills.• Talented and gifted students are identified and their experience is usually enriched by involving them in challenging competitions. High | <p>achievers are not appropriately challenged in the majority of lessons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The majority of students are involved in an adequate range of extra-curricular activities such as Model United Nations and Young Arab Leaders, and after school clubs such as Go Green, Read 2 Me, Help Hands, and the Soccer Club.• Students are adequately prepared for the next stage of education as they are offered lectures and special sessions during assembly time, with some private sessions for Grade 12 students.• Students' life skills are promoted through topics discussed in assembly sessions, such as "Cyber Bullying" for Middle School and "We can change the world" for Elementary School. Health and Life Skills sessions are also provided for Elementary School. |
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Areas for improvement

- Students' safety, particularly while using the transportation system.
- Remedial and enrichment programmes that target students' different academic needs.
- Systematic tracking for student's personal development and using the data to plan to meet their different needs.

Quality assurance of outcomes and processes

□ Leadership, management and governance 'Satisfactory'

Judgement justifications

- Self-evaluation is regular and involves students, parents and teachers. Evaluation of teaching involves subject coordinators, academic controllers, the Assistant Principal and Principal. These processes adequately focus on identifying school-wide strengths and areas for improvement.
- Strategic and action planning at subject, department and school level suitably involves all staff. These are well detailed and documented, with adequately effective systems to monitor the success of planning.
- Staff are provided with clear job descriptions. Throughout the year, staff are subject to a range of both in-house and external professional development programmes covering topics such as differentiation, Bloom's taxonomy, classroom management, and communication strategies.
- The school's data bank of staffs' skills is adequately used in supporting and developing their potential. The bank is used appropriately, for example in co and peer teaching.
- The school has developed good links with the local community and wider society by participating in national events, inter-school programmes, organising international tours, visits to national sites of historic and cultural importance, and inviting guest speakers to deliver talks to students on various topics creating awareness about health, hygiene and citizenship.
- The school's congenial environment, the open-door policy, the School Improvement Teams (SIT) and committees such as the Continuous Professional Development Committee, Publication Committee, School is Cool Committee, Go Green Committee and Helping Hands Committee are adequately effective in developing healthy and sound professional relations and promoting enthusiasm for development.
- The school's environment is conducive to learning. The school is rich in learning resources such as interactive white boards, e-tablets, e-library and internet in classrooms. These are used effectively in the better lessons to improve students' learning.
- The Board of Directors meets regularly and provides adequate strategic and monitoring support to the school's professional leadership. This is achieved by the oversight of strategic and action planning. The Board holds the school's leadership to account sufficiently well for its administrative routines and academic affairs. The Board rightly restricts itself to its strategic and advisory role in achieving this.

Areas for improvement

- Monitoring the impact of strategic planning.
- The impact of professional development programmes on teachers' performance in lessons, to ensure high quality outcomes.
- The quality of practical resources in science, to enhance students' practical and investigative skills.
- The utilisation of learning resources and facilities in providing high quality teaching, resulting in creating life-long learners.

Appendix: Characteristics of the school

Name of the school (Arabic)	مدرسة الحكمة الدولية												
Name of the school (English)	Al Hekma International School												
Year of establishment	1988												
Address	Building 1962 Rd 4363 Sanad 743 P.O. Box 26489												
Town /Village / Governorate	Sanad – Capital Governorate												
School's Contacts	17623999			Fax			17624800						
School's e-mail	info@alhekma.com												
School's website	www.alhekma.com												
Age range of students	6-18 years												
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)	Primary				Middle				High				
	1-5				6-8				9-12				
Number of students	Boys	277			Girls	206			Total	483			
Students' social background	Most students belong to middle and upper middle classes												
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Classes	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	1
Number of administrative staff	34												
Number of teaching staff	67												
Curriculum	American curriculum for all English taught subjects and Ministry of Education curriculum for Arabic taught subjects.												
Main language(s) of instruction	English and Arabic												
Principal's tenure in the school	1 year and 3 months												
External assessment and examinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SELP 2 (Stanford English Language Proficiency Test). • TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study). • PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study). Students graduate with an American High School Diploma 												
Accreditation (if applicable)	Middle States Association for Accreditation (MSA) in the US since 1996 and a second accreditation from a US institution, North Central Association for Accreditation (NCA), in 2012.												

Major recent changes in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The introduction of tablets as an option for students during the 2014-2015 academic year to replace hard copies of textbooks in English, maths and science.• Further electronic communication with parents through launching the AHIS mobile app which is downloaded on smart phones (android and IOS), and the introduction of the online home-school communication platform on the school website.• New art room and new teachers' workroom.
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