



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 – A’ali Branch – Girls Section  
A’ali – Central Governorate  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date of Review: 21-23 April 2014  
SP053-C1-R053**

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## Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews

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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

<b>School's name</b>		Al Falah Private School – A'ali Branch – Girls Section											
<b>School's type</b>		Private											
<b>Year of establishment</b>		1990											
<b>Age range of students</b>		6-18 Years											
<b>Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)</b>		<b>Primary</b>				<b>Middle</b>				<b>High</b>			
		1-6				7-9				10-12			
<b>Number of students</b>		<b>Boys</b> (Grades 1-3)	130	<b>Girls</b>	251				<b>Total</b>	381			
<b>Students' social background</b>		Most students belong to good social background											
<b>Classes per grade</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>Classes</b>	4	3	4	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Town /Village</b>		A'ali											
<b>Governorate</b>		Central											
<b>Number of administrative staff</b>		10											
<b>Number of teaching staff</b>		41											
<b>Curriculum</b>		MoE											
<b>Main language(s) of instruction</b>		Arabic											
<b>Principal's tenure</b>		1½ years											
<b>External assessment and examinations</b>		MoE examinations for the intermediate phase											
<b>Accreditation (if applicable)</b>		None											
<b>Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification</b>		<b>Outstanding</b>			<b>Gifted &amp; Talented</b>			<b>Physical Disabilities</b>			<b>Learning Difficulties</b>		
		-			6			3			8		
<b>Major recent changes in the school</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The most important changes during 2012-2013: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>appointment of new principal</li> </ul> </li> </ul>											

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- appointment of new social counsellors</li><li>• transferring to new premises last year</li><li>• appointment of 22 new teachers at the beginning of 2013-2014.</li></ul>
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## 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	4	4	4	4
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	4	4	4	4
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	4	4	4	4

### Key:

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

## Review judgements

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### Overall effectiveness

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

#### Grade: 4 Inadequate

Overall effectiveness is inadequate, as a result of inaccurate self-evaluation that negatively affects strategic planning. Students' standards are low, with weak acquisition of skills in all core subjects. The teaching and learning processes are below expectations, with one third of lessons being inadequate due to poor class management, limited use of assessment results in meeting students' needs, and insufficient support provided to the various categories of students inside and outside classes. Professional development for teachers is ineffective, with poor follow-up on the impact on teaching and learning. Curriculum enhancement programmes are limited, with insufficient opportunities provided for students to participate effectively in school life. All this negatively affects students' personal development and self-motivation. However, students generally adhere to Islamic values and Bahrain's heritage and culture. The majority of parents are satisfied with the school.

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

#### Grade: 4 Inadequate

The capacity to improve is inadequate. The strategic plan fails to identify work priorities and methods of improvements, due to inaccurate self-evaluation and its poor links with departments' action plans. Major challenges facing the school include low students' standards and skills in core subjects and the weak support provided to them both inside and outside classes. Their motivation towards learning is low, resulting from the limited availability of programmes that meet their needs. The role of middle management is muted, with continuous changes of staff and poor professional development programmes that are insufficient to meet teachers' training needs. This leads to the low performance of teachers in lessons, and limits the school's capacity to improve.

## Students' achievement

### □ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

#### Grade: 4 Inadequate

Students achieved high pass rates in both the school and MoE examinations during 2012-2013. Internal examinations' pass rates range between 89% and 100%, the lowest being Grade 4 English. Grade 9 MoE examinations range between 92% and 100% in core subjects, with mathematics being the lowest. Proficiency rates are consistent with pass rates in the secondary school, while varying in the primary and intermediate schools with an average in Grade 9 ranging between 48% and 57% in core subjects.

Arabic scored the lowest proficiency rates with 35% for Grade 6 and 39% for Grade 8. English in Grade 5 scored highest with 86%. Pass and proficiency rates are only reflected in a few lessons, resulting from ineffective teaching methods; moreover, due to poor class management and the limited support for students, the reflection of those results was minimum in most lessons.

