

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



Schools Review Unit Review Report

**Al Majd Private School
Al Zinj – Capital Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date of Review: 8 – 10 October 2012

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The Schools Review Unit

The Schools Review Unit (SRU) is part of the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (NAQQAET) 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 SRU is responsible for:

- evaluating and reporting on the quality of provision in all schools and kindergartens
- establishing success measures
- spreading best practice
- making recommendations for 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 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 Majd Private School											
School's type		Private											
Year of establishment		2004											
Age range of students		5 -15 years											
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High			
		1-6				7-9				-			
		Key Stage (KS) 1: Years 1 & 2; KS2: Years 3 to 6; KS3: Years 7 to 9.											
Number of students		Boys	161	Girls	116	Total		277					
Students' social background		Average income families											
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Classes	3	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-
Town /Village		Al Zinj											
Governorate		Capital											
Number of administrative staff		5											
Number of teaching staff		25 teachers + 11 support teachers											
Curriculum		British											
Main language(s) of instruction		English. Arabic in teaching Arabic language, citizenship and Islamic studies.											
Principal's tenure		1 year											
External assessment and examinations		None											
Accreditation (if applicable)		-											
Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification		Outstanding				Gifted & Talented			Physical Disabilities			Learning Difficulties	
		-				-			2			18	

Major recent changes in the school

- The school appointed a new Principal in 2012-13.
- In 2010-11, KS 3 students were transferred to a new building due to the expansion of the school premises.
- New facilities such as smart boards have been provided and a maintenance manager appointed.

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
Students' personal development	3	3	-	3
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	4	4	-	4
The quality of the curriculum implementation	4	4	-	4
The quality of support and guidance for students	3	3	-	3
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	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

Al Majd Private School's overall effectiveness is inadequate, due to significant shortcomings in the quality of provision and low levels of students' achievement. Students' academic standards and progress are below age-related expectations across the school, particularly in science and mathematics. Teaching lacks assessment and uses a limited range of strategies and resources. Curriculum review gives too little consideration and response to the different needs of students. The management promotes a positive family atmosphere and students respect each other well and act mutually in maintaining the school facilities. Self-evaluation lacks both rigour and monitoring systems to cover all areas of school performance. Action planning does not provide enough detail to guide and monitor improvements. Parents are regularly informed about their children's progress and students and parents are generally satisfied with the school.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Despite the positive notion exerted by the school's staff, there are significant areas of improvements to be addressed in the school's performance. School action planning is not effectively implemented to bring about improvement, middle managers are not sufficiently involved in the process and their roles are limited to evaluating teachers' performance. Existing teaching methodology and curriculum implementation does not sufficiently cater to students' different needs. Self-evaluation is not rigorous enough and does not accurately set key improvement priorities in order for students' attainment to be in line with key stage expectations. In addition, self-evaluation is not linked to strategic planning, and action planning lacks clear mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating its implementation.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Students attained high pass rates in internal examinations in 2011 and 2012 in all core subjects, with high competency rates in KS1 and KS2, but with a decrease in KS3, particularly in Year 8. The school does not use external benchmarking. In lessons and students' written work, students' standards are inconsistent in KS1 and below expectation in KS2 and KS3. In the majority of lessons, the progress students make in relation to their starting points and their abilities is satisfactory in KS1 but inadequate in KS2 and KS3, particularly in science and mathematics. In Arabic, the majority of students have good speaking and listening skills throughout the school. Students in KS2 read a range of texts fluently and with comprehension, demonstrating an understanding of grammar. However, the writing skills of Year 8 and Year 9 students are not developed well enough.

In English, the majority of students across the school have good listening and oral skills. They use a range of vocabulary with appropriate fluency. They read with expression and comprehend a variety of texts. However, students do not make the expected progress in their writing and use of grammar, particularly in KS3.

