



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

Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews Review Report

**Hawar International School
Riffa – Southern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date of Review: 18-20 November 2013
SP041-C1-R041**

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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 eleven 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		Hawar International School											
School's type		Private											
Year of establishment		2001											
Age range of students		6-18 years											
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High			
		1-5				6-8				9-12			
Number of students		Boys	405			Girls	244			Total	649		
Students' social background		Middle to high class families											
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Classes	4	4	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Town /Village		Riffa											
Governorate		Southern											
Number of administrative staff		11											
Number of teaching staff		53											
Curriculum		Virginia State American Curriculum for English MoE and Lebanese for Arabic											
Main language(s) of instruction		Arabic and English											
Principal's tenure		2 years											
External assessment and examinations		None											
Accreditation (if applicable)		None											
Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification		Outstanding				Gifted & Talented			Physical Disabilities			Learning Difficulties	
												100	
Major recent changes in the school		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> relocation to new premises during 2011-12 new management organisation since 2011-12. 											

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

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The overall effectiveness of the school is inadequate with all key aspects being inadequate. Students' achievement is inadequate as they do not make sufficient progress in lessons and written work, despite their high attainment in internal examinations. This is mainly due to ineffective teaching strategies that do not focus on active involvement in learning. Students are mainly passive learners, lacking positive attitudes. The curriculum is not rigorously reviewed and adapted to meet students' different abilities and needs. Support and guidance is ineffective, with available data not being used efficiently in planning to meet students' academic and personal needs. Special educational needs (SEN) students are not supported effectively in lessons. Leadership, management and governance are inadequate, with planning lacking focus on improvement priorities.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The school has faced major changes in recent years, mainly related to infrastructure issues and increases in students' numbers. Strategic planning focuses on these changes, with insufficient identification of key priorities for improvement of teaching and learning and students' achievement. Self-evaluation is not embedded within the school's procedures, so there is a lack of focus on the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Curriculum implementation is not regularly monitored to address students' needs, particularly for SEN students. Available data of students' performance is not sufficiently used to improve their performance. The school lacks effective professional development programmes for individual teachers' training needs, based on accurate monitoring of the teaching and learning practices.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Students attained high pass rates in school examinations in core subjects in 2012-13. Proficiency rate is high in grades 1 to 5 and 10 to 12, but lower in grades 6-9. Pass rates vary against proficiency rates particularly in the middle school and in Grade 9 of the high school. Although a high percentage of students achieve proficiency rates above 80% in Arabic and maths, rates are lower in other subjects with, for example, 18% in English Grade 9 and 19% in science Grade 8.

Results of internal tests and examinations are not representative of students' real levels of attainment, the results flattering actual achievements. Students' standards in lessons and their overall work are very low, mainly in the primary and middle school and in a few core subjects in high school such as science. The majority of students across all grades are making limited progress in lessons in relation to their starting points and abilities, particularly in Arabic, maths and science.

Tracking students' results from 2010 to 2013 indicates that grade 12 students are progressing in English and mathematics, while the majority of students in the elementary and middle school are declining in most core subjects. The standards of most students are under age-related expectations in mathematics, science and English in most grades.

Students listening and speaking skills in Arabic are adequate across all grades, although their extended writing skills are insufficiently developed particularly in the middle and high school.

The majority of students in the elementary and high school are able to read English with age appropriate fluency. However, the quality of writing and the application of grammar to language in the middle and high school are too low. Students demonstrate limited problem solving skills in mathematics and their understanding of scientific concepts and development of inquiry skills in science is too limited due to a narrow approach to the subject.

Most students make limited progress in Arabic and English in middle and high school. Progress in science is limited mainly in the primary and middle school. In mathematics, students make progress in a minority of lessons in the middle school. However, most students in the primary and high school are making insufficient progress.

How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Most students attend school regularly, but many frequently arrive late to lessons, particularly after a break. Their active participation in school life is limited both in and out of lessons. A minority of students take part in the occasional school activities such as football matches and charity events. However, the vast majority lack enthusiasm in most lessons. This is mostly evident in the satisfactory and inadequate lessons, where they rarely initiate ideas or express their thoughts through discussions or questions. Students tend to be mainly compliant and passive learners with very limited opportunities to develop confidence or independent learning skills. There is a lack of opportunities for students to work collaboratively in classrooms, but when given the chance they work well together. Most students behave in a mature manner, having good relationships with each other and with their teachers. They generally feel safe in school. However, there are a few incidents of disrespect to both peers and teachers, and some bullying incidents were observed specifically against special educational needs (SEN) students. Overall, the school is a safe and secure learning environment.

Most students demonstrate good understanding of Bahrain's heritage, culture and Islamic values. They participate in national events and have various trips to traditional locations. They maintain prayer times.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The majority of teachers have secure subject knowledge, which in the few more effective lessons is reflected in their ability to present lesson ideas gradually and to give clear explanations and examples. However, in most lessons the teaching and learning strategies are confined to didactic methods, direct questions and answers and long explanations which limit students' acquisition and application of basic skills. In the better lessons, teachers use the e-beam, interactive boards and visual aids to encourage students to participate actively, but most teachers over-rely on presenting textbooks' contents in a teacher-centred approach with insufficient involvement and interaction of students.

