



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-Manar Private Schools
Salmabad – Central Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date of Review: 28-30 April 2013

SP034-C1-R034

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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 seven 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-Manar Private Schools											
School's type		Private											
Year of establishment		2002											
Age range of students		6-17 years											
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High			
		1-6				7-9				11			
Number of students		Boys	60			Girls	40			Total	100		
Students' social background		Most students come from low or middle-income families											
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Classes	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	1	-
Town /Village		Salmabad											
Governorate		Central Governorate											
Number of administrative staff		3											
Number of teaching staff		24											
Curriculum		British and Ministry of Education											
Main language(s) of instruction		English and Arabic											
Principal's tenure		7 months											
External assessment and examinations		-											
Accreditation (if applicable)		-											
Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification		Outstanding				Gifted & Talented			Physical Disabilities			Learning Difficulties	
		35				10			-			5	
Major recent changes in the school		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointing a new principal, heads of sections and a social counsellor in the current academic year 2012-2013 Rebuilding the internal playground and building a 											

	<p>science lab for the middle grades in the current academic year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introducing social studies and French language to the curriculum in the current academic year.
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Provisional

Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	4: Inadequate			
The school's capacity to improve	3: Satisfactory			
	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	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	3	3	3	3

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, mainly because teaching, learning and academic achievement are inadequate due to the ineffective strategies used in a high proportion of lessons. Assessment does not support learning enough and there are insufficient opportunities for students to assume leadership roles and learn independently. This prevents them from achieving the expected progress in line with their abilities. The school achieves satisfactory levels in personal development, curriculum implementation, support and guidance, and leadership, management and governance. Good relationships exist between students and teachers, with mutual respect. Prompt care is provided for students. Effective communication between the school's principal and parents is a contributory factor in parents keeping their children in the school and to most students and parents being satisfied with the school.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory. In spite of the challenges the school faced last year in terms of the changes in leadership, many teachers leaving and the transfer of some students to other schools, the current leadership is bringing improvement. This is being achieved, in close cooperation with the owner and includes introducing English and mathematics text books, starting social studies and French as academic subjects, rebuilding and shading the internal playground to make it safer, and building a science laboratory for the Middle Grades. The school's self-evaluation identifies some of the aspects that need to be improved and findings are being used in developing a strategic plan. However, the main challenge is to improve teaching and learning as many teachers do not have sufficient teaching expertise or experience.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Students achieve pass rates ranging between 63% and 100% in most core subjects in school examinations in the first semester of the academic year 2012-2013. However, pass rates are particularly low in mathematics and science in Grade 7 at 33% in both subjects. Pass rates vary against proficiency rates across most academic subjects in all grades. Although a good number of students achieve proficiency rates above 70% in Arabic in most grades, proficiency rates are very low in other subjects, for example 17% in English in Grade 7 and 0% in mathematics in Grade 8.

The majority of students demonstrate standards in line with the curriculum and their age requirements in Arabic and science, especially in Grades 1 to 6, while their standards are lower in English, especially in Grades 4, 5 and 6, and in mathematics in most grades. Students' acquisition of reading skills, understanding vocabulary, applying grammar rules and using punctuation in Arabic are satisfactory, while their writing skills are inadequate. As for English, students acquire listening and reading skills better than speaking and writing skills. In science, students adequately acquire basic concepts, although they demonstrate below average levels in understanding and applying arithmetic and geometric principles in mathematics.

Students have maintained a stable pass rates over the past two years in Arabic in most grades in the school's examinations. However their pass rates show regression in other core subjects, particularly in mathematics in Grade 8 and in English in Grades 4 and 6.

The majority of students make limited progress in lessons due to ineffective use of teaching and learning strategies and not using assessment for learning. Their progress in lessons and written work is below expectations in most mathematics lessons and almost half the English lessons, whereas their progress in the majority of Arabic and science lessons is satisfactory.

The majority of low attainers make adequate progress in lessons, which is attributed to the support they receive, represented in one-on-one tutoring in some of the upper grades due to the small numbers of students. However, outstanding students do not achieve sufficient progress given their abilities because their learning needs are not met due to the use of unchallenging learning objectives in teaching.

How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The majority of students contribute to school life through their participation in school committees, such as the Discipline Committee, Arts Committee, and the 'Compassion Committee', a committee to raise awareness for care of the elderly. Participating students demonstrate leadership skills and good behaviour as they work together, but other students do not contribute to the same extent due to insufficient opportunities to develop their different interests. Students' participation varies in lessons. They show enthusiasm in good lessons due to the encouragement they receive, while their participation is limited in inadequate lessons due to teachers' low expectations, which hinder the development of students' self-confidence. Furthermore, many students do not exercise much effort in independent learning, neither do they assume leadership roles inside the classroom because of the lack of opportunities. In some lessons they do work together effectively and independently when they have the chance.

Students express feeling safe in the school. Most of them behave in a good manner, show respect to one another and to their teachers. They keep the school clean and preserve the school environment by engaging in activities organised by the 'Cleanness Committee'. They attend school regularly. Most students demonstrate an understanding of Bahrain's heritage and observe Islamic values, which are reinforced by murals, school trips and traditional events such as the Henna Day.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Teachers are familiar with their academic subject, which is reflected in the better lessons, especially Arabic lessons, in which they present content clearly and provide varied examples and starter activities. However, in a high proportion of lessons teachers do not use effective teaching and learning strategies or the available teaching resources. Teaching is too teacher-centred in most lessons, and teaching methods focus on conveying facts and information, and do not enable students to acquire concepts or develop their skills. Students are not provided with opportunities to develop their different skills, practise independent learning or assume leadership roles. Furthermore, the majority of lessons fail to link skills, understanding and knowledge. Instead, teachers focus on presenting the text book's content

which contributes to a significant number of students having under-developed writing skills in both Arabic and English and arithmetic and geometric skills in mathematics.

