



هيئة جودة التعليم والتدريب  
Education & Training Quality Authority  
Kingdom of Bahrain - مملكة البحرين

# **Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews Review Report**

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

**Date of Review: 9-11 January 2017  
SP028-C2-R031**

## Introduction

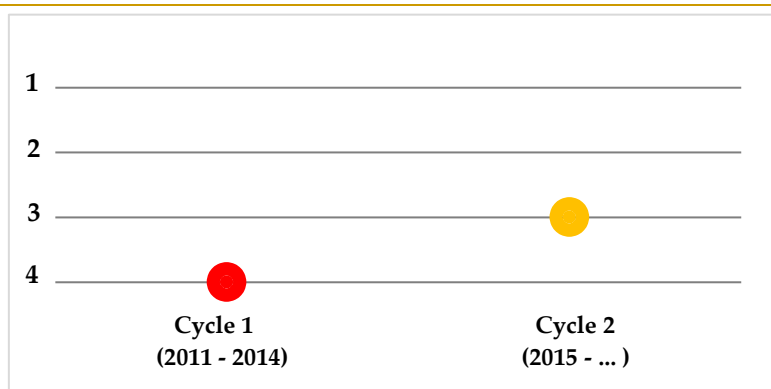
The Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews (DPS), which is a part of the Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA), conducted this review over three days by a team of nine reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed lessons and other activities, scrutinised students' written works and analysed school's performance data and other documents. They met with staff members, students and parents. This Report summarises their findings and recommendations.

### Summary of review judgements

<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
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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	3	3	3	3
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.



<b>1</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
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# School Report

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## 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

- The standards of the majority of students across the school are age-appropriate in all core subjects. However, the proficiency rates achieved by the Middle and High School students in internal examinations are low. The majority of students are making satisfactory progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills, across the school and in all subjects. However, in mathematics lessons, their achievement is highly inconsistent.
- The majority of students participate adequately in lessons and in school life generally. They demonstrate strong commitment to positive behaviour and respect each other's views and feelings. They have deep understanding of Bahraini culture and values.
- The effectiveness of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, though inconsistent in mathematics, particularly in the Primary School. A range of strategies, alongside effective use of the available resources interactive teaching, is practiced in the better lessons. However, in a few instances teaching strategies do not meet the learning needs of all students, particularly those who are less able. Additionally, the assessment results are not always used to inform teaching and

learning and in planning to support students of all abilities.

- The school is successful in meeting students' personal development needs and supporting them sensitively whenever they face problems. The learning needs of different groups of students are adequately met. However, the approach to identifying and meeting the needs of different ability groups is not systematic enough.

- Strategic and operational planning is in place, with the plans being adequately linked to the school's vision and mission. A range of professional development programmes is provided, though with inconsistent impact on classroom practices.
- Parents and students are satisfied with the school's provision.

### **Main positive features**

- Students' commitment to positive behaviour and respect for others' views, feelings and beliefs.
- Students' commitment to the values of citizenship and understanding of Bahraini culture and Islamic values.
- School's efforts in meeting students' needs, both to enhance their personal development and to carefully support them whenever they face problems.

### **Recommendations**

- Raise students' academic achievement, particularly in mathematics.
- Improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning, focussing on:
  - effective use of teaching and learning strategies to meet the needs of all students
  - rigorous use of assessment results to inform teaching and learning
  - supporting and challenging students of all abilities.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance by ensuring that the teachers' professional development programmes have an impact on students' achievement.
- Adopt a more systematic approach to identifying and meeting the needs of different ability groups of students.

## □ Capacity to improve 'Satisfactory'

### Judgement justifications

- The school has improved adequately in the key areas of students' academic achievement, the quality of teaching and learning and the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance, identified in the previous review.
- Students, across the school and in all the core subjects, show age-related standards in lessons, in academic work and in examinations. However, the proportion of students achieving acceptable proficiency rates in the internal examinations in the Middle and High Schools is low.
- Self-evaluation is regular, formal and involves stakeholders. Strategic and operational planning is in place, addressing the strategic goals and with sufficient links to the self-evaluation. Policies and procedures are adequately in place to support the students.
- Professional development is based on teachers' actual needs and linked to their appraisals.
- The facilities and available resources, including laboratories and library, are sufficiently utilised to support learning.
- Positive professional relationships are in place between the school leadership, staff and students, with high mutual respect. This has a positive impact on teacher retention.