The Majority of students adequately acquire basic skills in English, mathematics and science, such as oral expression, reading aloud in English, calculations in mathematics in the primary school, and the distinction between nuclear and chemical interactions in science in the secondary school. Their acquisition of basic skills is below expectations in most lessons, and oral and written expression in Arabic are less developed, as are extended writing in English, inquiry and deduction skills in science, and application of arithmetic concepts in problem solving in mathematics.

Students' results over the last three years from 2011 to 2013 show stable high pass rates, but proficiency rates show a decline in most core subjects. Whilst pass rates in Arabic in the MoE examinations for Grade 9 have improved, they remain the same in mathematics and science but have declined in English. Different categories of students achieve inadequate progress according to their abilities in most lessons and in written work, a result of limited activities that cater for individual needs.

Outstanding and talented students make limited progress due to the insufficient support provided, limited opportunities that challenge their abilities in most lessons, and limited enrichment programmes that enhance their abilities, restricted to competitions such as the recitation of the Holy Quran and poetry. Low achieving students make less than expected progress due to the poor support provided to them in lessons and remedial programmes.



## □ How good is the students' personal development?

### **Grade: 4 Inadequate**

The majority of students attend school regularly and are committed to their classes, though some report late to morning assembly and after breaks. The school follows these up through guidance and notices, reflecting positively in regular attendance by most students.

Students participate in limited activities and competitions, such as Students' Council and external competition in the Holy Quran in which the school took first place. Internal competitions between the classes do not contribute to enhancing students' self-confidence or increase their motivation and enthusiasm, being limited and failing to meet the various interests of students.

Few students show self-confidence in their ability to discuss and ask questions during lessons, the result of limited opportunities provided for them to participate, work together, and assume leading roles. Most students have good relations with each other, mutual respect and good behaviour, owing to behavioural projects such as 'We are good' which enhances Islamic values. However, some students do not feel secure at school, particularly in the first cycle as a result of teachers' insufficient attention. Educational approaches that cater for the different needs of the senior students are erratic, including cancellation of trips and some celebrations.

The majority of students show an understanding of Bahrain's culture and heritage. The school enhances this understanding in a satisfactory manner through the celebration of national festivals and community events.

## **The quality of provision**

### □ How effective are teaching and learning?

### **Grade: 4 Inadequate**

Most teachers are familiar with the subjects they teach, though this is not sufficiently reflected in the effectiveness of their teaching methods in the majority of lessons. Most lessons are teacher-centred, focussing on asking questions for learning, group work and discussion. This does not help to focus students' attention or increase their motivation towards learning. Some teachers have made mistakes, such as the analysis of vocabulary syllables in Arabic in the first cycle. Teachers do use the available learning resources such as pictures, flash cards and smart boards, but their use is ineffective and does not motivate

students towards participation in lessons. Lesson objectives are often shared with students, but these are then not followed through during lessons.

Most lessons are managed in an ineffective and unproductive manner due to the teachers' inability to manage student behaviour in most lessons, particularly in the boys' classes, and the prolonged delivery of learning activities, especially in the introductory phase. The majority of lessons are not completed on time. This hinders the fulfilment of lesson objectives and negatively affects the broadening of students' horizons. It also reduces opportunities in lessons for teaching students according to their abilities. Moreover, encouragement and motivation are ineffective and do not help to increase students' motivation towards learning, nor their enjoyment of lessons. Support provided to the various categories of students is poor.

Class and homework activities are given to students, but the majority of these do not take students' differing abilities into account, with most activities being direct questions and completion of textbook work. Moreover, they are not marked regularly, nor is accurate and sufficient feedback given to students to help them develop.

Although written assessment methods are used in a limited number of lessons, they mostly concentrate on group work and individual oral questions. These are then not used in the diagnosis of students' different learning needs and the planning of lessons. This negatively affects students' progress.

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

#### **Grade: 4 Inadequate**

The curriculum has limited subjects to enhance student experiences. Some enrichment activities are provided for senior students and remedial actions for low achievers, both in the first cycle. Some extracurricular activities are provided during morning assembly, but do not enhance students' experiences.

The school has outlines for teaching the curricula, and most subjects are analysed except for mathematics. Nevertheless, delivery is below expectations, with poor teaching methods and few programmes that suit different learning levels. The majority of teachers focus on knowledge without the acquisition of concepts and skills, clearly reflected in computer lessons and the Holy Quran. Insufficient links are made between knowledge and various skills in most lessons, resulting in the inability of most students to use their skills in different learning situations.

