



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

Directorate of Vocational Reviews

Review Report

Bahrain Music Institute

Manama

Kingdom of Bahrain

Date Reviewed: 30 October-2 November 2017

VO081-C3-R072

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Introduction

The Directorate of Vocational Reviews (DVR), which is a part of the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA), conducted this review over four days by a team of six reviewers. For this review, reviewers observed training sessions 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, Bahrain Music Institute the overall effectiveness was judged as outstanding, as were all aspects of its provision except the effectiveness of leadership and management which was judged as good.

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	Outstanding (1)
Quality of teaching / training and assessment	Outstanding (1)
Quality of programmes	Outstanding (1)
Quality of support and guidance	Outstanding (1)
Leadership, management and governance	Good (2)
Capacity to improve	Outstanding (1)
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding (1)

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: Outstanding (1)

The overall effectiveness of Bahrain Music Institute (BMI) is outstanding, as are all aspects of its provision except for that of leadership and management which is good. Most learners develop highly effective skills and excellent knowledge in different musical instruments. They make significant progress from their starting points and achieve the qualifications they aim for. This is evident from their active participation in local and international competitions and concerts, with talented learners achieving top awards and others pursuing further studies in the music field. Learners show a high level of commitment towards their learning and demonstrate positive attitudes and harmony within their group. The qualified teachers deliver musical courses in a pleasant and controlled learning environment. They use their musical expertise to conduct highly effective and focused lessons by giving advises and constructive feedback to motivate and engage learners that impact their performance rapidly. Learners are informed on a regular basis of their progress and what is needed to improve further, while parents are kept aware of the progress made by learners through effective interaction and direct access to the highly informative online system.

Learners and parents have the opportunity to choose from a comprehensive range of music courses, which comprise locally developed and externally accredited, courses that are supported with an excellent range of extracurricular activities to positively impact learners' achievement of musical skills and the quality of their public performance. Learners are provided with wide-range of support and guidance to help them achieve better outcomes and reach their full potential. At the commencement of a course, an inclusive induction arrangement is in place to help individual learners to settle in. Learners facing difficulties are supported well by their teachers and are encouraged to participate in the monthly in-house concerts, where they are given the opportunity to perform different musical pieces in front of public audiences and their parents, which positively impacts learners' skills and confidence. BMI management has well defined mission and vision statements focused towards improving learners' musical skills and talent from an early age and helping them to further develop musical performance. For this, the Institute has developed a set of effective action plans with clear improvement targets and suitable monitoring arrangements. The action plans are cascaded through the institute daily operations in a manner that provides staff with adequate sense of direction.

Capacity to improve

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

Grade: Outstanding (1)

Bahrain Music Institute has outstanding capacity to improve its provision. The management is highly committed to maintaining quality provision, continually improving its operations and widening the range of its offerings such as the recent introduction of the Trinity College range of courses. This is further evidenced by the learners' achievement rates which have been maintained for the past three years, with enrolment growing over the same period. The management and staff are guided by strategic direction comprising a range of operational and quality assurance targets that are closely monitored to trigger improvement initiatives. To further improve the effectiveness of measuring and monitoring of learners' achievement, the Institute has deployed highly efficient and user-friendly computer-based system. This provides comprehensive information and customised reports about all aspects of the provision, tightly coupled to learners' achievements and progress. Through this system, parents can view and monitor their children's performance any time. BMI maintains very productive links with parents, learners and international bodies. The Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) completed for the review is informative and self-critical. It identifies a range of areas that need to be improved, while the suggested grades mostly match those of the review team.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: Outstanding (1)

Learners' achievement is outstanding overall. Most learners develop highly effective musical skills and pertinent knowledge in playing music on different instruments. The vast majority of them achieve a very high competency rate with a confidence that shows well in the observed lessons. This is also evident from their active participation in local and international competitions and concerts, with the more talented learners winning top awards and others pursue further studies in the music field. Learners show high levels of commitment towards their learning and have effective relationships with their teachers that result in rapid improvement in fluently performing musical pieces. They develop the self-confidence needed to perform in front of audiences and are able to incorporate the required levels of musical sense well, such as the shape of phrasing. However, a few skills related to sight reading and tempo synchronisation is still not fully mastered by a few learners. Interviewed parents

acknowledged that they are highly satisfied with the learning outcome of their children and the valuable music skills they gain.