## Quality of outcomes

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### □ Students' academic achievement 'Satisfactory'

#### Judgement justifications

- Students achieve consistently high pass rates in internal examinations, since 2013-2014 ranging between 90% in English in Grade 1 and 100% in most subjects in the Middle and High Schools.
- Proficiency rates in the internal examinations are inconsistent in the Primary School, while being low in the Middle and High Schools, ranging between 5% in mathematics and 55% in Arabic in Middle School.
- In 2016, the performance of students in Cambridge Checkpoint was high with 94% of students in mathematics and 100% in science achieving at least 3 points out of 6. Average scores range between 3.0 in English and 4.9 in mathematics, being between the good and very good ranges.
- Around 35% of students in science and 60% in mathematics scored at least 5 out of 6 in the Cambridge Checkpoint. The average scores of students in Primary Checkpoint ranged between 2.8 in mathematics and 3.2 in science. However, the attainment in both the Checkpoint examinations in terms of proficiency rates is inconsistent.
- In High School, IGCSE students attained grades from A\* to C, ranging between 60% in biology and 100% in English and physics.
- In IGCSE, the proportion of students securing grades between A\* to B achieved proficiency rates ranging between 40% in Arabic and information & communication technology and 60% in biology. In English and biology, their results are above the world average.
- Tracking data of the same cohort over three years shows that students across the school are maintaining their age-appropriate academic performance in all core subjects.
- Across the school, in all the core subjects, students achieve age-appropriate standards in lessons and in their written work.
- Across the school, both in Arabic and in English, although students have secure oral communication skills their writing skills are inconsistent.
- Students across all the grades demonstrate adequate mathematical skills. For example, Primary School students can perform arithmetic operations and High School students can work with vectors. However, the data handling skills in the Middle School are inconsistent, while problem-solving skills, throughout the school, are underdeveloped.
- In science, students develop an adequate understanding of key scientific concepts. However, their practical skills are underdeveloped.
- In general, students make satisfactory progress in most of the core subjects lessons and in their written work. However, in a very small minority of lessons weak teaching limits their progress, particularly in science and mathematics in the Primary School.

## Areas for improvement

- The progress of students in the less effective lessons, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Students' practical and problem solving skills in science and mathematics and writing skills in languages.
- Students' proficiency rates in the internal examinations and their attainment in the Checkpoint examinations.

## □ Students' personal development 'Satisfactory'

### Judgement justifications

- In general, the majority of students participate adequately in school life both inside and outside the classroom. In the better lessons this participation is enthusiastic. However, in other lessons their participation, self-confidence and enthusiasm in handling leadership roles are inconsistent and very much dependent on the teaching and learning strategies. They are keen on joining in school events such as the morning assemblies, house activities and extracurricular activities including competitions, celebration of educational weeks, carnival and Science Fair.
  - Behaviour is good across the school. A culture of mutual respect for peers' and teachers' views and feelings prevails and is well appreciated by the parents. Students generally care for the school facilities and conduct themselves responsibly. They attend school regularly and punctually.
  - Students feel safe and secure, which shows in their good conduct both inside and outside the classrooms.
- Consequently, issues related to unacceptable behaviour are rare.
- Students show a strong understanding of both Islamic values and Bahraini culture and heritage. These are developed and demonstrated through various contests and charity campaigns as well as the celebration of national events and religious festivals such as Bahrain National Day and Eid. The strong commitment of students to Islamic value is reflected in their very positive attitude, across the school.
  - Students' independent learning skills and ability to take responsibility for their own learning are inconsistently developed. This is evident from classroom activities, due to limited opportunities provided across the school. In the better lessons students are provided with inquiry based homework to develop independent learning.
  - In the majority of lessons across all grades, whenever the opportunities exist students work collaboratively and communicate effectively, but at times the more able students dominate in group activities.

