



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

Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews

Review Report

Eastern School
Manama - Capital Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date of Review: 22-24 September 2014

SP054-C1-R054

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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 six 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		Eastern School											
School's type		Private											
Year of establishment		2010											
Age range of students		6-17 years											
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Secondary				High Secondary			
		1- 6				7-10				11			
Number of students		Boys	134			Girls	91			Total	225		
Students' social background		Mainly middle class backgrounds											
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Classes	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	-
Town /Village		Manama											
Governorate		Capital											
Number of administrative staff		5											
Number of teaching staff		25											
Curriculum		British											
Main language(s) of instruction		English and Arabic											
Principal's tenure		4 years											
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	
		-				-			-			-	
Major recent changes in the school		-											

Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	4: Inadequate			
The school's capacity to improve	4: Inadequate			
	Primary	Secondary	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

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, with all aspects judged as inadequate. Pass rates are generally high in internal examinations, but standards and progress in almost all lessons are inadequate. The school lacks a rigorous self-evaluation system that is linked to priorities, strategic planning and effective teachers' professional development programmes. In lessons, teaching and learning strategies employed have limited impact on learning. Students' learning needs are not supported adequately, time is not managed effectively and assessment is not well implemented to plan for learning. Although students feel safe and secure, opportunities provided for them to develop their confidence, work independently and take on responsibilities are too limited. The curriculum is not comprehensively reviewed or enriched to meet students' needs and interests. However, students and parents are satisfied with the school.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The school's capacity to improve is inadequate due to the absence of rigorous self-evaluation, clear strategic planning and effective professional development programmes that are needed to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to develop students' standards and progress. The present gaps in the school's key management structure and resources hinder its ability to carry out some essential improvements. Students lack support due to the absence of some key staff. For example, there is an explicit need for middle management and social and career counsellors. Staff responsibilities are confusing due to the lack of clear job descriptions, and well-established procedures to monitor performance particularly in teaching and learning are absent. Therefore, external support is essential in order to improve the overall performance of the school.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The majority of students across the school attained pass rates, in the year 2013-2014, ranging between 100% and 50% with 40% as the minimum requirement to pass. These results are based on internally marked tests without any external referencing. Competency rates are high in most core subjects in most grades, ranging from 100% to 31% except for mathematics in Grade 5 where it is 21% and Grade 8 with 27%. However, the high results documented in the internal examinations do not match students' achievement in lessons. In the majority of lessons throughout the school and in students' written work, their knowledge and understanding is below the curriculum expectations.

Although the majority of students at the primary level demonstrate standards in line with grade expectations in science and mathematics, their standards in English and Arabic are under the age requirements in most grades. In most lessons, students make limited progress in most grades and all core subjects in relation to their starting points and abilities.

The majority of students speak English with age-appropriate fluency as they can follow their teachers' instructions and respond adequately. However, their writing skills in both Arabic and English are insufficiently developed across all grades. For example, though primary students successfully repeat words after their teachers in the read-aloud sessions, their progress in reading comprehension and vocabulary is limited. Nevertheless, Grade 5 students demonstrate adequate progress in the lesson where most students apply appropriate verb tenses in sentences.

In mathematics, few primary school students' demonstrate adequate standards. For example, Grade 4 students can write algebraic expressions. On the other hand, in most lessons students' basic arithmetic skills are poorly developed and they exhibit insufficient calculation skills and lack confidence in solving problems. In science, students show satisfactory levels of understanding of scientific facts in a few adequate lessons. For example, Grade 3 students describe parts of plants and Grade 11 students explain the functions of mitochondria in animal cells. However, in the majority of the lessons observed, students do not make sufficient progress in understanding scientific concepts and their inquiry and practical skills are underdeveloped.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Most students attend school regularly, with daily attendance percentages ranging between 86% and 92%. However, 13% of students arrive late in the morning. Students' participation in both class and school life is too limited due to the lack of activities catering to their needs. The majority of in-class activities are teacher-centred and extra-curriculum activities available outside the classroom are limited to sports.

Most students do not develop self-confidence or collaborative and independent learning skills, nor take on leadership roles due to the fact that teaching strategies lead to most students being passive learners fulfilling basic individual tasks. Nevertheless, most students are mature, responsible and well-mannered. They exhibit suitable behaviour and form positive relations with their teachers and class-mates. However, there are a few cases of unacceptable behaviour such as teasing and disruption of class that are dealt with according to school's policies. Therefore, most students feel safe and secure.

The majority of students show an adequate sense of belonging to Bahrain and acceptable understanding of its culture and the values of Islam, the result of school activities such as visits to a few historical sites, including Bahrain Museum, and National Day celebrations. Citizenship lessons play a significant role in instilling a sense of belonging and patriotism.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The majority of teachers have secure subject knowledge; however, this only shows in a very few lessons where teaching provides instructions and illustrations that contribute to students' understanding. In almost half the lessons, the effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies employed is too limited, with the focus on chorusing phrases and information that is readily provided without allowing sufficient opportunities for students to think or work independently. This negatively impacts students' understanding and acquisition of skills. There is a great focus on memorising basic knowledge, for example in a science lesson in Grade two the main focus was on knowing the different parts of plants without any actual understanding of their functions.

