



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

Directorate of Vocational Reviews

Review Report

**Al Awael Institute
East Riffa
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date Reviewed: 2-4 December 2013

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The Directorate of Vocational Reviews

The Directorate of Vocational Reviews (DVR) 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. Established to raise standards in vocational education and training, the DVR is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the quality of vocational provision, identifying strengths and areas for improvement, establishing success measures, spreading best practice and offering policy advice to key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education.

Reviews are based on the DVR's *Review Framework*, and carried out on providers' premises by teams of carefully selected and highly trained reviewers. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the planning of the review, and to represent them during review team meetings. Reviewers examine a range of evidence before arriving at a series of judgements and awarding grades for the quality of the provision.

Review grades are awarded on a four-point scale:

Grade description	Interpretation
1: Outstanding	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are at least good in all aspects and outstanding in the majority.
2: Good	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are at least satisfactory in all aspects and good in the majority. There may be some particularly successful approaches or outcomes.
3: Satisfactory	This describes a basic level of adequacy. There are no major areas of weakness which substantially affect what learners, or significant groups of learners, achieve. There may be some features which are good.
4: Inadequate	This describes situations where major weaknesses in some areas affect the outcomes for learners and outweigh any strengths in the provision.

Introduction

Description of the provision

Al Awael Institute (Al Awael) was established in February 2010. It is licensed by the Ministry of Education to provide tutorial sessions in addition to non-accredited courses on Information Technology (IT) and general English and French language.

Al Awael has one centre located in East Riffa. The institute is managed by a part-time manager who also runs the day-to-day operations and employs a receptionist, a part-time messenger and a bus driver who also works as a caretaker. The institute uses a pool of 12 part-time teachers.

Since the last review, the institute has maintained an annual enrolment of approximately 850 students, most of whom are sponsored by their parents and attend the institute for tutorial sessions on government school's curriculum.

Scope of the review

This review was conducted over three days, by a team of three reviewers. During the review, reviewers attended lessons and other related activities, analysed data about the courses and qualifications students achieved, examined students' written and other work, studied documents and the materials provided by the institute and met with staff, students, parents and teachers.

In the previous review, the overall effectiveness of the institute was judged to be below satisfactory as were learners' achievement, the quality of teaching, the support and guidance and leadership and management. The quality of the programmes offered was judged satisfactory. The capacity to improve was judged very weak.

This report summarises reviewers' findings and their recommendations about what the provider should do to improve.

Table of review judgements awarded

Overall Effectiveness	
How effective is the provision in raising learners' achievement and meeting the full range of learners' and stakeholders' needs?	Grade: 4 Inadequate
Learners' Achievement	
How well do learners achieve?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
Quality of Provision	
How effective is teaching and/or training in promoting learning?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
How well do programmes meet the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
How well are learners supported and guided to achieve better outcomes?	Grade: 4 Inadequate
Leadership and Management	
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	Grade: 4 Inadequate

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in raising learners' achievement and meeting the range of learners' and stakeholders' needs?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The overall effectiveness of Al Awael is inadequate, as are the quality of support and guidance, the leadership and management and the institute's capacity to improve. The range of tutorial sessions offered by the institute meets the needs of the majority of students and their parents. Whilst the teachers delivering these sessions are appropriately qualified and have the relevant knowledge of the government school's syllabus and examination standards, teaching methods used by some teachers are not effective enough to engage all students. Teachers, generally, use short exercises and provide verbal feedback to support students during sessions and share some useful tips on how to tackle school question papers. While the majority of students make just satisfactory progress through practice exercises and following repetitive techniques, a minority of students still depend on the teachers' continuous guidance and only follow their steps. Furthermore, the more able learners are not stretched enough or given opportunities to develop higher order skills through independent learning. The management practices are insufficient to have a positive impact on the quality of the provision as evident from the absence of strategic planning, achievement records and effective monitoring of performance.

Al Awael's capacity to improve is inadequate. The institute's management structure and resources are inadequate to devise proper strategic plans, set up development objectives and monitor progress. Since the last review, only a few recommendations were partially addressed; such as improvement in health and safety measures and selection of teachers. However, other major recommendations related to assessment, records keeping, strategic planning and monitoring of performance have not been addressed yet. The lack of useful performance data makes it extremely difficult for the management to monitor performance against realistic targets and set up improvement plans. Self-assessment processes are underdeveloped and not done collaboratively as the views of teachers are rarely sought. Most teachers attend on an hourly part-time basis only and have very minimum input in any performance improvement initiatives. The institute lacks clear quality assurance procedures or mechanisms to standardise different practices. While the enrolment remains stable and the repeat business continues at a good rate, the efforts to upgrade the range of programmes, particularly the general English and IT produced only partial success.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Students' achievement is satisfactory overall. Interviewed students and parents expressed their satisfaction with the learning experience at Al Awael and highlighted the positive impact the tutorial sessions have on students' performance at school, helping them to achieve better grades. However, the observed lessons reveal that the majority of students gain only sufficient knowledge with a minority of the students lacking self-confidence and continuously depending on their teachers to guide them when solving exercises. For the sessions observed, attainment and progress in lessons vary across lessons and subjects. For example, young students who attend the 'School Pack' sessions, where they are individually supported with their homework, develop useful learning skills while receiving continuous probing, follow-up questions and immediate feedback. Moreover, students attending mathematics tutorial sessions develop generally better skills than in other subjects.