The majority of teachers manage lessons adequately. However, the productivity of a high proportion of lessons is inadequate due to ineffective time management as some teachers end their lessons ahead of schedule, focus on unchallenging learning objectives which most students achieved quickly, and do not provide additional activities to support their learning. On the one hand, teachers adequately support, encourage and simplify the material for low attainers in effective lessons, which improve these students' participation and engagement levels. On the other, the majority of teachers do not challenge students' abilities or use activities and questions that focus on developing higher order thinking skills. This limits the development of students' intellectual capacities.

Students are assigned homework assignments which are mainly additional text book exercises that are assigned at one level for all and do not consider individual differences. Homework is followed up by some teachers but generally with insufficient marking and feedback. Moreover, assessment is not used effectively, as most teachers rely on factual recall through oral questions and considering closed-answer questions focused on a particular group of students, and do not check the levels of understanding achieved by students of different abilities or use the findings in planning lessons.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The curriculum offers a combination of academic subjects which develop students' experiences. However, implementation of the curriculum is not effective enough in meeting the different learning needs of students, particularly the gifted and talented students. The school has appropriate plans for the curriculum and reviews it adequately, which has resulted in updating the English and mathematics text books, in addition to introducing social studies and French to all grades. Despite individual attempts to make links between subjects, such as using some social studies' topics in English lessons, useful links between subjects are mostly insufficient and unplanned in most lessons.

The school develops the students' sense of citizenship and promotes their understanding of their rights and responsibilities by organising a wide range of relevant events. It offers extra-curricular activities to all students, such as Arabic and English writing and Quran memorisation contests, which provide the majority of students with opportunities to develop their interests and acquire the multilingual communication skills necessary to prepare them for the next stage of education or employment.

The school's environment is used to enrich the curriculum with educational and awareness-raising murals, by displaying learning aids in classrooms and by celebrating students' works inside and outside the classroom, in addition to school trips, such as the ones to the Coast Guard Headquarters and the Civil Defence Department.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school ensures that new students are settled in quickly by providing them with the necessary care and guidance on 'day one'. The school regularly assesses students' levels through examinations; however the findings are not used effectively to plan to meet the learning needs of the majority. The school also offers remedial lessons to low attainers and revision lessons to all students prior to the examinations during the school day. The school promotes positive behaviour and good relations among students and between students and teachers, which contribute to improving students' personal development.

The school provides sufficient support to students when problems arise between them, such as problems related to cultural differences. Overall, students with learning difficulties are provided with adequate care and support. However, due to the lack of a special educational needs specialist, they do not receive the needed professional support to develop personally and academically.

Parents are informed well about their children's progress through various channels, such as periodic reports, phone calls and open days. Although the school provides some information about post-school choices, it does not provide structured guidance with comprehensive information about the middle and secondary levels. Similarly, the school has adequate overall safety and security measures supported by appropriate guidance, however, recent evacuation drills have not been conducted.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school has a suitable vision which focuses on improving students' academic achievement, educational outcomes and personal development. The vision is developed in

cooperation with teachers, parents and the school's Board. However, although most school members are aware of the vision, it is inconsistently reflected in important aspects of school work, currently inadequately in the quality of the teaching and learning processes and in students' levels of achievement. Nevertheless, given the school's capacity to improve, leadership, management and governance are satisfactory.

The school has an adequate five-year strategic plan, with objectives that are based on the findings of self-evaluation and the school's situational analysis. It is aware of its strengths and areas for improvement, especially with regard to weaknesses in Arabic and English. Many aspects of the school's work are satisfactory. Although the school has introduced new middle management positions in core subjects, called department heads, their roles are still insufficient in executing action plans, monitoring and improving performance.

The majority of school members praise the leaderships' efforts to inspire and motivate them. They do this through giving encouraging phrases in front of students during short class visits and through certificates of recognition, as well as its efforts to promote interpersonal relationships, which contribute to building a family atmosphere.

The school identifies teachers' training needs through class visits while considering the majority's lack of experience, as more than half of them are in their first or second year of teaching. It meets some of their needs through workshops, such as those on using modern teaching methods, technology and diversified classroom activities. However, the school's efforts are not reflected effectively in the teachers' performance in a high proportion of lessons.

Available teaching resources and facilities are used adequately to serve the teaching process, such as the learning resource centre and the computer laboratory. Moreover, the school adequately seeks and responds to students' and parents' view. Also it adopts an open door policy and holds group and individual meetings to promote improvements. It communicates with the local community, so positively enhancing the students' educational experience. Despite limited documentation, the roles and responsibilities of the school principal and the owner, who effectively supports school work, are clear.

The school's main strengths

- Student's awareness, good behaviour and understanding of Bahrain's heritage.
- Good relations between students and teachers which are based on mutual respect.
- Effective communication between the school and parents, and the school's responsiveness to parents' views.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- raise students' academic achievement, especially in mathematics and English
- develop teaching and learning strategies to focus on:
 - students' acquisition of basic skills and concepts
 - proper use of assessment to plan for learning
 - ensuring students know what they need to do to improve and that teaching meets their learning needs
 - provide students with more opportunities to assume leadership roles and practise independent learning.
- monitor the impact of professional development programmes on teachers' practice in lessons
- provide varied programmes to develop gifted students and provide better support for students with learning difficulties.