هيئة جودة التعليم والتدريب
Education & Training Quality Authority

The Performance of the Education and Training Sectors in the Kingdom of Bahrain
for the Academic Year 2023-2024

June 2024

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The Performance of the Education and Training Sectors in the Kingdom of Bahrain for the Academic Year 2023-2024 - June 2024

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▪️ Executive Summary

The Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA)'s operations which include reviews of education and training institutions, academic and vocational programmes, administering the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and conducting National Examinations aim at measuring the performance of the education and training sector in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

By publishing detailed performance reports, BQA provides policy makers and relevant stakeholders with valuable insights into the quality of education and training in the Kingdom. These reports also offer institutions specific recommendations for improvement, highlighting strengths and areas needing attention. This approach fosters continuous improvement and contributes to the realization of national educational aspirations.

This report provides an overview of the performance of Bahrain's education and training sectors for the academic year 2023-2024* by analysing the results of the BQA's operations. It also highlights the effective practices observed in better-performing education and training institutions and identifies areas for improvement and appropriate recommendations to enhance the quality of performance in the education and training sectors.

BQA Operations (2023-2024)

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National Examinations

Grade 12

12,499 students from **37** government schools and **18** private schools

Grade 9

13,214 students from **62** government schools

BQA applied the new schools and vocational reviews frameworks in March 2024. Therefore, the analysis of the results of these two sectors will be limited to the institutions' results in the second semester only (March – June 2024).

Schools' Performance

The recent school reviews demonstrate a positive trend. Of the 27 schools evaluated, 9 improved by one grade, and 14 maintained their current rating. While 4 schools remained 'Inadequate,' it's encouraging to note that only 3 schools experienced a decline by one grade, all of which were government schools.

Given that this academic year marks the second year since students returned to in-person learning following the pandemic, it is difficult to draw direct comparisons between this year's academic performance to pre-pandemic performance standards.

The results indicate an improvement in students' performance and a continuation of the gender gap trend in schools, particularly in government schools, with all 'Outstanding' schools in this batch being girls' schools, an assertion echoed by the results of the National Examinations, where girls demonstrably perform better than boys.

An analysis of Grade 12 and 9 National Examination results for 2023 and 2024 revealed consistent student performance levels. Students demonstrated strengths in basic skills, such as comprehending Arabic and English reading and listening texts and recalling scientific concepts. However, most students struggled with more complex tasks that required critical and analytical reading, understanding implicit meanings, and applying scientific knowledge. Girls continued to outperform boys in most subjects.

Some effective educational practices shared by high-performing schools include collaborative teaching, extracurricular enrichment, effective leadership and strong home-school partnerships. As well as offering ongoing training and development programmes for staff to ensure they are equipped with the latest educational best practices.

Main recommendations include addressing the disparity in performance and academic achievement between boys' and girls' schools; focus on enhancing students' proficiency in core subjects, ensuring more accurate follow-up on professional development by schools, improving the design of learning activities and continuing sharing of best practices of 'Outstanding' schools.

Vocational Training Institutions' Performance

Between March to May 2024, (6) vocational reviews were conducted. These are the first batch of reviews conducted based on the new Vocational Reviews Framework, which was approved in February 2024.

The number of listed vocational institutes on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), increased this year by (34%) compared to the previous academic year, which indicate the understanding of Institutes to the importance of institutional listing to enhance their position locally and internationally. It also confirms the success of efforts and processes implemented to achieve partnership with regulatory and funding bodies such as the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education, and the Labour Fund (Tamkeen).

Some effective practices that have emerged in better-performing institutes include clear strategic direction informed by self-evaluation, and timely learners' achievement of the qualifications they aim for. In addition to the effective implementation of the assessment methods, and establishing a supportive learning environment that enhances effective learning process.

While the reports of low-performing institutes indicated the need to focus on further improving learners' mastery of skills and gradual acquisition of the programme Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs), strategies to be adopted to productively engage the less able learners during the training sessions, enhance the utilisation of the self-assessment process outcomes, and improve the effectiveness of the training session observations.

