



هيئة جودة التعليم والتدريب
Education & Training Quality Authority
Kingdom of Bahrain - مملكة البحرين

Directorate of Vocational Reviews

Review Report

Al Muheet Institute
Al Maqsha
Kingdom of Bahrain

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VO077-C3-R071

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Introduction

The Directorate Vocational Reviews (DVR), which is a part of the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA), conducted this review over four days by a team of five reviewers. For this review, reviewers observed training lessons and other related activities, analysed data about the courses and qualifications learners achieve, examined learners' written and other work, examined documents and the materials provided by the provider and met with learners, parents, teachers, management and support staff.

In the previous review the overall effectiveness of Al Muheet Institute (MI) was judged as inadequate, as were all aspects of its provision except the quality of the programme which was judged as satisfactory.

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

Grading scale

Outstanding	1	Good	2	Satisfactory	3	Inadequate	4
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Table of review judgements awarded

Main Question	Judgement
Learners' achievement	Satisfactory (3)
Quality of teaching / training and assessment	Satisfactory (3)
Quality of programmes	Satisfactory (3)
Quality of support and guidance	Satisfactory (3)
Leadership, management and governance	Inadequate (4)
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory (3)
Overall effectiveness	Satisfactory (3)

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

The overall effectiveness of Al Muheet Institute (MI) is satisfactory, as are all aspects of its provision including the capacity to improve but excluding the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance which is judged as inadequate. The Institute offers a range of non-accredited general English courses. These are delivered by qualified and knowledgeable teachers who adequately assess learners' understanding and achievement of course objectives. An appropriate range of teaching methods are used by teachers to engage and motivate the majority of learners, though in a few lessons the methods used are ineffective and class management is an issue. The majority of learners at MI develop adequate skills and knowledge in English, though a minority do not develop these skills particularly in writing and spelling and do not achieve their course objectives successfully. Learners progress sufficiently throughout the courses from their starting points. Adequate support and guidance is provided to learners to achieve better results. High achievers receive recognition as 'Star students' and others are motivated through the provision of free and discounted courses. One-to-one support sessions are provided for learners who are underperforming. However, the implementation of these practices in addressing issues and the follow-up procedures required are not consistent across all courses.

MI courses are adequately planned and structured, with stated learning hours and teaching methods and a range of formative and summative assessment being used. However, in a few courses learning hours are insufficient to achieve the objectives, the course assessments are not always aligned to the course objectives and the time allocated for the assessment is not appropriate.

The management has developed policies and procedures, though these are not always implemented consistently. The organisation structure is suitable and matches the requirements of day-to-day activities. However, most of the roles and responsibilities of internal quality assurance are handled by a part-time person who is also the English department head, hence, the implementation of these practices is not sufficiently effective. Recent use of external verification has highlighted useful comments related to the quality of assessments, but action on verifying these has not yet been taken. The Institute does not have clearly defined strategic planning based on a rigorous self-evaluation process and focus on learners' achievement. Regular monitoring of teachers' performance is conducted and areas

to be improved are acted upon by providing suitable training opportunities. Arrangements to monitor learners' achievements are in place, and suitable records are kept on learners' performance and attendance.

Capacity to improve

How strong is the provider's capacity to improve the quality of learning?

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

MI's capacity to improve is satisfactory. Most areas of improvement that were highlighted by the review team on the last visit have been addressed appropriately, including the monitoring of learners' performance and sufficient support being provided by the management to enable learners to achieve their course objectives, while teachers' performance is monitored through regular classroom visits.

The Institute has suitable organisational structure to meet its day-to-day operations, with suitable physical and human resources being deployed. Overall performance of the provision is evaluated through disseminated practices. Though most of the courses are internally moderated, in a minority of cases this approach is not rigorous enough. Appropriate external verification was completed recently, which highlighted a range of comments related to quality of assessment and learning, though action on these has not been addressed sufficiently. A range of policies and procedures are in place to quality assure teaching and learning, but the implementation of these is not consistent.

In October 2015 the Institute expanded by establishing another branch in the Al Maqsha area, to offer general English courses and serve a wider community. Hence, overall enrolment increased rapidly and has been maintained over the past three years. MI regularly collects learners' and parents' views and measures their satisfaction, recently identifying the need to introduce the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). MI has also recently signed a contract with an external body to offer English courses.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

Learners' achievement is satisfactory overall. The majority of learners develop adequate English skills and knowledge relevant to their course level. The majority of parents and learners interviewed express their satisfaction with the learning experience, acknowledging that attending courses at MI positively impacts their levels at school. The total mark for overall achievement is based on 50% for final results and the remaining 50% distributed on continuous assessment throughout the course. However, 14% of the total mark is subjective, and in a minority of courses assessment is not sufficiently rigorous and marking is not accurate.