Generally, students' knowledge is sufficiently developed during lessons through class exercises. However, no relevant and reliable records are kept to show the progress students make over time. In addition, students' prior attainment is insufficiently assessed to establish a starting point from which progress could be measured. Nonetheless, the majority of students make at most satisfactory progress as reflected from their class participation during the observed sessions and while working on the given exercises in class. In addition, there is a small proportion of students who make minimal or insufficient progress due to the use of ineffective teaching methods by a few teachers who provide limited opportunities for students to practice independently.

Most of the students show suitable levels of enthusiasm while attending their lessons and a few are self-motivated and take the initiative to question their teachers and reflect sufficiently on how well they are progressing or what they need to improve further. Attendance records are kept and the majority of students are attending regularly as per the number of sessions for what they paid. However, punctuality is not recorded and the institute has only a lateness card to allow students to enter their classes. Moreover, there are a few cases of students arriving late for more than ten minutes as seen on almost all the observed lessons.

The quality of provision

How effective is teaching and/or training in promoting learning?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The teachers at Al Awael have relevant theoretical knowledge and experience of their academic specialism in the taught subjects. They exhibit useful awareness of the government school's syllabus and the examination standards and materials. In the majority of lessons observed, teachers use exercises enabling students to practice on samples of school questions and overcome their difficulties. Most teachers cater sufficiently for the needs of the less able students, mainly through repeating and oversimplifying the tasks to be achieved. However, more able students are not stretched enough and a small portion of students remain dependent on the teacher's continuous support. Nonetheless, in a few of the lessons observed, teachers provided sufficient opportunities to students to further their understanding and solve problems independently. Teachers use many exercises in lessons. However, teaching methodologies used in the less effective lessons do not succeed always in engaging and motivating students to participate effectively. Teaching is mostly done through the appropriate use of whiteboard, schoolbooks and hand-outs. However, some of the observed lessons lack the use of relevant visual aids.

Almost all classes start and end on time and lesson objectives are usually shared with students verbally. However, some exercises are not timely managed and take more time than necessary. From the observed lessons and scrutinising the provided course files, teachers do not use lesson plans, except in few mathematics tutorial sessions. Generally, teachers follow the sequence of the schoolbook regardless of the prior attainment of the students as these are not measured. Generally, students' understanding is assessed through questioning and exercises during lessons and useful verbal feedback is provided. However, summative assessment is not conducted across all the tutorial sessions and the institute and teachers do not maintain any record on students' progress or attainment, apart from enrolment and attendance records.

How well do programmes meet the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

AL Awael offers an appropriate range of tutorials and examination evening preparation sessions covering the needs of subjects for primary, intermediate and secondary students, as well as private courses for general English and French languages and IT upon requests.

However, the needs for the general English and IT courses are not fully sustained, as no groups have registered for these courses since the last review in June 2011. The institute offers a range of tutorial sessions based on parents' and students' requests, as well as suggestions from teachers and the management themselves. Students and parents interviewed confirmed that generally, the offered tutorial sessions match their needs and that the institute is always ready to arrange for any subject upon request, private lessons or a small group. The most demanded tutorial sessions that the institute offers include Arabic and English languages, mathematics, science subjects, accounting and finance as well as homework support for the primary school students; 'School Pack' sessions. Parents enrol their children on the tutorial sessions on monthly basis for two hours per week.

The tutorial and examination evening preparation sessions are planned and structured in the form of booklets and summaries according to the school books content and largely follow the delivery schedule of each subject in government schools. The institute's booklets are adequately updated. For some courses, the booklets are changed completely, while for others changes are carried out partially depending on the initiative of each teacher. For tutorial sessions, teachers use school books and always follow the updated versions used by the school. In addition, teachers usually update the practice exercises and the questions they use in class using examples of questions appearing in the schools' previous final examinations. The resources available to run the courses are satisfactory for the nature of most of the tutorial sessions the institute offers currently. Whilst, course booklets and worksheets are available for tutorial sessions, the courses, particularly language courses, are not enriched with suitable audio-visual resources. The institute has a computer laboratory with sufficient number of computers, however, it is not utilised to support the non-IT courses.