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Higher Education Acamdemic Programmes' Performance

In the academic year (2023-2024), the Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA) published the results of 45 Academic Programme Reviews (APRs) including the extension visits of academic programmes, where 42 (93%) of these programmes received a 'Confidence' judgement, while 3 (7%) received a 'No Confidence' judgement.

The cumulative results of 121 Academic programmes reviewed, in the first and second review cycles, show that 91% of programmes have received Confidence judgment, while 4% have received 'Limited Confidence' and 5% of the programmes have received 'No Confidence'.

The number of higher education qualifications placed on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was also increased by 29%.

APRs results highlight several best practices for academic programmes. These include fostering global partnerships, incorporating professional certificate content into curricula, and encouraging student research publication. Such initiatives equip graduates with valuable skills and certifications, enhancing their employability and fostering a culture of innovation.

APRs reviews emphasize the importance of higher education institutions implementing robust quality management practices. Key recommendations include developing risk management policies, ensuring adequate staffing with appropriate qualifications, conducting regular graduate follow-ups, effectively measuring learning outcomes, and conducting rigorous market and feasibility studies to align academic programmes with labour market demands.

National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Register

During the academic year 2023-2024, the BQA listed (12) Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions in the NQF register, bringing the percentage of Institutions listed in the NQF to (56%) of the total licensed institutions. In addition, (31) national qualifications have been placed on the NQF, and (46) foreign qualifications have been aligned to the NQF with a (20%) increase compared to the previous academic year. The majority of qualifications were placed and aligned to the NQF Level 8, mainly in management and finance, engineering, and information technology.

During this academic year, the BQA has achieved a marked increase in completion rates of the NQF operations as a result of joint coordination between the BQA and its partners, including the Ministry of Labour, Higher Education Council (HEC) and Labour Fund (Tamkeen), and developing mechanisms for linking the NQF operations to licensing processes and funding. Furthermore, the majority of higher education and vocational institutions are committed to developing

general policies for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). In addition, the BQA has noticed an increased awareness of VET institutions of the importance of benchmarking their qualifications with the relevant local, regional or international standards in the field of the qualification, and the promotion of an internal quality assurance culture in the institutions, enabling them to drive internal improvements through the pilot implementation of the 'self-validation process'.

For better compliance with the NQF requirements, it is recommended that the VET institutions develop their policies and procedures regarding the accumulation and transfer of credit hours, identify the needs and rationale for introducing their qualifications, enhance their policies and procedures for internal and external reviews of the qualification and the institution as a whole, and enhance their policies and procedures relating to assessment design and measuring the achievement of the Learning Outcomes.
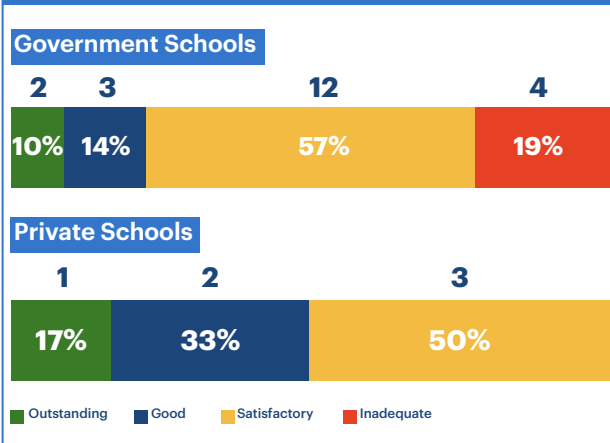
Government and Private Schools

During the second semester of 2023-2024, 21 government schools and 6 private schools underwent reviews following the 2024 Schools Reviews Framework. This framework comprises four main aspects: Students' Academic Achievement, Students' Personal Development and Wellbeing, Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, and Leadership, Management, and Governance.

As for the Overall Effectiveness, when evaluating this batch of government and private schools, the results show a distribution of performance levels as indicated in below Figure. In government schools, 10% were judged as Outstanding, 14% as Good, 57% as Satisfactory, and 19% as Inadequate. Conversely, private schools showcased a different trend, with 17% achieving an Outstanding judgement, 33% as Good, 50% as Satisfactory, and no schools received an 'Inadequate' judgment in this batch.