Most lessons are teacher-centred. Occasional questions are directed to students but they are almost always closed ones, allowing no development of students' higher order thinking skills such as reasoning or critical thinking. In the vast majority of lessons, too much reliance is placed on teaching through textbooks, with limited involvement and engagement of students in their learning. Other than whiteboards and textbooks only limited resources are used in lessons, apart from a few such as the use of a model to explain a shape in a Grade 6 mathematics lesson.

Most teachers manage behaviour in lessons effectively and students are well-behaved. However, the pace of activities in most lessons is slow with activities focusing on copying material provided, which itself is well-below age expected levels.

Homework is usually assigned as indicated in lesson plans. Nevertheless, it does not enhance or enrich students' learning. With the exception of a few lessons when written tasks are given to students, there is an over-reliance in the vast majority of lessons on direct questions to check the memorisation of knowledge that is being drilled into them with very little feedback provided. Students are not helped to improve the quality of their written work as it is often corrected without providing appropriate feedback. Assessment is generalised and its results are not taken into account to plan to meet students' different needs in and out of lessons. Moreover, students seem disconnected from the activities in their lessons, due to unclear objectives in lesson plans which are almost never shared with them.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The curriculum provides an adequate range of subjects, following the British curriculum for the majority of subjects and the MoE curriculum in Arabic subjects. Students in Grade 9 and above have the choice between science and commerce streams. However, lessons in almost all subjects lack interactive and practical activities, failing to sufficiently cater to students' diverse abilities including high and low achievers.

Curriculum review is limited to changes in textbooks. Almost all lessons are textbook driven, with very little attention paid to developing students' life skills such as investigative, practical, research and ICT skills. There are hardly any links made between subjects, so

students do not experience a coherent curriculum; for example, when solving problems in Grade 8 physics, it is not recommended that students apply their mathematical skills.

One activity period per week is offered to Grades 1 to 7 students, but choices are not provided to meet their different interests. Other than citizenship lessons, the school provides few opportunities to promote students' understanding of their responsibilities. The curriculum is insufficiently enriched by the use of the school environment, with only scarce resources. For example, the science lab is not equipped and learning resources in the library are too limited. Students' work is seldom displayed inside or outside the classrooms.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The school does not have an adequate induction system in place to help students settle easily and quickly. New students are distributed to their classes and left to cope for themselves. Although the school sometimes offers remedial lessons in core subjects such as mathematics and Arabic, and assesses students' attainment through termly tests, it lacks a systematic procedure for monitoring students' academic progress and personal development. Assessment data is not analysed or used to meet students' needs.

The school lacks essential staff and resources to identify and meet students' different needs, such as social and career counsellors and administrative supervisors. Students with special educational needs rarely receive sufficient support and others are reluctant to approach staff regarding their problems as they are rarely resolved. Older students have a choice between science and commerce streams, but do not have access to well-informed advice to guide them on their future choices of studies or employment. Nevertheless, unstructured advice is occasionally provided.

Parents receive sufficient information about their children's attainment through report cards and termly meeting with teachers to discuss academic issues, as well as teachers' contact details. The school satisfactorily maintains a safe environment for students and staff. It has recently conducted a risk assessment and an evacuation drill. The school clinic adequately supports students.

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's management has a stated vision that focuses on development, but it is not shared with and by the school community. Self-evaluation and performance analysis is too limited; it is not systematic, lacks rigour and is not embedded in all the functions of the school. The school's strategic objectives are set by the school leadership and the Chairman of the Board of Management, but have no links to any self-evaluation. The school lacks explicit strategic planning, and action planning is more or less day to day trouble-shooting. The school also lacks systems and procedures to show when and how to achieve the strategic objectives or monitor progress made, with no performance indicators to measure success. The school does not have precise and effective monitoring schemes to reveal its strengths and areas for improvement, particularly in teaching and learning.

Although staff are sometimes motivated through monetary incentives, the support provided is too limited. Even though the principal conducts class visits in order to improve teachers' professional competences, these are neither regular nor rigorous enough. They do not sufficiently identify teachers' individual professional development needs, concentrating more on offering too few general training sessions such as those on the effectiveness of teaching and learning and child-centred learning. Their impact on teachers' performance is very limited across the school, with teaching lacking sufficient emphasis on catering to students' different abilities and skills development. Resources are scarce, with no laboratory facility. Consequently, students' are devoid of experiential learning, resulting in a lack of practical and investigative skills.

The school lacks formal students and parents councils, and is without a system and policy to seek the views of parents and students on its provision. It does not have any significant link with the local community to enhance students' learning experiences. The roles and responsibilities of the school leader and the Board of Management are separated and respected. However, the Board of Management is almost non-operational, and therefore unable to provide sufficient strategic guidance, financial planning and resources to ensure that the school delivers its promise to parents.

The school's main strengths

- Students feel safe and secure.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- seek external support to establish a rigorous self-evaluation system with clear links to:
 - priorities and strategic planning and policies
 - extensive professional development programmes for teachers.
- improve teaching and learning strategies to ensure that:
 - students' achievements are raised and monitored
 - support is provided to students of different abilities
 - effective time management is implemented to support students' involvement in learning
 - assessment results are used to plan for students' learning.
- provide regular opportunities for all students to develop their confidence, capacity to work independently, and take on responsibilities in school life
- conduct a comprehensive curriculum review and enrichment, to meet the different needs of the students
- fill the gap for a French teacher and middle school science teacher.