The observed sessions and scrutiny of learners' work reveals that the majority of learners achieve their course objectives appropriately. They are awarded with a certificate of completion upon completing at least 70% of the scheduled hours and scoring a minimum attainment of 60% in the formative and summative assessments. However, a minority do not develop the required skills, particularly in writing and spelling, and do not achieve the course objectives successfully. Further scrutiny of course files reveals that a few learners do not achieve part of the course objectives and/or do not pass the final exam, yet have still been granted the certificates. The observed sessions and the analysis of pre-and post-test results reveal that, generally, learners progress sufficiently from their starting points and over levels.

Judging from the observed lessons, learners are attentive and the majority are self-motivated, with the more capable learners being able to correct themselves and confidently present their work and ideas in front of a group. They are also able to reflect critically on their colleagues' work and correct their peers' mistakes when asked by the teacher. The majority of learners are able to work appropriately as individuals, and/or in groups during class activities. In a few cases learners are disruptive and distract the other learners. Learners are made aware of the attendance policy at the start of the course. The majority attend regularly and attendance is well recorded. However, punctuality is rarely recorded and in the observed lessons there were many cases of poor punctuality after break time.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching/training and assessment in promoting learning?

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

The effectiveness of teaching and assessment is satisfactory overall. Teachers have the theoretical and practical command of teaching. They provide relevant examples and respond to learners' questions. Based on the observed lessons, teachers apply a range of teaching methods including open discussion, question and answer, presentation, and group work to engage learners. However, in a few lessons, the teaching methods used are ineffective in motivating learners to participate and interact in the activities. Lessons are appropriately managed and usually start with sharing the objectives and recapitulation of previous lessons. However, in a few of lessons class and time management are an issue due to inefficient distribution of activities timing, lack of clear instructions and uncontrolled disruptive learners. Teachers use suitable lesson plans that include lesson objectives, lesson procedures, materials, and evaluation methods. However, the time allocated for the activities do not always match the activity requirements and learners' prior and continuous assessment outcomes are not effectively utilised in planning.

Throughout the courses, formative and summative assessments are used to measure the achievement of course objectives, including two quizzes and a final examination. However, in a minority of courses these assessments are not sufficiently rigorous and marking is not accurate. A clear marking scheme is not in place. Although suitable rubrics for writing skills are present, implementation is not always rigorous. During lessons, teachers measure learners' understanding appropriately through direct verbal questioning, presentation and written individual and pair activities. Learners' starting points and their levels of progress are suitably measured using pre- and post-tests.

Teachers maintain records of learners' performance. Useful verbal feedback is provided to learners during lessons and written comments are provided on learners' work. Additionally, comments on learners' overall performance during the course are documented in the 'Learners Performance Report'. However, the written comments are mostly generic and are not always constructive to help learners improve further.

Teachers generally support learners who struggle by giving them more attention and repeating explanations. However, in a few lessons learners varying needs are insufficiently addressed. Teaching methods and the activities used by most teachers provide sufficient opportunities to challenge learners' abilities, stimulate their higher order and critical thinking and promote lifelong learning through questioning techniques and assignments that requires researching the internet, though in a few lessons these activities do not match the

requirements of learners with higher abilities. Teachers use an appropriate range of learning resources and materials such as white board, interactive board, flashcards, work books and work sheets to facilitate learning.

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

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

The effectiveness of programmes in meeting the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders is satisfactory overall. The Institute offers an appropriate range of non-accredited general English courses. These courses are offered with progression levels; levels 1 to 6. Each level is sub-divided into three levels; the duration for each sub-level is 30 hours and for one complete level is 90 hours. MI utilises fit-for-purpose means to sense market needs and recently identified the wishes of parents and learners to introduce the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Learners and their parents acknowledge that courses on offer meet their needs. Courses are supported with an appropriate range of resources that suit the learners' needs. In addition, relevant extra-curricular activities such as spelling-bee, read aloud and field trips are conducted to support and enhance learners learning experience, though such activities are not scheduled regularly enough to have a sustained positive impact on the learning experience.

The Institute follows the internationally approved English as a Second Language (ESL) curriculum for different levels. New editions are introduced as recommended by the publishing partner and which are suited to the target learners' ages and requirements. Courses are suitably structured and planned, with stated study hours. Fit -for-purpose course outlines briefly mention the topics, target language and skills addressed, teaching methods and the range of formative and summative assessments. These allow learners to acquire the core competencies and knowledge and gradually progress through the levels. The various modules in the syllabus are suitably allocated over the sub-levels within each course. However, in a few courses the study hours are insufficient to allow learners to achieve the learning outcomes effectively. Also, the assessments in some courses are not fully aligned to the objectives, and the time allocated to complete the assessments is not appropriate. The Institute utilises online placement tests which are aligned to the Common European Framework Referencing (CEFR) system to identify learners' language levels and place them within the most appropriate level of the language programmes.

How well are learners supported and guided?