In some lessons, classroom management is generally appropriate in terms of discipline and managing students' behaviour, but most lessons are poorly managed in terms of pacing the activities that successfully engage students in their learning and aid in their acquisition of the lesson's objectives. This is mainly due to a lack of appropriate activities that meet students' different needs and limited opportunities to challenge students' different abilities. Questioning techniques depend mainly on direct simple questions that do not encourage in-depth thinking and analysis. This contributes to the under-development of the students' higher order thinking skills, so their learning needs are insufficiently met.

Regular homework is given and a few projects are assigned, but follow up is inconsistent. Homework is appropriately linked to the work done in class, but generally focuses on recalling knowledge without sufficiently targeting or extending learning needs. Students' written work is generally marked but lacks rigour and constructive feedback.

There is over-emphasis on formative assessment, with summative assessment contributing only to a small percentage of students' overall results. The policy on formative assessment is also unclear, and inconsistent between different teachers and subjects. Assessment results do not reflect students' performance accurately, nor do they feed into planning to both meet students' needs and focus on weaknesses. Oral and group assessment methods are used in most lessons, but responses are not effectively used to re-teach or provide feedback to students in order to improve their understanding and performance.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Curriculum implementation has significant weaknesses, with a lack of effective overall coordination contributing to weaknesses in planning and review. Elementary and middle school students are offered a balanced range of experiences, but in the high school there are discontinuities in the provision of science subjects and gaps in curriculum provision; for example, after Grade 8 there are no courses in foreign languages or art. Courses are insufficiently modified for those with learning difficulties, such as in English, and for high achievers. Planned links between subject areas are few, with knowledge from one subject rarely used to inform the work of another. Students' understanding of their rights and responsibilities is insufficiently developed. Too few opportunities are provided for students to take leadership roles and work together in different activities, with only a minority of students involved which does not promote a sense of community. The curriculum is enlivened by a few enrichment activities such as a reading month, but there is no regular programme of extra-curricular activities that meet students' different interests. Use is made

of the local community, involving students in national events that develop citizenship, but little is done to prepare them for the world of work. The school buildings and grounds are well maintained with an attractive ambience.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

A limited induction process helps students to settle into the school. Parents are regularly updated about their child's performance, being notified through a variety of communication channels about events and assignments. They receive information through SMS, phone calls, newsletters, reports and parental meetings, alongside the school's open-door policy. The school's website and 'Engrade' system provide on-line assessment records for each student. Although students' attainment is assessed through termly tests there is no systematic procedure for monitoring their academic progress and personal development. Furthermore, the available data is rarely used to plan lessons and a range of activities suited to students' differing abilities.

The school has an inclusive policy for students with special needs, but individual education plans for each SEN student are not set. Mainstream teachers are not aware of students' targets nor of the strategies required to help them progress in lessons. Teaching assistants are not providing effective support in lessons. The school provides occasional events to guide students for the next stage of their education, such as the 'Careers Fair', but a well-structured programme of guidance is not available. The school has an efficient clinic to support students' health, but there is no health education programme. Generally, the school is a clean, safe and hygienic environment.

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 senior management has a generic vision on the overall improvement of the school, especially the infrastructure and facilities, but this is not shared with the whole school's community. There is a 5 year strategic plan, based on improvement areas identified by the

senior management. However, the plan lacks systems and action planning to show when and how to achieve targets or monitor progress made, with no performance indicators to measure success. Although the leadership monitors the performance of academic departments, whole-school self-evaluation is not embedded in these practices. The setting of key priorities lacks accurate monitoring mechanisms to effectively inform the school of its strengths and areas for improvement, particularly in teaching and learning.

The senior leadership team supports staff members through positive gestures that increase their level of commitment. Despite the fact that departmental coordinators conduct class visits in order to improve teachers' professional competence, these are not rigorous enough and do not sufficiently address teachers' individual training needs with the exception of some general training sessions being offered, such as class management. However, their impact on teachers' performance varies across the school, as teaching still lacks sufficient emphasis on challenging students' abilities and better supporting their needs.

The school uses its financial resources to provide good teaching facilities, such as science and computer labs and a learning resource centre. This creates a positive learning environment. Students' and parents' views and suggestions are sought through an open door policy and parent council. The school has responded to some of their suggestions, such as setting a different end to the school day for elementary students.

The school has links with the local community and conducts some events such as the National Day celebration with the Southern Governorate, whilst a charity marathon is conducted by the students. Members of the board adequately support the school administration, though their involvement in strategic planning and self-evaluation is limited. Roles overlap in the school and the accountability structure is not clearly understood, especially on the academic side where nobody holds the president accountable for the school's performance.

The school's main strengths

- Students' understanding of Bahrain's culture and their embracing of Islamic values
- The school's continuous and regular communication with parents.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- improve leadership and management by:
 - establishing rigorous self-evaluation that includes all aspects of school work
 - developing strategic planning with key priorities that focus on academic achievement and personal development, with clear roles, delegation of responsibilities and accountability
 - undertaking professional development programmes based on accurate assessment of teachers' needs.

- improve teaching and learning by:
 - using effective assessment to plan and meet students' different needs
 - using effective teaching strategies that develop students' understanding and skills
 - supporting all students according to their different needs
 - actively engaging students in their learning and developing their independent learning skills and self-confidence.

- provide effective support for special educational needs students (SEN) in and out of lessons, including provision of modified curriculum and plans that meet their individual needs

- review the curriculum regularly to modify and cater to students' different needs, and enrich their learning through the provision of regular extracurricular activities that meet students' different interests.