



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

Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews Review Report

**Ebenezer Private School
Barbar-Northern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date of Review: 25 – 27 November 2013
SP042-C1-R042**

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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 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		Ebenezer Private School											
School's type		Private											
Year of establishment		2006											
Age range of students		5-12 years											
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High			
		1-6				-				-			
Number of students		Boys	131	Girls	89	Total		220					
Students' social background		Most students come from middle income families											
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Classes	3	2	2	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Town /Village		Barbar											
Governorate		Northern											
Number of administrative staff		5											
Number of teaching staff		18											
Curriculum		British											
Main language(s) of instruction		English											
Principal's tenure		3 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		
		85			8			-			10		
Major recent changes in the school		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school moved from Tubli to Barbar in 2010. 											

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

Students behave well, showing respect to colleagues and teachers. They have sound understanding of Bahrain's heritage and culture and Islamic values. Adequate support is provided to students in case of problems. Parents can discuss their child's performance through regular parent-teacher meetings. However, in most lessons teaching is highly focused on factual recall, not sufficiently promoting the development of understanding and skills. Consequently, students' academic standards are weak and progress limited.

Leadership has significant areas for improvement, including rigorous self-evaluation involving all stakeholders which is not embedded throughout the school. Strategic planning is poorly translated into action planning with clear performance and progress indicators.

The quality of teaching and learning is ineffectively monitored. Curriculum implementation does not encourage life-long skills effectively. Most parents and students are satisfied with the school.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The school has a five-year strategic plan but several factors restrict the school's potential to bring about the required improvements without external support. For example, self-evaluation is limited and not sufficiently objective. It does not effectively diagnose faculties' professional development needs. Planning lacks performance indicators and regular follow-up mechanisms to monitor the progress and success of planning. Neither the self-evaluation nor the action planning sufficiently ensure continuous improvement in all aspects of the school's performance. Although the school's facilities are sufficient overall, resources are limited and those available are ineffectively used. There are serious weaknesses in the school's provisions, particularly in teaching and learning which are adversely affecting students' academic achievement.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

In the internal examinations students achieve high pass rates, with a significant cohort of students securing 80% marks and above. Although most students maintain stable and high pass rates in the core subjects over the past three years, this performance is not evident in lessons and in their academic work. Additionally, the assessments are not sufficiently moderated against curriculum proficiencies, significantly reducing their effectiveness and reliability.

In general, students' standards are weak across the school in almost all core subjects. In science, the majority of students' standards are broadly in line with age-related curriculum competencies. In Grade 1, students have age appropriate knowledge of organisms. In Grade 6, students have sufficient understanding of the use of filtration and decanting. However, in Arabic, English and mathematics students' standards are below the age-related expectations.

For example, in mathematics, Grade 2 students show limited grasp of key concepts such as subtraction. In Grade 6 they lack sufficient understanding of additions of decimals whilst in Grade 4 they have limited understanding of fractions. In Grade 4 English, students are less confident in differentiating the types of adverbs. In the majority of instances students demonstrate that their knowledge of fundamental concepts is limited to factual recall.

Tracking the progress of the same cohort of students over time indicates inconsistencies.

However, most students' progress is declining in English. Additionally, in lessons students are making limited progress in relation to their starting points and abilities, particularly in mathematics, English and science.

Students' listening, speaking and reading skills are sufficiently developed in Arabic. In English, a majority of students demonstrate sufficiently developed reading skills, well supported by the read-aloud sessions in lessons. However their writing skills in both languages are less secure, with limited vocabulary and weak application of grammar.

Students' basic arithmetic skills and problem solving skills are underdeveloped. In science, students generally have satisfactory levels of understanding of scientific facts. However, their scientific inquiry and practical skills are underdeveloped.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Students generally attend school regularly and are punctual for lessons. A few tardy cases are perceived and are adequately dealt with. Students regularly give talks in morning assembly on personal development issues and awareness. Students enthusiastically participate in extra-curricular activities. In the better lessons, when opportunities are provided students participate confidently and actively. The house system witnesses energetic participation of students in sports events.

Students adequately take responsibility for newly inducted students, helping them to settle easily through the 'buddy system'. In general, students are respectful to their peers and teachers, evident from their conduct in breaks, in better lessons, during formal and informal meetings and during dispersal. Most students behave in an adequately mature and responsible manner, obvious in most lessons and around the school. They generally take care of the fabric of the school.

By and large, students feel safe and secure in the school. This positively impacts on their confidence and keenness to participate in school life. They portray a sound understanding of the heritage and culture of Bahrain and the values of Islam by celebration of Hajj and Duha, enactments with Ihram, wearing traditional dresses, old professions and tools.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The majority of teachers have secure subject knowledge. They convey facts accurately with a variety of examples. However, lesson planning is not explicit, with limited focus on activities to challenge and support students of all ability levels. Learning and lesson objectives are unrealistically low in expectations for students' academic progress. A limited variety of strategies is used to promote effective learning. Teaching generally focuses on whole class instruction, mainly emphasising factual recall rather than understanding while using a limited range of activities to sufficiently develop practical skills. In the better lessons, teaching effectively engages and encourages students to contribute, for example by sharing students' views and using praise to increase student participation. However, in most lessons students are insufficiently supported and activities mostly focus on repetition. The majority of lessons are slow paced which leads to limited progress by students.

