



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

Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews Review Report

**Palms Primary School
Riffa – Southern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date of Review: 11-13 January 2016

SP008-C2-R013

Introduction

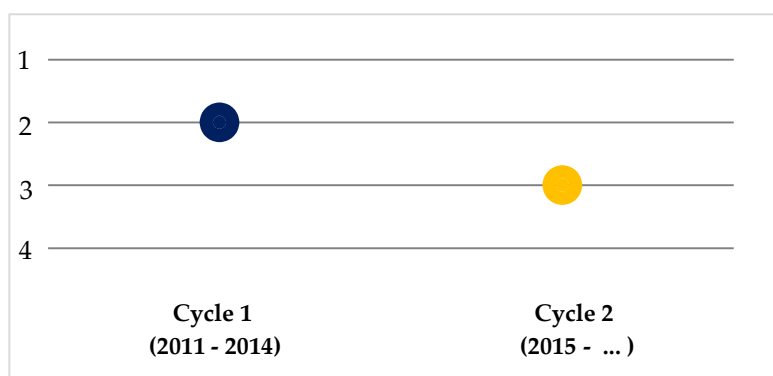
The Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews (DPS), which is a part of the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (QQA), conducted this review over three days by a team of six reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed lessons and other 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

Outstanding	1	Good	2	Satisfactory	3	Inadequate	4
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Aspect		Grade			
		Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Quality of outcomes	Students' academic achievement	3	-	-	3
	Students' personal development	2	-	-	2
Quality of processes	Teaching and learning	3	-	-	3
	Students' support and guidance	2	-	-	2
Quality assurance of outcomes and processes	Leadership, management and governance	3	-	-	3
Capacity to improve		3			
The school's overall effectiveness		3			

The chart demonstrates the school's overall effectiveness throughout the review cycles.



1	Outstanding	2	Good	3	Satisfactory	4	Inadequate
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School Report

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

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The schools' overall effectiveness is judged as satisfactory due to the adequate level of students' academic achievement and the satisfactory effectiveness of teaching and learning. Students' personal development and support and guidance are judged as good. • Students attain high pass rates in internal assessments. However, against the Cambridge Primary Checkpoint benchmark students' performance is generally below the expected levels. • Students have satisfactory standards and progress in almost all core subjects. • The effectiveness of teaching and learning is satisfactory, though further | <p>development is still needed with a particular focus on raising students' academic achievement. Time management is not effectively used to increase productivity in the majority of lessons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment results are utilised effectively in the better lessons, while in the other lessons these are not sufficiently used to provide better educational support to all students, particularly low achievers. • Students' inquiry, investigative and problem solving skills are not well-developed across the school. • Strategic planning is based on whole school self-evaluation. However, it is not |
|---|---|

systematically reviewed and updated due to the recent changes in the school's leadership and its progress with expansion plans. A more rigorous and continuous analysis of the school's general performance, with clear links to improvement aspirations and planning for development, is crucial at this stage.

- Teachers' professional development programmes are not strictly based on rigorous assessment of their particular needs. School's mechanisms used to evaluate the impact of these programmes

on teachers' performance in lessons are not well defined.

- Students' academic and personal progress are not systematically well monitored.
- Students are well behaved and committed to the values of citizenship. They show good levels of understanding of Bahraini culture.
- The school maintains positive links with the local community and whole society.
- Most students and parents show good satisfaction levels with the education provided by the school.

Main positive features

- Students' personal development including their understanding of Bahraini Culture and ability to work independently.
- The range of extracurricular programmes and after-school activities to match most students' learning styles.

Recommendations

- Review and update the school's strategic planning by implementing more:
 - rigorous analysis of the school's performance, with clear links to improvement aspirations and planning for development
 - effective professional development programmes based on rigorous assessment of teachers' particular needs, and develop better mechanisms to evaluate the impact.
- Raise students' academic achievement by improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies through better:
 - use of assessment results to identify and meet students' needs
 - time management to increase productivity
 - support for students of different abilities.