## **Areas for improvement**

- Students' more active participation, self-confidence and enthusiasm in handling leadership roles, particularly in lessons.
- Students' ability to learn independently and take more responsibility for their own learning.
- Students' collaborative working skills.



## Quality of processes

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### □ Teaching and learning 'Satisfactory'

#### Judgement justifications

- In most lessons teaching provides opportunities for interaction and collaboration through individual activities, discussions and group work. Various learning resources such as flash cards, interactive white boards, smart televisions, video clippings and PowerPoint presentations are used. However, the effectiveness of these strategies is inconsistent in science and mathematics, particularly in the Primary School.
- Lessons are generally orderly and appropriately managed. Nonetheless, in few lessons inconsistent management of the learning time lead to fast pace lessons and the learning objectives are not effectively achieved. Teachers across the school generally use questioning and clear explanations to make lessons adequately productive. However, in a few lessons insufficient thinking time is given to student, limiting their learning and significantly reducing the productivity of these lessons.
- Students are sufficiently encouraged to participate in the learning process through praise. The better lessons, particularly in English, actively involve students in classroom tasks. Consequently, in these lessons, the learning outcomes are successfully achieved by most students.
- In most lessons, oral and written methods of assessment for learning are adequately used. However, in a minority of lessons the more able students dominate the oral responses. Additionally, the results of assessment for learning in lessons are not sufficiently used to inform teaching and support students.
- Homework is regularly assigned to students, across all the subjects and grades. In a few better lessons research-based homework provides significant opportunities for students to develop their independent learning skills. In the majority of lessons homework consolidates the work done in class. Although students' work is regularly checked it lacks critical feedback to guide students on how to improve further.
- In the majority of lessons, the teaching strategies lack the provision of sufficient opportunities to students to justify, reason and interpret their replies and express their points of view. Thus the opportunities for students to develop their higher order thinking skills are limited.
- In almost all lessons whole-class teaching is practised, and the instructions and tasks are not modified to cater to students' abilities. Consequently, students of different abilities are not effectively supported or challenged to improve their academic performance, and students' attainment and progress remains inconsistent.

## Areas for improvement

- A wider range of teaching strategies to meet the needs of all students.
- Use of assessment results to inform teaching and learning.
- Supporting and challenging the abilities of all students.

## □ Students' support and guidance 'Satisfactory'

### Judgement justifications

- The school meets the learning needs of students adequately by analysing and tracking their attainment data on a regular basis across all levels and sharing the data with teachers and parents.
- Gifted and talented students are adequately supported by the provision of opportunities to participate in different competitions and activities both inside and outside the school. These include the Quran Recitation Contest, Arabic Reading Challenge and Bahrain Third Mini Olympics'.
- Low achieving students and those with learning difficulties are appropriately supported, with remedial classes on Saturdays and individual guidance sessions by the social counsellor. In a few better lessons the more able students support their low achieving peers. However, the impact of this support and the effectiveness of the reinforcement in meeting students' different learning needs are inconsistent. Moreover, an attempt to identify and meet the needs of the different ability groups of students is not very systematic and the impact is inconsistent.
- Outstanding students have sufficient opportunities to participate in inter-school competitions such as the science fair, speech contest, Arabic reading challenge and debates.
- The school provides good support to students to enhance their personal development, through lectures such as 'I am Responsible' and through various counselling sessions. The school is prompt in sensitively supporting students when they have any issues. This is well praised by the parents.
- The school adequately broadens students' experiences and interests by providing an adequate range of activities, such as the Traffic Safety Campaign, inter-house competitions, sports events, Reading Club and external visits. However, the impact of such activities on the development of students' life skills is inconsistent, particularly in the Primary School.
- Although the school premises are old they are sufficiently maintained, and the school provides an adequately healthy and safe environment to students and staff. Risk assessment is carried out regularly and staff and students are trained on evacuation and fire drills. Health projects include a presentation on 'Importance of the Breakfast Meal' plus free eyes, dental and health check-ups, contributing significantly to the development of healthy habits among students.