How well are learners supported and guided to achieve better outcomes?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Students at Al Awael receive *ad hoc* support only. This is provided mainly within the lessons and depends on the initiative of the individual teacher. Mostly, teachers oversimplify and repeat the information to ensure that students with low abilities can pass their school tests, which does not support the development of the needed self-learning skills and leads to overreliance of students on teachers' guidance.

The institute does not have a policy or dedicated staff members to support students with learning needs outside the classroom and help them achieve better. The administration staff use short messaging system (SMS) and telephone calls to follow up with parents regarding students' late attendance and respond adequately to parents' enquiries about the available

tutorial subjects and the sessions' timetable. However, parents are not usually informed on their children's progress as a result of the tutorial sessions they attend. The majority of students are not sufficiently made aware of their progress, where opportunities are not provided to them to discuss their individual progress and what they need to do to improve further.

The offered courses lack written course outlines and clear plans apart from the course booklet itself. Only brief information about course arrangements and the institute's rules and regulations is made available to students and parents during registration days. The institute has a website and a number of social media network such as Instagram and Facebook, however, the information provided on them is out-dated and insufficiently detailed. Arrangements for the delivery of courses are generally flexible to suit the needs of parents. The tutorial sessions are offered in different modes; regular classes, private and evening examination revision sessions. The scheduling of sessions delivery is based on schools' year level and sometimes arrangements for separate classes for boys and girls are made upon parents' requests. Furthermore, students who miss their lessons with valid reasons are given free compensation hours. The learning environment is acceptable for the intended use with a sufficient number of classrooms, which are equipped with basic furniture and the necessary learning resources. However, some classrooms are crowded and a few students stated the need for a more stimulating learning environment.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Leadership and management are inadequate overall. Although there is a common purpose among the management and teachers to help students do better in school and relevant vision and mission statements are in place, these are not translated into strategic and operational plans. The institute lacks a strategic planning process which is informed by a critical self-assessment and translated to action plans with clear targets and monitoring mechanism. Moreover, the management structure is not large enough to carry out strategic tasks and monitor the performance of the provision as it is preoccupied with facilitating and running the day-to-day operations. Apart from students' enrollment and daily attendance registers, essential students and performance records are not maintained. Students' achievement records are not available and students' progress is not tracked to enable the management to monitor and analyse trends and take necessary actions. Procedures for assessing and utilising students' prior attainment do not exist; records of school grades are

not kept as a reference base. The only measure the management has to evaluate the performance of the provision is the continuous enrollment of students and the *ad hoc* and occasional feedback it receives from few parents and some students.

The institute employs part-time teachers who are well aware of school curriculum and examination standards and have the relevant qualifications and teaching experience. However, very limited meetings are held with these teachers to discuss and plan how to improve the learning experience of the students at the institute. While a useful form is available to observe teachers in class, only a few teachers were observed recently. The teachers are not adequately provided with feedback on their performance or recommendations on how to improve. The institute also does not offer training and development opportunities or workshops to teachers or staff to improve their teaching and support practices. A suitable form is used to collect feedback from students on their views on the quality of teaching and learning experiences they have at the institute. However, the feedback is infrequently administrated and the limited number of collected feedback forms have not been aggregated. As a result, critical feedback and comments are not followed up systematically. The management receives informal and *ad hoc* feedback from parents and some actions requested by parents have been addressed such as having separate classrooms for females and adjusting the break time.

The premises are free of obvious hazards and parents feel the premises are safe for their children to attend and necessary health and safety measures are in place. However, a written health and safety procedure is not developed and students are not provided with sufficient guidance on how to act during emergency. The self-evaluation form (SEF) submitted for this review lacks the required details, has insufficient reference to evidence and the provided grades highly overestimate the provision. Nonetheless, the SEF has identified a few relevant priorities for development.

The provider's key strengths

- The types of tutorial sessions offered by the institute meet the needs of parents and students.

Recommendations

In order to improve, Al Awael should:

- ensure that students make the progress expected from them
- enhance the teaching and learning experience received by the students by:
 - ensuring that teachers use more effective teaching methodologies to engage and motivate all students
 - introducing more comprehensive assessment strategies including summative assessment, keeping records of students' progress and sharing them with students and their parents.
- devise and implement formal procedures for assessing, analysing and utilising students' prior attainment
- develop a strategic planning mechanism which is informed by a critical self-assessment and is translated to an action plan with clear targets and monitoring mechanism
- expand the management structure to enable the institute to monitor the overall performance of the provision, particularly the performance of teachers in class and trends of students' achievement.