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

Learners at MI are provided with adequate guidance and support to enable them to improve their performance. The management and staff at the reception are supportive and approachable. Prior to the start of the course learners are provided with suitable advice and guidance on courses, which includes basic information on the suggested levels as well as the assessment methods. On the first day of the course an orientation day is organised to induct learners into the Institute. Course outlines, textbooks and the required supplementary materials are provided to learners at the beginning of the course. Using social media such as Twitter and Instagram, MI also informs learners and their parents on upcoming courses. The Institute's website is in its initial stage of construction.

Learners who fail in their final examinations are allowed to re-sit after discussion with their parents. High achieving learners are appreciated as 'Star students' and a few of them are further motivated through providing free and discounted courses. In a few cases, extra classes are provided to compensate learners for missed sessions. Teachers use the individual support forms to state any identified issues and recommendations related to learners' achievement. One-to-one support sessions are provided for learners who are underperforming. However, the implementation of these practices in addressing issues and the necessary follow-up procedures are not consistent across all courses to help learners to achieve their full potential.

Although the Institute has a fixed schedule for delivery of courses, the dates and time of sessions are adjusted according to learners' and parents' needs. Parents are updated on their children's performance through open days conducted in the middle of the courses and through informal meetings and phone calls. Reports on learners' performance are sufficiently detailed and are shared with parents on request upon course completion. However, the comments on performance reports vary. The learning environment is suitable for its intended use at both premises, with a sufficient number of classrooms equipped with interactive whiteboards. Relevant educational posters are displayed in some of the classrooms. The Institute has a written policy to deal with special educational needs. The administration staff provide compassionate personal care to learners when they face problems. However, the Institute does not have sufficient arrangements in place to identify students with special needs or to support them effectively in meeting their learning needs.

Leadership, management and governance

How effective are leadership, management and governance in raising achievement and improving the quality of the provision?

Grade: Inadequate (4)

The effectiveness of leadership, management and governance is inadequate overall. MI has vision and mission statements that focus on the development of learners' skills and personal confidence. Since the last review, the Institute has taken limited steps towards improving its strategic directions that focus on raising learners' achievement. In 2017, the Institute developed an operational plan with a set of objectives that are based on the previous BQA review recommendations, though progress on these objectives is not thorough and not fully put in place. The practices to monitor the overall performance of the provision are fragmented. Additionally, the process of self-evaluation is not systematically carried out nor is it utilised effectively to improve the overall provision. Considering the number of enrollment and conducted programme, the organisation structure is suitable to carry out the Institute daily operations. The Institute has internal moderation and external verification procedures. However, in a minority of cases internal moderation is not rigorous. Recently, appropriate external verification was conducted that highlighted useful comments related to the quality of assessment, but action on these moderation and verification recommendations has not been taken. Policies and procedures have been developed, but the implementation of these is not always consistent. These are due to the fact that the Institute does not have a fully dedicated quality assurance person, the person in charge is deployed on a part time basis and does not sufficiently ensure a consistent implementation of internal quality assurance.

Qualified and experienced staff are recruited, suitably inducted and deployed. The management maintains a healthy and fit-for-purpose learning environment, with essential health and safety procedures and practices being monitored by the management. Both premises are free from hazards. Learners' prior attainment is in place to ensure that learners are put in level suitable to their abilities. The Institute management monitors teachers' performance regularly through scheduled class observation visits. In addition, very recently the Institute completed a number of classroom observations conducted by an external party. Recently the management has taken steps towards improving teaching and learning and building teachers' capacity. MI adequately monitors learners' performance through the new Zibgrades system. Learners' and parents' views are collected and aggregated and some actions are taken based on these views, such as the timing of course delivery and transportation.

The provider's key strengths

- The development of English skills by the majority of learners.
- The range of general English courses.
- The effective links maintained with learners and parents.

Recommendations

In order to improve, Al Muheet Institute should:

- Ensure that learners achieve all course objectives and develop competencies according to their course level, particularly in writing and spelling.
- Improve course structures to ensure that assessment methods are rigorous and accurately mapped to course objectives, and that sufficient learning hours are allocated with clear rubrics and marking schemes.
- Ensure that support mechanism and procedures are systematic and consistently followed.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - improving strategic planning, making it more systematic
 - ensuring that the self-evaluation process is carried out regularly and critically, and the outcomes are utilised to improve strategic planning.

Appendix

Description of the provision

Al Muheet Institute (MI) was established in 2009. It is licensed by the Ministry of Education (MoE) to offer a range of non-accredited general English courses. These courses are offered with progression levels; levels 1 to 6. Each level is sub-divided into three levels; the duration for each sub-level is 30 hours and for one complete level is 90 hours.

Since the last BQA review the Institute has enrolled 5,775 learners, broken down as 1,706 in 2015, 1,796 in 2016 and 2,273 in 2017 to the date of this review. The majority of learners are enrolled in level 1 and 2 courses, come from government schools and are aged seven and above.

The Institute operates from two premises, located in Nuwaidrat and Al Maqsha. These branches are managed by an executive director and two branch part-time directors, with a pool of English teachers led by a head of department who is employed on a part-time basis. The Institute has four departments; English language, marketing, admission and registration, and transportation.