In mathematics, students' arithmetic skills are insufficiently developed, with an over-emphasis on memorization rather than understanding and application. In KS1, students can count confidently but only a few are able to solve simple arithmetical problems using money. In KS2, although Year 3 students have an adequate understanding of estimating concepts, few Year 6 students can multiply and divide numbers confidently. In KS3, students show insufficient understanding of fractions and sequences as most students are unable to correctly divide fractions and find appropriate sequences.

In science, the majority of KS1 students demonstrate age-appropriate knowledge of the environment, with adequate use of scientific terminology. In KS2, most students show a limited understanding of fundamental concepts such as animals and their diets and they lack confidence to infer from observations. In KS3, most students have insufficient understanding of key scientific terms and basic concepts such as acids, alkalis and gravity. Their confidence is limited when explaining these concepts and giving suitable examples. Moreover across the school, students' practical, investigative and research skills are limited.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Most students arrive on time each day and are punctual in attending their classes. The majority of students participate in school life, which starts with morning assembly and the broadcast conducted by selected students. In the better lessons, students participate in their learning and are eager to ask questions as a result of the teaching methods used. The majority participate in school committees, such as the cultural committee and the cleanliness committee, which suitably meet their interests and enhance their experiences. However, most of these activities are for selected students which deprives the rest from participating.

In a limited number of lessons, the majority of students develop self-confidence and work independently. Through their council, students have the opportunity to express themselves and their views. They discuss matters with the management. However, such roles of assuming responsibility are too limited for students in most lessons.

Most students enjoy good relationships with others, and despite a few having some quarrels, most show good respect to each other and act properly in and outside classes. This contributes to students' sense of comfort and security in the school. Most students show a strong sense of belonging, including their understanding of the heritage and culture of Bahrain as they actively participate in national events and festivals.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

In a limited number of Arabic and English lessons, particularly in KS1 and KS2, the majority of teachers effectively use their subject and course knowledge with clear explanations to students. Nevertheless, in most KS2 and KS3 lessons, there is too much emphasis on the transmission of knowledge and facts with insufficient focus on providing opportunities for students to develop skills and understanding. Very few teachers make effective use of interactive boards, flash cards, chart work and interactive question and answer sessions to develop interest and promote learning. In most lessons across the school, limited use is made of resources to promote learning. Additionally, the opportunities for students to develop analytical thinking and problem-solving skills are too limited across all subjects. In a significant number of lessons, class management is not effective and leads to slow

progress. However, in more productive lessons in Arabic and English, teachers tend to have more effective class management skills.

Teachers generally provide too little support to students and this leads to their limited engagement and motivation. Low expectations, together with limited and ineffective challenge in most lessons do not appropriately target students of all abilities to enable them to make at least expected progress. In lessons, teachers mostly provide tasks which are focused on factual recall and insufficiently develop research skills, apart from a few lessons where the majority of students are engaged, motivated, encouraged and supported.

In the majority of lessons across the school, a limited range of teaching strategies and resources is used to promote effective learning. Whole-class teaching predominates with too little planning to cater for the needs of all students, including those with special educational needs. Students are provided with limited opportunities to interact in class discussions, develop confidence by working independently and in collaborative groups. However, in the best practices, teachers successfully challenge students and expectations are higher.

Assessment is appropriately used in KS1, but in KS2 and KS3 most teachers do not use assessment results to diagnose and meet the different needs of all students, as assessment tools are not effectively implemented to track and measure each student's progress.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Curriculum implementation is primarily based on selected textbooks which provide progression and continuity. However, it does not offer a sufficiently broad range of experiences as it gives limited attention to developing students' practical, investigative, research and creative skills. This provides insufficient preparation for the next stages of their education. A more limited choice of subjects is offered to KS3 students. In KS 1 to 3, curriculum overviews and course outlines lack sufficient detail to ensure that curriculum implementation caters for the different needs of all students, including high achievers as well as those with learning difficulties and special educational needs.