□ Capacity to improve 'Satisfactory'

Judgement justifications

- Along with the recent changes in the school, including the appointment of new leadership, staff and increase in students' numbers, the school lacks a strong systematic approach in reviewing and updating its planning. It still needs a more rigorous and continuous analysis of performance, with clear links to the recent changes and improvement aspirations. The new leadership is aware of these challenges, as it has started implementing some changes. However, these improvements are still in their initial stages and more time is required for the expected impact.
- The relationship between the school's leadership and staff is positive, which could help in overcoming the present challenges.
- The school has a clear shared vision and mission with emphasis on holistic education, teamwork and quality of teaching. The four-year strategic and action plans are based on the school's self-evaluation.

Quality of outcomes

□ Students' academic achievement 'Satisfactory'

Judgement justifications

- Students achieve high pass rates, ranging between 86% and 100% in all core subjects in the school's internal examinations in 2014-2015.
 - The school's high pass rates are reflected in students' standards in good lessons, particularly in Grade 4 English and mathematics.
 - Tracking students' results over the past three years from 2013 to 2015 indicates that most students have consistently achieved high pass and proficiency rates in Arabic, English and mathematics. However, proficiency rates declined to satisfactory in Grade 6 science in 2014-2015.
 - In the Cambridge Primary Checkpoint examination for Grade 5, the percentages of students scoring 4 and above has increased in mathematics, English and science in 2015. However, the percentages are still low and do not match the high performance in school's internal exams.
 - Students' standards are satisfactory both in the majority of lessons and in their work, as the work presented to them is not differentiated.
 - Students' oral and reading comprehension skills in Arabic and English are better developed than their extended-writing skills.
- In science, the majority of students acquire age-expected standards. For example, the majority of Grade 3 students have basic knowledge of weather concepts. Grade 6 students can explain reversible and irreversible reactions. However, in the majority of lessons the greater focus is on facts rather than developing students' practical and investigative skills.
 - In mathematics, the majority of students acquire basic understanding of mathematical concepts and arithmetic operations. However, problem-solving skills are less developed across the school.
 - In lower grades, the majority of students meet the age-expected standards in science and mathematics, while standards are inconsistent in English because of the teaching and learning strategies used and issues related to classroom management.
 - High achieving students progress appropriately in accordance with their different abilities in the majority of lessons and in the different activities provided for them. However, low achieving students' progress is inconsistent due to insufficient support provided to them in the less effective lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Students' progress in their written work and in the development of extended writing skills in English and Arabic.
- Progress of low achievers in less effective lessons.
- Students' investigative and problem solving skills in science and mathematics.

□ Students' personal development 'Good'

Judgement justifications

- Most students participate enthusiastically in school life, particularly in the good lessons through discussions and debates. Active participation is also evident in many school activities and programmes during the morning assembly and break times, as well as in the various after school clubs such as sports, gardening and drama.
- Most students show good self-confidence when expressing their views, and justifying their answers in most lessons. They demonstrate a clear ability to work independently and take responsibility in the activities and roles assigned to them outside lessons, such as the roles of entrance, water and playground monitors. They also enjoy involvement in decision-making roles in the Students' Council, particularly when making proposals. However, leadership roles in the majority of lessons are confined to regulatory issues such as the board and pens monitors.
- Most students are committed to positive behaviour and act with a good sense of awareness. They adhere to school regulations and respect the school's facilities. School programmes are in place to further enhance behaviour, such as the Behaviour Stations and the House Points System.
- Students feel safe at school as they work together in harmony, showing good respect to their teachers and peers.
- A clear understanding of Bahrain's heritage and culture is evident, being well promoted by citizenship's corners in classrooms and the heritage corner in a school corridor. Students participate actively in national celebrations like National Day and enjoy field visits to heritage landmarks in Bahrain such as the National Museum and Bahrain Fort. Islamic values are clearly noted through many practices including the way students and teachers greet each other in the assembly and lessons.
- Most students attend school regularly and punctually, with few cases of lateness and absence. Where necessary, action is taken according to school's disciplinary policy. Guidance sessions are held when needed.
- Students show a positive ability to learn independently, particularly in the better lessons such as when asked to use dictionaries to find the meaning of newly taught words in English, do assignments, write reports and present findings to the class. On-line self-learning programmes

such as 'Mathletics' and 'EducationCity' are also provided and students are motivated to use them at home, receiving awards when achieving real success through these mediums.