The school develops students' understanding of citizenship through participation in national events and some field visits, which contribute to enhancing their sense of citizenship. However, it does not clearly develop students' understanding of their rights, duties and responsibilities due to the limited opportunities provided.

The school inconsistently uses its facilities such as the two family-life education laboratories and two computer laboratories. It enriches the school environment with some educational and guiding displays and corners such as the recycling corner, but celebration of students' work inside and outside classrooms is limited.

### **□ How well are students guided and supported?**

#### **Grade: 4 Inadequate**

An induction programme for new students helps them settle in easily. However, the school fails to sufficiently prepare students for the next phase of education, limited to a couple of lectures, though a meeting is arranged with a representative of a British university for those moving to higher education.

Students' health is monitored through awareness and guidance sessions, with programmes to enhance Islamic values for intermediate and secondary students. However, they do not sufficiently meet students' individual needs nor motivate them towards learning, and most students feel psychologically insecure.

Students' learning needs are diagnosed through tests. Students with learning difficulties and low achievers are merged in the 'self-development' programme presented to Grades 2 and 3 in Arabic, but they are not provided with sufficient support to make the expected progress and their attendance is irregular. Limited programmes are provided for talented and outstanding students. There is some participation in sports, and religious and writing competitions, but this is too little and leads to limited progress of most students.

In the primary stage the school communicates with parents through weekly bulletins and students' diaries, but to a lesser degree in other stages. A healthy and safe environment is provided for students and staff by following up on security and safety precautions, evacuation procedures and carrying out facilities maintenance.

## 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 vision is based on Al Falah Schools' general vision, focussing on educational pioneering, Islamic values and total quality. Unfortunately it is not shared with most staff. The three year strategic plan focuses on development aspects and is based on self-evaluation by the senior management. It covers all departments, but lacks follow-up procedures and clear performance indicators. It does not reflect on departments' action plans, which directly affects overall performance.

The school provides some general professional development to teachers through workshops, but without identifying their training needs. The workshops focus on topics such as the use of smart boards, but have little impact on most teachers' performance.

Outstanding teachers are honoured through the 'Star of the Month' award and through delegated responsibilities such as chairing internal committees. Teachers' performance is also assessed through lesson observations, exchange visits and feedback. However, such events are irregular due to the limited role of middle management who are only available once a week. More frequent follow-up is needed, particularly for new teachers who form half of the teaching staff. One third of lessons reviewed were judged as inadequate.

The school seeks parents' views and responds to some suggestions like the organisation of school trips. The Parents' Council also provides suggestions that are responded to where possible, such as having full time female workers in toilets. The vast majority of students are not satisfied with the school response to their suggestions and those of the Students' Council.

The school provides various resources and facilities that are inconsistently utilised, such as the science and computer laboratories and arts room. The learning resources centre is even less used. The school communicates with the local community and cooperates with the Civil Defence Directorate for evacuation drills. Field trips to Al Areen Park are organised. Nevertheless, such activities do not sufficiently meet the students' interests. The school's Principal and General Director have clear roles and responsibilities within the central organisational structure, but the support and guidance provided by the Board of Directors and the Board of Trustees are not sufficient to improve the school's overall performance.

## **The school's main strengths**

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- Students' understanding of and respect for Islamic values.

## Recommendations

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### **In order to improve, the school should:**

- construct the strategic plan to promote all aspects of the school, based on accurate and comprehensive self-evaluation with clear performance indicators and school priorities, and follow up its implementation on a regular basis
- raise students' academic achievement and develop their basic skills in all core subjects
- develop teaching and learning strategies by:
  - utilising a variety of assessment methods and using their results to meet students' learning needs
  - using efficient class management to ensure the effectiveness of lessons
  - providing the necessary learning support for the various categories of students.
- provide programmes and activities to motivate students, and provide sufficient opportunities to promote their self-confidence and ability to assume responsibilities through taking leading roles within and outside classrooms
- extend teachers' professional development programmes and follow up their impact on teaching and learning processes.