Overall Effectiveness of 21 government schools and 6 private schools reviewed

Government Schools

2	3	12	4
10%	14%	57%	19%

Private Schools

1	2	3
17%	33%	50%

■ Outstanding ■ Good ■ Satisfactory ■ Inadequate

As for the overall performance status of all 206 schools in Bahrain, government and private schools combined, 12% are 'Outstanding', 17% are 'Good', while 36% and 35% of schools have received a judgement of 'Satisfactory' and 'Inadequate' respectively, as illustrated in the below Figure.
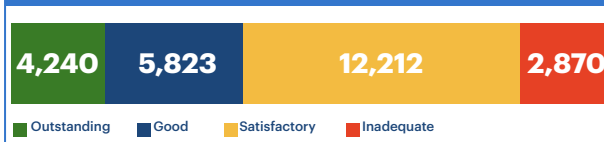
Overall Effectiveness of 260 government and private schools according to the latest results
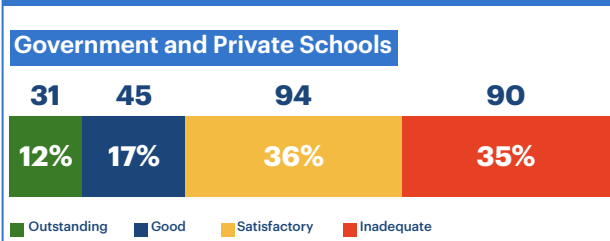
Government and Private Schools

31	45	94	90
12%	17%	36%	35%

■ Outstanding ■ Good ■ Satisfactory ■ Inadequate

The recent school reviews demonstrate a positive trend. Of the 27 schools evaluated, 9 improved by one grade, and 14 maintained their current rating. While 4 schools remained 'Inadequate,' it 's encouraging to note that only 3 schools experienced a decline by one grade, all of which were government schools.

The 27 schools that underwent a review had a combined student population of over 25,000, with over 22,000 students receiving at least satisfactory education, while approximately 3,000 students are receiving inadequate education, as illustrated in the below Figure.

Student population distribution in 21 government schools and 6 private schools reviewed

4,240	5,823	12,212	2,870

■ Outstanding ■ Good ■ Satisfactory ■ Inadequate

The results also indicate a continuation of the gender gap trend in government schools, with all Outstanding schools in this batch being girls' schools, while all Inadequate schools are boys' schools. The Overall Effectiveness by gender, boys' schools showed 0% judged as Outstanding, 11% as Good, 44% as Satisfactory, and 44% as Inadequate. In contrast, girls' schools displayed a distinct pattern, with 17% judged as Outstanding, 17% as Good, 67% as Satisfactory, and none as Inadequate, as explained in the below Figure. Reviews' results suggest that the possible reasons for this gap might stem from differences in teaching approaches, support systems, motivation, and understanding of needs, all of which warrant further examination to address and narrow this disparity.

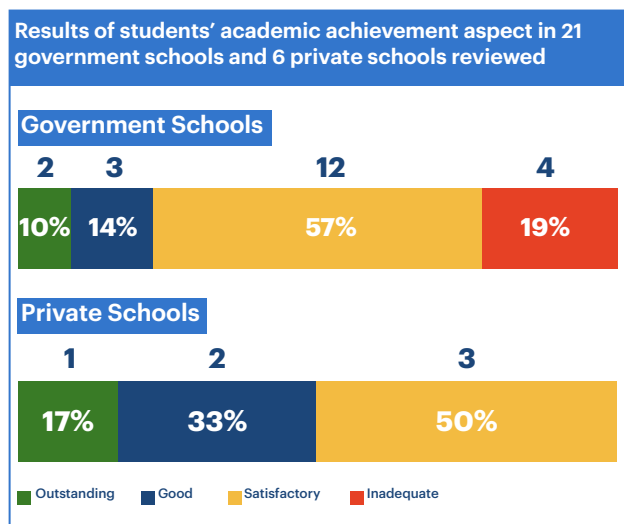**Results of reviews of 21 government schools according to gender**