- An orientation week is organised to suitably induct new students into the school. During this week students are shown around the school premises, meet relevant staff and are familiarised with the school rules. A workshop is also conducted to familiarise Middle School students with Cambridge IGCSE.
- The school provides adequate opportunities for promoting students' life skills, through AJYAL educational programme and the Students' Council. In a significant proportion of lessons, teaching encourages the use of dictionaries and reading tables, enabling the development of life skills.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The effective reinforcement to meet students' different learning needs.
- A systematic approach in identifying and meeting the needs of the different ability groups of students.
- Provision of school activities to promote students' life skills.

## Quality assurance of outcomes and processes

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### □ Leadership, management and governance 'Satisfactory'

#### Judgement justifications

- The school's vision and mission is adequately shared with staff and students and shows in the harmonious atmosphere within the school.
- The school's strategic and operational planning is adequate. These are based on the results of the self-evaluation of the school's needs through the analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, views of the stakeholder's and BQA's previous visit recommendations. These plans have adequate links with the school's vision and mission.
- Planning is sufficiently focused on raising students' achievement and personal development. It caters for teaching and learning by means of staff professional development, and leadership and management with an efficient administration team. Policies and procedures are adequately in place to support the students' needs.
- The staff works in a positive family-like environment, with high mutual respect, and are adequately motivated and encouraged through financial incentives and appreciation by the management. This contributes well to teacher retention.
- The school's middle and senior leadership regularly conduct class observations and provide adequately critical verbal and written feedback to teachers. Professional development sessions, adequately linked to teacher evaluations, are provided on a range of topics including Class Management, Differentiated Instructions, Assessment for Learning and Peer Learning. However, the impact of these programmes on classroom practices and students' academic achievement is inconsistent.
- The effective use of learning resources in classes is inconsistent, which adversely affects students' engagement. The library, information and communication technology laboratory, auditorium, audio visual rooms and the football field are adequately utilised to support learning. Use of the science laboratories is focused on the higher grades.
- Adequate links are maintained between the school and the local community in terms of participation in inter-school competitions and celebrations. Community-linked extracurricular activities are adequate, including 'Health Talks', visits to homes for the elderly, and charity campaigns such as Tree of Life Charity and orphans' support.
- The Board of Directors contributes to the overall sense of direction and advises the school leadership on the choice of curriculum, selection of staff, strategic directions and finance. The Board meets regularly to monitor the school's performance and adequately holds the senior leadership accountable for the school's performance.

## **Areas for improvement**

- The effectiveness of continuous professional development programmes, with a focus on students' academic achievement.
- The effective utilisation of resources to enrich students' learning.
- The local community links that contribute to students' academic achievement and personal development.

## Appendix: Characteristics of the school

Name of the school (Arabic)	مدرسة المهدي الداخلية - فرع سار													
Name of the school (English)	Al Mahd Day Boarding School – Saar Branch													
Year of establishment	1997													
Address	Villa 795, Road 1725, Block 517													
Town / Village / Governorate	Saar / Northern													
School's Contacts	17792422				Fax				17792606					
School's e-mail	almahd.school@gmail.com													
School's website	www.almahdschool.com													
Age range of students	5-18 years													
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)	Primary				Middle				High					
	1-6				7-8				9-10					
Number of students	Boys		439		Girls		416		Total		855			
Students' social background	Most students are from lower and upper middle income families													
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	Classes	7	6	6	5	4	4	3	2	2	1	-	-	
Number of administrative staff	31													
Number of teaching staff	58													
Curriculum	British – Cambridge													
Main language(s) of instruction	English													
Principal's tenure in the school	2 years													
External assessment and examinations	Primary Checkpoint, Cambridge Checkpoint, International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE)													
Accreditation (if applicable)	Cambridge International Examinations (CIE)													
Major recent changes in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new science laboratory opened in September 2015.</li> <li>• Teaching of Bahrain history in Arabic.</li> <li>• Updated school software.</li> </ul>													