- Most students possess clear communication skills. They work together

harmoniously in school activities and events, showing themselves able to present and interact in the morning assembly. Students express their views and respectfully listen to their teachers and peers in most lessons, especially the good ones.

Areas for improvement

- More opportunities for independent learning and assumption of responsibility in classrooms.

Quality of processes

□ Teaching and learning 'Satisfactory'

Judgement justifications

- In the majority of lessons teachers use a sufficient range of teaching and learning strategies such role-play, discussion and questions and answers. Teaching also shows sufficient emphasis on the development of students' understanding and knowledge, particularly in English.
- However, in the less effective lessons teaching is inconsistent and available learning resources such as the smart boards are not well utilised to create more interactive lessons or to display topic-related videos.
- Most teachers demonstrate effective behaviour management, supported by the discipline of most students. However, the effectiveness of time management varies particularly in the less effective lessons, as teachers tend to take more time than planned to introduce topics, thereby affecting the time allocated for students to work on given tasks and for teachers to assess students' understanding. Therefore, a significant number of lessons ended before completing the plenary.
- In most lessons, students are well encouraged and motivated to participate actively. However, teachers provide inconsistent support to low achieving students and in some lessons such students are passive, even sometimes struggling on their own while teachers are content with the more able students.
- In the better lessons, teachers use a variety of differentiated written assessment worksheets to measure students' understanding and identify areas in which students need to improve. However, in the less effective lessons, teachers focus mostly on verbal assessment, and some of the written assessment activities given are not rigorous enough to measure attainment and meet students' different needs.
- Teachers usually mark students' worksheets and follow up homework, but feedback is inconsistently given to students.
- In a very few lessons, particularly in languages, students are required to analyse ideas and express and justify their views. However, in the less effective lessons teaching focuses mostly on recollection and memorisation rather than providing opportunities for students to think critically and develop higher order thinking skills.
- The majority of lessons are mainly directed towards the average level of students. Class activities are often unified and provide inconsistent challenge to students of different abilities, particularly the high achieving.

Areas for improvement

- Effective use of time to increase lesson productivity, and further challenge all categories of students.
- Use of assessment results to provide effective support to low achieving students.
- Development of students' higher order thinking skills.

□ Students' support and guidance 'Good'

Judgement justifications

- The school identifies and meets the educational needs of most students through a variety of programmes offered in after-school activities, including English, maths and science clubs as remedial classes for low achievers. Talented and outstanding students are offered other activities such as the drama and sports clubs.
 - On-line enrichment programmes in core subjects such as 'Mathletics' and 'EducationCity' are also provided as other means to meet students different educational needs.
 - Most students' personal needs are met through the counselling periods that help improve behaviour, using programmes such as 'Kelso's Choice' and 'Anger Management'. Students are well supported when they face problems through case studies, managing behaviour procedures and following up.
 - A wide range of extracurricular activities is offered to broaden students' experiences and match their different learning styles. These include 'Thursday Theme Day', Students' Council and sports activities. Field trips are organised to sites such as the Science Centre and Aali' Pottery.
- A safe and secure environment is ensured as health and safety procedures are carried out, maintenance records are kept and evacuation drills are conducted. Students have access to a nurse throughout the day. However, there are a few overcrowded classrooms particularly at lower grades and the playground area is not sufficient to hold outside activities.
 - New students are inducted effectively into the school with a one-week induction programme aiming at familiarising them with the school's policies, staff and facilities. Grade 5 students are intensively trained beforehand for the Cambridge Primary Checkpoint examinations. Special talks are often held on topics regarding issues of concern to students at this stage, such as 'Adolescence'.
 - Students' life skills, including communication and ICT skills, use of dictionaries and teamwork are developed through the curriculum and the range of enrichment activities provided. However, problem solving and investigative skills are less developed. Membership of the Students' Council and rotating leadership roles on the school's premises benefit most students.