Curriculum review pays insufficient attention to evaluating implementation in order to ensure that modifications are planned in response to the experiences and interests of students and to provide appropriate challenge and support. Planned links between subjects are very limited. KS2 & KS3 students are given opportunities to develop an awareness of their rights and responsibilities during citizenship lessons, as well as to learn leadership

skills through extra-curricular activities such as the Toastmaster Club. An appropriate range of extra-curricular activities is provided to engage most students' interests and promote learning. Additionally, satisfactory attention is given to using local resources to enhance students' learning, and this includes informative visits by the civil defence and regular field trips.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Successful induction helps students joining the school to settle quickly and easily. They are given clear guidelines and instructions, together with introductions to their peers and staff. Counsellors work in close coordination with teachers, but lack easy access to students' portfolios to facilitate their monitoring of students' personal development. Students' academic progress is insufficiently monitored in order to ensure that appropriate challenge and support are provided in and outside lessons. Additionally, assessment results are not used sufficiently to diagnose different learning difficulties, so that all students' educational needs can be met.

Students are sensitively supported if they have problems and some older students take on monitoring roles to guide the younger students. Students' behaviour and social relationships are adequately developed and monitored. Adequate guidance is given to students about the next stage of education and choices of schools. Provision for enrolled students with special educational needs is unsatisfactory as their needs are not diagnosed or even recognised, which therefore does not support their learning in classes. Parents are well-informed about their children's academic progress through effective parent-teacher communication and report cards. Risk assessments are conducted and rare incidents of misbehaviour are swiftly handled. The school provides a healthy and safe environment and has good medical provision in case of need.

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 friendly, cooperative relationships between all members of the community promoted by the previous principal is encouraged by the incoming principal, who is developing an

additional focus on organisation and structure with the support of the subject coordinators. Whilst motivation is appropriately provided, the support given to staff is not sufficiently effective to ensure consistent quality in teaching that positively impacts on raising the standard of students' achievement throughout the school.

Self-evaluation is insufficiently rigorous. It involves using some quality assurance techniques, including student and parent questionnaires, but lacks systematic mechanisms to cover all areas of school performance, in particular, analysis of students' achievement results, performance management and curriculum review. Strategic planning identifies goals extending over a five years period. However, the action plan provides very limited detail to guide and monitor improvement planning. For example, there are no specific actions to achieve goals, no assigned responsibilities and no monitoring process to record and evaluate progress. Teacher evaluation appropriately involves co-ordinators, however this leads to only limited personal target-setting and monitoring of progress, which does not develop the quality of teaching enough. There is a limited link between the results of teacher evaluation and the planning for continuous professional development to address individual and school-wide needs. The principal relies mostly, for the purposes of teacher evaluation, on self-assessment.

The school is developing its facilities, but resources are still limited. For example, science facilities and apparatus to promote investigative and practical work are inadequate and there are insufficient reading books. Most significantly, teaching frequently makes ineffective use of available resources such as the interactive whiteboards. Effective communication with parents demonstrates the school's priority to seek their views. Parents and students appreciate the positive response to their feedback, for example in the provision of sports facilities. The school has developed adequate links with the local community including educational visits by a doctor and by the civil defence, and regular field trips.

The advisory board has established distinct roles for themselves and the school management. They respect the differences between the two, giving full responsibility for day-to-day matters to the principal. Benchmarks are set for the school's development and the advisory board holds the principal accountable through meetings as well as feedback from parents.

The school's main strengths

- Students' sense of belonging and understanding of Bahraini heritage
- The productive relationship between the school management and parents
- Students' good behaviour and their respect for each other.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- raise students' achievement throughout the school, particularly in science and mathematics
- improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning by:
 - effective use of a wider range of teaching and learning strategies and resources
 - effective use of the results of assessment during lessons to meet the needs of all students
 - effective class management to ensure productive lessons
 - focusing on developing understanding and skills as well as knowledge.
- undertake an on-going curriculum review which addresses students' interests, experiences and different needs
- improve the quality of leadership, management and governance through:
 - rigorous and systematic self-evaluation to identify key development priorities in all aspects of the school's performance
 - detailed action planning to guide and monitor improvement planning
 - linking the outcomes of teacher evaluation with provision of continuous professional development to address both individual and whole school needs.