



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

Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews

Review Report

Quality Education School – Manama
Manama – Capital Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date of Review: 29 September–1 October 2014

SP055-C1-R055

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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		Quality Education School – Manama											
School's type		Private											
Year of establishment		2003											
Age range of students		5–9 years											
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High			
		1 - 4				-				-			
Number of students		Boys	58	Girls	62	Total		120					
Students' social background		Most come from average income families											
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Classes	3	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Town /Village		Manama											
Governorate		Capital											
Number of administrative staff		5											
Number of teaching staff		12											
Curriculum		British											
Main language(s) of instruction		English, 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		
		-			-			1			-		
Major recent changes in the school		A new vice president appointed at the end of the year 2013-2014											

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	4	-	-	4
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	4	-	-	4
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

The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate, with insufficient progress achieved by students in over 50% of observed lessons and inadequate development of their ability to work independently and take responsibility. This is the result of whole-class teaching that doesn't develop students understanding or skills, nor does it guide students on how to improve their attainment. The school provides an adequate mix of subjects, but a limited range is offered to non-Arabic students who are inadequately engaged during several lessons. Teachers maintain records of students' academic attainment and personal performance, but these are not systematic nor effectively used to meet students' needs. Students behave well and the majority have a clear understanding of the values instilled by the school. They feel safe and secure at school.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Despite students' good behaviour and the school's small size, it faces big challenges in raising students' academic achievement. Teaching needs to cater for and meet all students' learning needs and develop their skills and understanding. A new Vice Principal is in place but requires more time to impact positively on teaching. Self-evaluation is not systematic, nor rigorous in setting key improvement priorities, with an absence of systematic monitoring procedures and mechanisms that focus on students' academic and personal progress. The school lacks proper strategic planning that focuses specifically on the development of this branch. Existing professional development workshops are too general and do not assess teachers individual needs. The school faces a high annual staff turnover, which has resulted in appointing some teachers who lack proper qualifications.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Students from Grades 1, 2 and 4 achieved high pass rates in all core subjects in internal examination during 2013 and 2014, ranging between 94% and 100%. Grade 3 students achieved 83% in Arabic and mathematics, and 71% in English and science. The proportion of students securing 80% and above in core subjects is high in Grades 1, 2 and 4 and adequate in Grade 3, ranging between 48% and 63%. The highest is in mathematics and the lowest in Arabic. These results are based on internally marked tests since the school does not have any external benchmarking.

In lessons and written work, the majority of students across the school have age-appropriate standards in mathematics and science but below the expected level in Arabic and English. In most core subjects, the progress achieved by students in relation to their starting points and their abilities is inadequate. In English, the majority of students have adequate oral speaking and listening skills, for example the majority in Grade 2 being able to express the difference between various vehicles. However, throughout the school students' comprehension and writing skills are under-developed. In Arabic, students only occasionally speak formal Arabic in lessons and speaking, reading and writing skills are very limited in almost all grades. In science and mathematics, students have adequate basic skills and factual concepts with, for example, students in Grade 4 doing arithmetical operations confidently and students in Grade 3 knowing the different types of teeth. However, students make insufficient progress in understanding scientific concepts and mathematical skills, with teaching methods providing only limited opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and understanding in solving problems.

The school's internal examination results generally show consistent progress in students' attainment over the past three years in all core subjects for students who are progressing from Grade 2 to Grade 4. However, Grade 1 to 3 results show declining progress both in pass and competency rates. In lessons, students' progress is limited due to whole-class teaching that does not sufficiently provide opportunities to develop understanding and skills. Students of all abilities are not making sufficient progress due to ineffective support, limited challenges, and lack of enrichment and reinforcement programmes.

How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Most students attend school regularly though only a minority arrive on time, with tardiness still an issue to be resolved. Students participate in school events such as the school's annual and environment days. However, across the school, the extent of involvement and enthusiasm is low and few students pay full attention in the morning assembly. Homeroom periods are not effective and weekly extracurricular activities do not match students' needs and interests. Students are unwilling to ask questions and suggest ideas, mostly just responding to questions. This is all due to ineffective teaching.

Students' skills in working independently and taking responsibility are insufficiently developed in most lessons. However, when given the opportunity the majority can work in groups, such as in the Grade 2 science lesson where they shared their views on physical exercise and human growth.

Students behave well and the majority have a clear understanding of the values instilled in them by the school. They enjoy good relationships with each other and show their courtesy in keeping classrooms and school buildings clean. They feel safe and secure at school and show great respect for Islamic values. Students have adequate knowledge and understanding of the culture and national heritage of Bahrain, taking part in national events and trips to cultural and historic sites.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Minority of teachers are familiar with their subject knowledge, reflected in their explanations and examples in the few effective lessons. However, in many lessons teachers' insecure subject knowledge hinders students' learning and skills development, an example being their underdeveloped English skills due to grammatical and spelling mistakes being repeatedly drilled into students. In a few lessons, teachers use the question and answer strategy effectively to motivate students and facilitate their understanding, for example asking about students' body parts and linking them to the five senses in a science lesson. However, more than half of the lessons are teacher-centred with limited attempts to engage students in activities and in their learning. Resources are rarely utilised effectively, with the vast majority of lessons being text driven. Occasional pictures are used to demonstrate and

explain vocabulary, but in most cases these are too small or unclear so do not contribute effectively to students' learning.