Areas for improvement

- Students' lifelong learning skills.
- Enrichment programmes that are more systematic for the gifted and talented student.

Quality assurance of outcomes and processes

□ Leadership, management and governance 'Satisfactory'

Judgement justifications

- The school has a clearly stated vision and mission with emphasis on holistic education, teamwork and quality of teaching. This is communicated to all stakeholders and is evident in the school's routines such as morning assembly. The four-year strategic plan and the action plan are based on the school's self-evaluation, with reference to students' academic progress, quality of teaching and teacher development activities.
- The school's new senior leadership is aware of the recent changes and the key areas of concern within the school. However, leadership lacks a systematic approach in reviewing and updating the school's action plan through rigorous and continuous analysis of performance with clear links to the recent changes and improvement aspirations.
- The Principal, Vice-Principal and head of the Arabic department conduct class observations and provide verbal and written feedback to teachers. However, these observations lack sufficient focus on follow-up to ensure a positive impact on students' learning.
- Professional development sessions are provided to all teachers regularly, on various topics including 'Class Management' and 'Differentiation'. However, there is limited focus on the provision of professional development programmes tailored to teachers' specific training needs, based on evaluation and monitoring of teaching practices. With more than half of the teaching staff joining in the current semester, the school is in the initial stages of identifying individual teacher training needs.
- The school's leadership is inspiring, motivating and encourages teamwork, sharing of experiences and a common mission. Regular staff meetings are held and teachers are encouraged to prepare action plans and share best practice.
- The school makes adequate use of the available facilities such as the computer laboratory and the school library. Conversely, the constraints of the premises do not allow for a science laboratory or appropriate play area. Moreover, the use of learning resources in lessons to involve students actively and productively in learning is inconsistent.
- The school has developed good links with the local community through a partnership with the International Association of Students in Economic and Commercial Science (AIESEC), participating in charity services and cancer awareness programmes such as 'Think Pink' which further develop students' ability to work collaboratively outside classrooms.
- Clear, separate and respectful roles exist between the Board representatives and the school's senior leadership. The Board

of Directors meets periodically to monitor the school's performance and follow up on finance matters. The Managing

Director provides strategic direction and contributes to the improvement plans.

Areas for improvement

- The analysis of the school's performance against its action planning, with clear links to improvement aspirations.
- The effectiveness of professional development programmes, to create an impact on teachers' performance in lessons thereby leading to high quality student outcomes.
- The effective utilisation of learning resources and facilities to provide effective teaching and broaden students' experiences in lessons.

Appendix: Characteristics of the school

Name of the school (Arabic)	مدرسة النخيل الابتدائية													
Name of the school (English)	Palms Primary School													
Year of establishment	2005													
Address	Building 605, Road 2615, Block 926													
Town /Village / Governorate	Riffa – Southern Governorate													
School's Contacts	17666637				Fax		17664544							
School's e-mail	palmsprimary@gmail.com													
School's website	-													
Age range of students	6-12 Years													
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)	Primary				Middle				High					
	1-6				-				-					
Number of students	Boys		114		Girls		54		Total		168			
Students' social background	Major are coming from middle class backgrounds													
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	Classes	2	2	2	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Number of administrative staff	6													
Number of teaching staff	17													
Curriculum	British for all English taught subjects and Ministry of Education (MoE) for the national subjects													
Main language(s) of instruction	English and Arabic													
Principal's tenure in the school	3 months													
External assessment and examinations	Cambridge Primary Checkpoint													
Accreditation (if applicable)	-													
Major recent changes in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of students and classrooms, particularly in Grades 1 and 2. • Appointment of a new Principal, Vice Principal, nurse and seven new teachers at the beginning of the academic year 2015-2016. 													