



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

Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews Review Report

Confidential

**Al Mahd Day Boarding School - Saar Branch
Saar - Northern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date of Review: 11-13 March 2013

SP028-C1-R028

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The 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 Mahd Day Boarding School - Saar Branch													
School's type		Private													
Year of establishment		1997													
Age range of students		5-16 years													
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High					
		1--6				7-8				9-10x					
Number of students		Boys	469	Girls	348	Total		817							
Students' social background		middle class													
Classes per grade		Grade		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		Classes		10	8	6	4	4	2	2	2	2	1	-	-
Town /Village		Saar													
Governorate		Northern													
Number of administrative staff		18													
Number of teaching staff		90													
Curriculum		International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), Cambridge Primary Programme and Ministry of Education (MoE).													
Main language(s) of instruction		English													
Principal's tenure		2 years													
External assessment and examinations		Checkpoint and IGCSE													
Accreditation (if applicable)		University of Cambridge Examination Centre.													
Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification		Outstanding				Gifted & Talented				Physical Disabilities				Learning Difficulties	
		92				65				-				-	
Major recent changes in the school		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrading the computer laboratory and introduction of smart boards 2012-13 Introduction of computerized software systems to update students' records and teaching practices 2012-13. 													

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	4	4	4	4
Students' personal development	3	3	3	3
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	4	4	4	4
The quality of the curriculum implementation	4	4	4	4
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

The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate. Students' standards and progress are generally below expectations and satisfactory only in Arabic. Teaching uses too limited a range of strategies and resources and lacks effective planning and assessment. Though the curriculum provides an adequate mix of subjects, its breadth is limited for older students and modifications and enrichment are lacking. Students are well-behaved and respect each other. Parents are regularly informed about their children's progress and students and staff work in a healthy and safe environment. Whilst the school evaluates and trains its staff, monitoring is not sufficiently robust to ensure that all students are provided with quality education that meet their needs. Hence, leadership and management are inadequate overall. Students and parents are generally satisfied with the school.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Recent improvements have focused on the development of school facilities, raising teacher proficiency and monitoring students' behaviour. This has had a positive impact on the majority of students' conduct and attitudes. Although the school's premises are generally appropriate, a number of classes are small and resources are limited and ineffectively used. The school has significant deficiencies in major areas of its work. For example, school self-evaluation does not use the analysis of student performance results or teaching to target improvements. Additionally, strategic planning does not sufficiently address all the identified goals and planned developments. The provision of professional development is not yet sufficiently linked to the findings from lesson observations in order to identify and meet the needs of both individual, and groups of teachers.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Students in most Grades 1 to 8 attain high pass rates in internal examinations, ranging from 65% to 100%. The high competency rate, in Grades 1 to 4, declines in Grade 6 to 8, with, for example, only 6% of Grade 8 students scoring more than 80 per cent in English. Students' attainment in most core subjects in IGCSE examinations is low. For example only one out of 12 students in mathematics and 4 out of 16 students in chemistry scored above C grade. However, performance in Arabic is stronger, where 12 out of 18 students scored above C grade. A small cohort of students participated in the optional Grades 6 and 9 Cambridge Checkpoint examinations. Their overall performance demonstrated a basic understanding in English, mathematics and science. Students' performance in Grade 6 English is below age-related expectations and attainment in Grade 9 English is the weakest.

In lessons throughout the school, most students' standards in science, English and mathematics are below age-related expectations. Nevertheless, in Arabic, students demonstrate satisfactory speaking, reading and writing skills. Additionally, they appropriately comprehend a variety of texts and, with the exception of Grade 4 and 9 students, their writing skills are well developed. In English, the majority of students throughout the school have adequate listening skills and speak with appropriate fluency. However, their comprehension and writing skills are not sufficiently developed. In mathematics, students acquire basic skills and concepts across the school, but the majority of them rely on memory recall and have difficulties when applying their knowledge and understanding to solve problems. In science, students do not make sufficient progress in understanding scientific concepts and they lack inquiry and practical skills.

School examination results show largely stable progress over the past three years in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, and a decrease in Key Stage 3. In relation to their starting points, students are making inadequate progress in science, English and mathematics, and satisfactory progress in Arabic during most lessons and in their written work. Moreover, the low and high achieving students make limited progress in part due to teaching which does not sufficiently meet their different learning needs. Rates of progress, on balance, are too slow to be deemed satisfactory.

How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The vast majority of students attend school regularly and punctually. Their good attendance is encouraged by effective monitoring, awards and appropriate action to remedy lateness. The majority of students participate enthusiastically in activities, including their involvement in daily assemblies, inter-house activities and extra-curricular activities. The majority of students are confident and responsible, such as Grade 4 and 5 students working positively in cooperative groups. Additionally, high-achievers are able to complete assigned projects independently. However generally in lessons, most students show less interest and make fewer contributions with too few opportunities provided to them to work collaboratively, independently and take on leadership roles. Grade 9 and 10 students have been selected as prefects and student councilors.

Students adequately work together and responsibly monitor and guide their younger schoolmates. Students are well-behaved. They share good relationships and show respect for each other and their teachers, particularly in the higher grades. They express strong feelings of safety and security and carefully follow the school's discipline regulations. Most students show a good understanding of Bahrain's heritage and culture including the values of Islam. They participate in celebrations and knowledgeably give speeches in special assemblies. Additionally, they appreciate the opportunities to participate in Quran recitation competitions.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Most teachers know their subject matter well, but not all are equally skilled at using their knowledge to plan and deliver lessons that engage students' interests and help them to develop their skills and understanding. Across the school there are too many lessons that feature limited teaching strategies, aimed solely at learning factual information.