Most learners make significant progress from their starting point, and continually improve their musical and vocal skills as shown by BMI's levels and the Associated Board of Royal School of Music (ABRSM) examinations results. This is further evidenced by the very constructive feedback recorded by teachers about individual learners. It is worth mentioning that learners who sit for the ABRSM and the Trinity College examinations achieve high competency rates, with a significant number scoring distinction grades. Learners at BMI achieve the intended musical level outcomes and course objectives successfully, with almost all learners who opt to sit for the external examinations achieving the qualifications they aim for. Achievement rates have been steadily high for the past three years.

Most learners show a high level of confidence and are able to perform well, independently through class activities and collaboratively within a group in concerts. Learners have positive attitudes towards their learning, show high level of enthusiasm and are able to take control of their learning. In a number of cases, learners reflect critically on what they need to do to improve through productive and critical discussions with their teachers.

A clear attendance policy is in place. Attendance rates have been high for the last three years, averaging 92%. The Institute has a clear procedure to follow-up on absenteeism cases, which is implemented effectively as lessons are scheduled to suit parents' preferences and convenience. From the observed lessons, learners attend on time, but punctuality is not recorded although it was not an issue in the observed lessons.

The quality of provision

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

Grade: Outstanding (1)

The effectiveness of BMI teaching and training is outstanding overall. Teachers are highly qualified with vast international experience in the specialised music areas they teach. This shows well in their explanations and in the focused information about the way of performing different selected international musical pieces that widen learners' perspectives. Teachers follow fit-for-purpose course plans to deliver their lessons which cover the contents and strictly following the structured students' books. Lessons are well planned and highly structured, and time is well managed. Lessons always start on time with effective revision of the previous lesson and the pace of lessons is adjusted depending on learners' progress. Teachers utilise a very wide variety of effective teaching methods to engage and motivate learners through a one-on-one teaching

approach; they demonstrate positive professional attitudes toward learners, such as patience and caring while interacting with learners, and they effectively utilise the available learning resources of musical instruments and course books to facilitate effective learning. From the observed lessons, teachers provide individual learners with ample opportunities to practice and further develop their musical skills throughout the lesson, focusing on learners' individual needs and addressing the individual support provided to each learner according to the learner's musical technical skills and abilities. Learners are provided with homework that precisely indicates the areas for further practice, taking into consideration learners' favourite music pieces.

Teachers assess learners through a highly structured range of formative and summative assessment. The standard of BMI level examinations are comparable to the ABRSM grade, with clear and detailed guidelines for marking and rubric for evaluation of pieces, scale, arpeggios and sight reading which are meticulously followed. The ABRSM examinations grades forms are critically evaluated by internal and external teams, with specific justification for each section. Records about learners' performance are well maintained and updated in a timely manner using the online IT system. Teachers provide very effective verbal instant feedback and hints to learners during lessons and detailed written constructive comments on how learners can improve their performance further. Teachers also promote learners higher critical thinking by provoking challenging discussion on the higher levels of music pieces to stimulate performance improvement. Learners are encouraged to participate in the in-house monthly concerts to build learners' self-confidence and promote life-long learning.

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

Grade: Outstanding (1)

BMI provides a highly relevant range of locally and externally accredited programmes covering musical instruments, music theory and vocal courses for young learners aged six and above. In addition, the Liberal programme is provided solely to encourage music lovers to enjoy learning or practicing in a well guided environment. The Institute depends entirely on the management's in-depth local and international experience and networks in the field of music and knowledge of the requirements of the local market, stakeholders, parents and learners to inform its provision.