Even in the successful lessons, teaching challenges only high achieving students to develop their understanding and skills such as prediction and using the Arabic dictionary. However, these opportunities are too few and in the vast majority of lessons students of different abilities are insufficiently challenged. Moreover, in most lessons students are presented with insufficient opportunities to think analytically and justify their views. Teaching provides little help in developing problem-solving and investigative skills in mathematics and science, or extended writing skills in both English and Arabic.

Teaching uses a range of resources including textbooks, whiteboards and worksheets, with limited effectiveness. However, in the few better lessons, teaching makes effective use of hand-made materials such as flash cards and pictures. In most lessons, teaching depends on whole class questioning, choral responses and worksheets, with low expectations that mainly assess students' knowledge and recall of facts. There is limited thought for differentiation or use of individualised written assessments to measure students' achievements throughout lessons. Regular homework is assigned to complete and reinforce work done in class, with limited opportunities for extension and investigation to enable sound understanding of key concepts.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The school offers an adequate range of subjects, including French as an additional language starting from Grade 2. All subjects have clear schemes of work that identify the curriculum content. Delivery of the syllabus contents is closely monitored. However, although few textbooks are changed, such as in science in Grades 3 and 6, the curriculum is not kept under continuous and systematic review to meet the changing needs of students. There are too few organised links between subjects and the school does not sufficiently plan for effective cross-curricular activities for students to experience a coherent curriculum. Curriculum implementation adequately develops students' understanding of rights and responsibilities through various activities, example being motivational sessions in the morning assembly and occasionally in classrooms. The 'buddy' and 'house' systems give suitable opportunities for older students to help younger and newly joined students. Preparation of students for their next stage of education is insufficient, with limited focus on life-long learning skills.

Certain celebration days are offered such as Bahrain National Day carnival, sports and other competitions. However, a wide range of extra-curricular activities, with elements of choice to satisfy the different interests of students, are not provided. Resources available in the

school and local community are not effectively utilised, examples being the swimming pool and science laboratory.

How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school inducts new students through sessions on the school's rules and regulations, involving both students and parents. It also implements a 'buddy' system where younger learners are taken care of by older students. A record is maintained of students' academic progress, using tests and direct observations in lessons. Various enrichment materials are provided, with irregular early morning remedial classes in core subjects to support low achieving students. Acceptable behaviour is promoted through adequate monitoring of students' conduct and maintaining behaviour charts in classrooms, conducting sessions on good behaviour, praising students' good manners in morning assembly and awarding certificates of good behaviour at the end of every term.

Students are well supported if they have problems, assisting the majority to overcome their difficulties. The school maintains cooperation with other schools in the vicinity in order to ensure a smooth transition of students to the next stage of learning.

Parents are adequately informed about their child's progress through a variety of methods including the annual comprehensive evaluation card, termly report cards, telephone contact, diaries and open-house meetings.

In general the school provides a healthy and safe environment. A full time nurse is available. Safety devices such as fire extinguishers are monitored. However, fire evacuation drills are irregular and not effectively timed.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Leadership has a clear vision for the school with high, noble and achievable aspirations focussing on students' achievements. However, it's less than effective sharing by the staff is

apparent from the limited impact on the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Staff are generally satisfied and sufficiently inspired due to the caring and appreciative manner of leadership, which results in low turnover of staff.

Self-evaluation is neither rigorous nor sufficiently embedded in all the functions of the school. It is not systematic and does not involve all stakeholders. It informally involves parents and teachers through parent-teacher meetings and staff end of year gatherings.

Strategic planning lacks precisely defined goals stemming from stringent self-evaluation. It is deficient in action planning. It lacks well-defined systems and performance indicators to monitor the school's progress and successes.

As the leadership provides few professional development programmes, staff are not sufficiently developed to have a significant impact on students' academic achievement. The teaching faculty is evaluated according to organisational expectations, but does not effectively identify teachers' individual development needs, resulting in limited effectiveness of teaching and learning.

Budgeting and resource allocation are not firmly linked. Limited resources planning is therefore hindering effective learning by students of different abilities. Moreover, available resources such as the science laboratory are ineffectively used to promote understanding and skills.

Although the school lacks systematic procedures to seek the views of all parents and students, it is sufficiently responsive in this respect such as by unifying the vacation schedule with government schools, establishing a canteen and forming the parents' council.

The school has limited links with the local and wider community, mainly concerned with the professional development of staff, fun trips and facilitating the transition of Grade 6 students to their next stage of education.

Roles and responsibilities of the school's professional leadership and the governing body are kept sufficiently separate and well respected. The board is mandated with strategic and financial planning, whereas the Principal is correctly held accountable for academic results and provisions.

The school's main strengths

- Students' understanding of the heritage and culture of Bahrain and the values of Islam.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- develop and implement rigorous self-evaluation procedures to:
 - monitor the school's performance
 - diagnose and meet the professional development needs of the faculty
 - identify clear priorities with rigorous action planning.

- raise the students' academic achievements, particularly in core subjects, through improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning by:
 - focusing on the development of understanding and skills
 - increasing the range of teaching and learning strategies to meet the needs of all students
 - using assessments effectively to diagnose and satisfy students' needs.