Too few opportunities are provided to develop students' higher order thinking skills such as reasoning and critical thinking, since questions are almost always direct and require short monosyllabic answers. Although lesson plans often indicate clear learning objectives and differentiation by either process or outcome, actual implementation does not match these plans as activities are directed at all students regardless of their abilities, with limited support to enable different abilities to progress. This hampers the achievement of learning objectives in the majority of lessons. Behaviour is managed appropriately, with students showing self-discipline. Nonetheless, class and time management is an issue in many lessons where activities fail to engage students or enrich their learning. Although teachers usually assign homework to students there is no specific policy, and it just provides more repetition of the work copied in the lessons without offering students the opportunity to enhance or expand their learning.

In most lessons oral questions, and in few lessons worksheets, are used to assess students' understanding. However, these are ineffectively utilised as questions usually target a small group of students and worksheets do not accurately match students' learning needs. Moreover, feedback is rarely provided in lessons or in students' written work to help them improve their performance.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The school provides an adequate mix of subjects based on the English National Curriculum and the Ministry of Education Curriculum for Arab students. However, a limited range is offered to non-Arabic students, with no choices available to them to replace the subjects taught in Arabic. Curriculum review is irregular and not driven by self-analysis from within the school, so does not adequately meet the changing learning needs of students. The school focuses on eleven values to be embedded in the curriculum delivery, which nurtures a positive environment and adequately develops their understanding of responsibilities within the school community. However, limited attention is given to enriching the curriculum to develop students' language skills in English and investigative and problem-solving skills in science and mathematics.

In a few lessons teachers make useful links between subjects, such as referring to the environment in a Grade 1 science lesson. However, there is limited cross-curricular planning

to ensure students experience a coherent curriculum. Although a few students participate in inter-school competitions such as 'Spectra', the extracurricular activities offered pay insufficient attention to students' interests. The use of local resources is very limited, displays of students' work and educational aids are minimal, visits by guest speakers are infrequent and field trips are only sometimes curriculum related.

How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The school provides an informal induction for students and their parents, including an introduction to the rules and policies and a tour of the school. However, there is an absence of systematic induction and transition to the next grades to enable students to settle easily and progress better. Teachers maintain records of students' academic attainment and personal performance, but are not systematic in using this effectively to meet students' needs over time. Non-Arabic speaking students are inadequately engaged during several lessons such as Arabic and Islamic, mostly being left without work during these periods.

Staff supports students sensitively, helping to resolve any problems quickly. Grade 4 students are adequately prepared for Grade 5 through regular visits to the main branch to participate in activities, including an introduction to teachers and the curriculum. Parents are regularly informed about students' attainment with end of term report cards and meetings with the staff. They are also updated through their children's diary and are invited to meet with the staff every Saturday. The school's facilities are clean, safe and satisfactorily maintained. Fire extinguishers are in place and assembly areas are well marked. School gates are secured by staff and the school nurse provides first aid and updates vaccination programmes.

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 has a vision and mission to provide quality education to all its students, to nurture brilliance and build values. However, these values do not reflect in classroom practises as they are inconsistently shared with and understood by staff. The school

community works in a family-like environment due to its small size, with senior leadership attempting to encourage and motivate teachers who are overloaded with duties and responsibilities.

The school recently appointed a new vice principal in an effort to improve overall performance, particularly academic related issues. This initiative is still in its early days and as yet has had little impact on improving teaching. Self-evaluation is neither systematic nor rigorous in setting key improvement priorities, due to the lack of proper monitoring procedures and mechanisms. There is a simple operational plan that focuses on improving overall performance, but its objectives are very general and not based on any performance indicators, measurements of success or task responsibilities. Instead it is limited to specifying school needs and work challenges, such as the annual turnover of teachers. It is not shared with or comprehended by all school stakeholders to ensure its impact.

Teachers are reviewed each term and general professional development programmes provided to primary teachers of both campuses. However, such training is ineffective in addressing teachers' individual needs and does not provide them with in-depth understanding of curriculum competencies or how to implement it effectively. Despite the small number of teaching staff the school is in continuous change due to the high annual turnover of teachers, with a few of the new teachers lacking the proper qualifications to teach as class teachers. Training sessions offered are too general to remedy the situation.

Budget allocation does not sufficiently cater for essential school requirements, with a lack of essential teaching aids to enrich students learning. The school seeks parents' views and is adequately responsive to their suggestions such as introducing a cafeteria at school. Roles between the school's leadership and members of the board are defined, with regular meetings in which the principal is held accountable. However, their contribution to strategic planning is limited, particularly in improving classroom practices.

The school's main strengths

- Students are well behaved and feel safe and secure in their classrooms and around the school.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- improve the effectiveness of the leadership and management, with focus on:
 - strategic planning based on rigorous and systematic self-evaluation and emphasis on improvement priorities and monitoring of performance
 - professional development programmes based on teachers' individual needs and following up its impact on classroom practices
 - ensuring that teachers have the appropriate professional qualifications for their roles.
- raise students' academic achievement by implementing a broader range of effective teaching and learning strategies to ensure that:
 - skills and understanding are developed as well as the acquisition of knowledge
 - time is used productively to focus on engaging students in their learning
 - assessment results are used in the planning of lessons and catering for students' different abilities.
- systematically monitor students' academic and personal progress in order to meet their needs.