The BMI level examination and the externally accredited ABRSM and Trinity College of Music examination programmes are highly structured, with well-defined progression routes and are delivered on a one-on-one basis. The courses are taught in a sequence that encourages progressive acquisition of musical skills and knowledge. The BMI examination level courses are carefully aligned to external examination courses, where the exit level corresponds to the 'PREP' examination, which is a pre-requisite for entry to the ABRSM grade one. The course outlines clearly state the different music components and the summative assessment structure

and evaluation criteria, which are closely matched to the external examinations and thus allow the learners to progress seamlessly to the externally accredited programmes. BMI level examinations courses are locally designed, developed and delivered to allow entry level learners to attain the minimum entry level requirement for ABRSM or Trinity Examination grade one. While the processes for the design, review and updating of programmes are appropriately implemented by the designated staff members, this mechanism is not fully formalised. For the ABRSM and Trinity courses, the respective awarding body's guidelines and syllabi are strictly adhered to. BMI has a comprehensive entry and access policy and the process is rigorously enforced in evaluating the competency level of learners' prior learning or, in the case of beginners, their musical aptitude.

BMI courses are supported with a range of high quality musical instruments. For the local courses, customised materials and music compositions are created by the design team and shared with the teachers and learners to enhance the learning experience. For the external examination courses, a wide range of internationally recognised up-to date music books and resources from the awarding bodies are used, and most music instruments are maintained well to meet international standards. The different music courses are enhanced with a highly relevant range of extracurricular activities, which impact positively on learners' achievement of musical skills and their public performance capability. These include the in-house Musician of the Month concert, public concerts, music events, local, regional and international competitions and workshops.

How well are learners supported and guided?

Grade: Outstanding (1)

BMI has a comprehensive range of support and guidance practices, provided to learners to help them achieve better outcomes. At the commencement of a course an inclusive induction process is in place to help individual learner to settle well into a course. Learners who face difficulties are supported by their teachers and are encouraged to participate in the monthly in-house concerts, where learners are given the opportunity to perform different musical pieces in front of a public audience and their parents, which positively impacts learners' skills and confidence.

Talented and gifted learners are provided with ample opportunities to enroll in international music events such as the 'Knights of Tunes' project, which is adopted and sponsored by the local governmental authority and delivered by the BMI. A number of graduates from this project are now studying music and art at international universities, with records of the destination of these learners being well maintained. Management, teachers and administration staff are approachable, supportive and highly committed to help learners during their learning journey. Learners who missed lessons are rescheduled with a make-up

lesson within a week of its original date. The management extends its financial support for learners who need such support. Feedback from learners' and parents' indicate high satisfaction with the standards of learning and the impact of BMI.

The institute's learning environment and facilities are fit-for-purpose, with appropriate classrooms which are equipped with a good range of music instruments and decorated with pleasant paintings related to music on the walls. The reception area is inspiring, displaying the learners' honours list and photos of learners playing different music instruments. Learners and parents have access to a user-friendly and highly interactive website, social media platforms, learners' and parents' guide books and brochures.

Communication with parents is very effective in informing learners' performance, being through a comprehensive BMI online portal and direct discussion during the BMI monthly concerts. On completion of each lesson, parents can trace their children's performance, attendance rates, teachers' comments, and homework assignment by logging into the BMI online portal where they can easily view the historic records. Likewise, the online system generates useful reminders to learners and parents for future scheduled lessons and notifications of absenteeism. Delivery of the courses is highly flexible to meet the needs of learners and parents, in terms of timing and methods of payment.

An effective arrangement is in place to identify learners with special needs. On a few occasions the Institute has invited learners with special needs from various local community organisations to receive free music lessons. However, the policy to support learners with special needs is not sufficiently detailed.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: Good (2)

BMI management has clear mission and vision statements focused on improving learners' musical skills and talent from an early age and helping them to further develop musical performance. A basic strategic plan with a number of relevant objectives is in place. Effective action planning is developed, where tasks are identified for each target as well as accountabilities, timescale, and monitoring requirements; these are shared with the staff, providing them with an adequate sense of direction to achieve the set targets. The Institute deploys sufficient human and physical resources that suit the nature of the provision and meet its overall aims. The senior management has extensive international experience in the field of

music education and performance. Daily activities are run by the administration team, who are guided with clear job roles and responsibilities. A detailed governance policy and procedures are in place, with the performance of the Institute being overseen by the Board who provide sound advice on a regular basis and contribute to development of the provision.