There are several key features common to most of the less successful lessons. Teachers frequently expect too little of many of their students. Worksheets and exercises are often completed with little difficulty, particularly by more able students, who are not challenged sufficiently to make optimum progress. Opportunities for students to think critically or

apply what they know in order to solve new problems are few. Lower achieving students are not offered enough support to enable them to complete lesson tasks effectively. In most lessons, teachers include reference to differentiated teaching in their planning. However, this often refers to differing expectations or outcomes, rather than to modifications in teaching or resources in order to meet the needs of all groups of students. Teacher's tendency to over control and dominate the direction of lessons leads to very limited opportunities for students to take responsibility for their learning and to develop independent or collaborative learning skills, which was obviously seen in the teaching of science.

Where lessons are more effective such as Arabic, teachers focus students' attention on their learning objectives, and choose activities to match them, as when Grade 9 students played a game to reorganise jumbled story extracts while studying narrative structure. A minority of teachers are attempting to add variety to the strategies they use, with orderly and feature a mutually respectful working atmosphere though classroom resources are sparse. Homework is regularly set and often used to consolidate lesson work.

Many teachers do not make the best use of assessment information, to cater for students' educational needs. Marking is often too cursory to help students to improve their work.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Curriculum implementation provides an adequate mix of subjects which follow MoE guidelines in Arabic subjects, the Cambridge Primary Programme to Grade 6 and IGCSE for Grades 9 and 10. Breadth is more limited for older students who must choose between science and commerce subjects. Additionally, Personal Social and Health Education, art and computers are discontinued. Within the scope of the curriculum, the school provides a limited range of interactive and practical activities during lessons and these do not sufficiently meet students' needs, including high- and low-achievers. Curriculum review is limited to changes in textbooks, for example in mathematics. A few natural links are made between subjects such as using mathematics calculations during computer lessons.

Moreover, curriculum delivery does not effectively equip students with requisite skills such as independent learning, problem-solving and investigative skills. Students' understanding of their responsibilities is promoted through activities which develop citizenship, including international day celebrations and visits to elderly homes and student council activities. The school also offers a good range of extra-curricular experiences which broaden students' aesthetic, literary and sports interests. The curriculum is adequately enriched by the use of

school environment and resources available in the community, including field trips and programmes by professionals and external organisations.

How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Class teachers and elder students help new students become familiar with the school in an informal induction programme. Although the school regularly assesses students' academic progress through school's tests, this information is not used effectively to modify teaching in order to meet their individual learning needs in lessons. Additionally the support provided through reinforcement lessons has a limited impact on students' overall achievement.

Students are appropriately supervised at all times. Procedures for monitoring students' personal development to identify their different needs, and the approach to managing their behavior are effective. Although coordinators and senior leaders are available to give information and advice to students about Grade 9 subject options, the guidance provided to help students knowledgeably plan their future education and employment is limited.

Students are confident to approach their teachers and the counselor who sensitively support them if they face problems. Parents are well informed about their children's progress through regular monthly meetings, diary communications and phone calls. The school provides a healthy and safe environment and health-related incidents are handled efficiently. Conversely, arrangements for vehicle and pedestrian movements are not well organised during students' departure.

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 senior leadership team share a vision which gives direction to the school's development and is appropriately communicated to all members of the community. The daily management of the school is due to the clear understanding of the administration to their

roles. Teachers show a suitable degree of commitment and loyalty to the school and senior leaders successfully encourage an ethos of respect between teachers and students.

The school does not adequately monitor all its systems and procedures in order to evaluate their effectiveness and to inform and focus improvement planning. In particular, self-evaluation does not sufficiently use either the analysis of student performance results in both internal and external examinations, or the evaluation of the quality of teaching to target improvement. Strategic planning has limited impact in the way it guides priorities. The plan itself does not address all the identified weaknesses, nor does it include all planned developments. The objectives are unambitious and action plans lack sufficient detail to provide effective improvement and monitoring strategies, particularly for raising the quality of teaching and students' academic achievement.

Teachers attend regular in-school training sessions. Nevertheless, the provision of professional development is not yet sufficiently linked to the findings from lesson observations in order to identify and meet the needs of both individual, and groups of teachers. That is because of lack of procedures that observe teachers performance by defining weakness, monitor and support effectively.

The school doesn't use its educational resources efficiently, a number of classrooms are small, limit student movement and do not adequately accommodate a range of appropriate learning activities. Resources are limited, especially for practical science activities, as well as research and literacy development using the library. Although the school has installed interactive whiteboards in each section, these are used in a limited way for teaching and learning activities.

The school regularly seeks parents' opinions and is responsive to both parent and student suggestions. The school has established suitable links with the local community which enhances students' educational and personal experiences. For example, students participate in charity events and visit local orphanages. The senior leadership are held accountable for the school's performance through meetings with the Board who provide supportive guidance and oversight of the school's work, particularly with financial planning.

The school's main strengths

- Students' good relationships and respect for each other, and their feeling of safety at the school
- Communication with parents.

Provisional

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- raise students' academic achievement, in science, English and mathematics
- develop the quality of leadership and management by:
 - rigorous monitoring of the school's systems and procedures through accurate and comprehensive self-assessment of all aspects of school work, and making use of its results to rebuild the strategic plan according to the development priorities
 - providing professional development that matches the needs of both individual and groups of teachers, and leads to improvement in teaching quality.
- improve the quality of teaching and learning to ensure:
 - selecting a wider range of strategies and more varied educational activities that are better designed to develop students' basic skills
 - using assessment results to plan lessons to meet the needs of students of all categories.