BMI management maintains a healthy and safe learning environment, with all essential procedures and practices being well maintained. To guide standardisation and maintain consistency, BMI has a range of quality assurance procedures and practices to conduct its daily operations, and these are implemented effectively in the areas of quality teaching and assessment, programme structure and learners' achievement. The Institute utilises the awarding bodies' quality assurance procedures to assess learners' achievement, and adheres to suitable internal and external verification and moderation arrangements to ensure the quality of learning and teaching. A procedure is in place for assessing, analysing and utilising learners' prior attainment in order to place learners according to their abilities and talents. However, quality assurance documents are not sufficiently streamlined. A self-evaluation process is in place to continually evaluate operations and improve efficiency; the Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) provided is sufficiently detailed and provides useful information about operations, with most grades provided being in line with the review team's findings.

BMI has a clear recruitment policy and procedures in place, with firm selection steps being undertaken before employing trainers and staff. The Institute recruits highly qualified staff and experienced teachers who are deployed according to their specialisation. Staff are developed through coaching and relevant courses in the field of music and art to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Their performance is regularly observed during lessons and they are provided with constructive feedback, with the management linking learners' performance and final results to financial incentives. The management has taken a few improvement actions based on the outcome of these visits.

Management maintains comprehensive records about learners' achievements for the various courses and groups. Very useful reports are produced and monitored by the management, further analysis is carried out as required to trigger improvement actions. Constructive comments are provided to individual learners and updated after each lesson on their online profile. Learners, parents and management can review the progress at their convenience. Very productive links are established with international awarding bodies such as ABRSM and Trinity, and locally the Institute maintains good rapport and links with parents and relevant parts of the community including local societies and feeder schools. However, although the Institute has sufficient arrangements in place to collect learners' and parents' feedback after each course and during monthly concerts, the outcomes are not aggregated nor analysed for further improvement.

The provider's key strengths

- Most learners develop highly effective skills and relevant knowledge on different musical instruments, and make significant progress from their starting point.
- Teachers are qualified, with international experience in the specialised music areas that they teach.
- There is an extensive range of local and externally-accredited music courses at various levels.
- A highly relevant range of extracurricular activities are offered that positively impact learners' achievement of musical skills and the quality of their public performances.
- Learners are well supported and guided to help them achieve better outcomes.
- Comprehensive records about learners' achievements on various courses and groups are maintained.

Recommendations

In order to sustain the high quality provision, Bahrain Music Institute should:

- Further enhance strategic planning and the quality assurance policies and procedures.

Appendix

Description of the provision

Bahrain Music Institute (BMI) was established in January 2000. It is licensed by the Ministry of Education (MoE) to offer music courses for children and adults on different musical instruments including piano, keyboard, guitar, violin, drums, saxophone, flute and oud. Vocal and theory courses are also offered. The courses are either internally designed or externally accredited by the Associated Board of the Royal School of Music (ABRSM) of the United Kingdom and Trinity College of Music. Course durations extend from 16 to 48 lessons for the local BMI level examination course and from 24 to 100 lessons for the externally accredited ABRSM and Trinity College examination programmes.

BMI operates from one centre located in the Mahooz area and is owned and led by the managing director. There is a Board of Directors. BMI employs two full-time administrative staff, a registration clerk and a secretary, one part-time person who is in charge of marketing and quality assurance, and a part-time accountant. There are thirteen full-time teachers. During the last three years 2015 to 2017, BMI enrolled 2,939 learners; 568 in 2015, 1,285 in 2016 and 1,086 in 2017 to date.