Boys

1	4	4
11%	44%	44%

Girls

2	2	8
17%	17%	67%

■ Outstanding ■ Good ■ Satisfactory ■ Inadequate
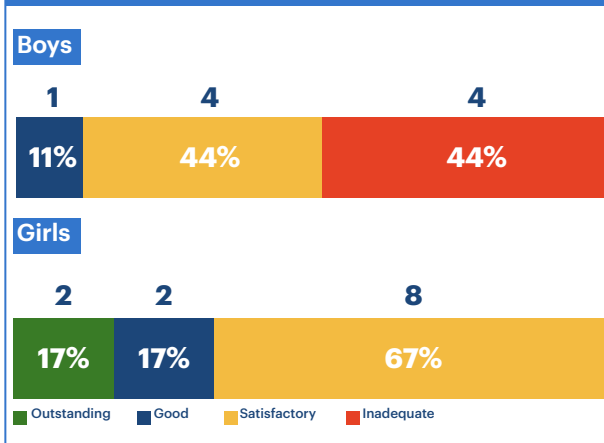
Government and Private Schools

Students' Academic Achievement

The evaluation of students' academic achievement in both government and private schools reviewed in this batch reveals divergent performance trends, segmented into four categories: Outstanding, Good, Satisfactory, and Inadequate as indicated in the below Figure.

Results of students' academic achievement aspect in 21 government schools and 6 private schools reviewed

Government Schools

2	3	12	4
10%	14%	57%	19%

Private Schools

1	2	3
17%	33%	50%

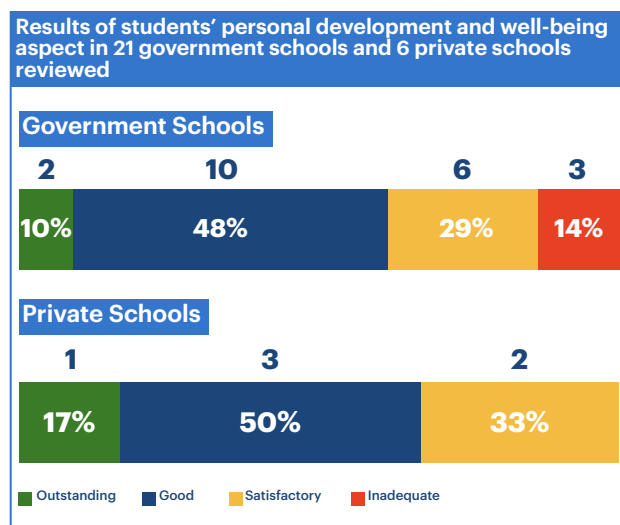■ Outstanding ■ Good ■ Satisfactory ■ Inadequate

In government schools, 10% achieved Outstanding, 14% Good, 57% Satisfactory, and 19% were Inadequate. In private schools 17% achieved Outstanding judgements, 33% Good, 50% Satisfactory, and none fell into the Inadequate category. This comparison highlights stark contrasts: while both sectors have a small percentage of Outstanding results, private schools demonstrate a much higher proportion of Good judgement. The majority of schools fall into the Satisfactory category - 57% in government schools and 50% in private schools - suggesting that both sectors meet basic educational standards but need to accelerate progress to ensure improved outcomes. Notably, 19% of government schools in this batch are rated as Inadequate, signalling the need for significant improvement, while the absence of Inadequate judgement in private schools indicates a more consistent delivery of satisfactory or better education.

The falling performance in the academic achievement aspect, particularly among Inadequate schools, is primarily attributed to challenges in basic literacy and numeracy skills, hindering their progress within lessons. Discrepancies between internal assessment results and actual student skills exacerbate this issue, highlighting the need for alignment between assessed performance and real proficiency levels. In contrast, better-performing schools exhibit no such gaps, with students demonstrating expected or better levels in external examinations. Bridging these skill-based disparities is key to ensuring accurate measures of student achievements.

Students' Personal Development and Well-being

The assessment of students' personal development and well-being in government and private schools reveals contrasting results compared to academic achievement. Government schools saw 10% achieving an Outstanding judgement, 48% as Good, 29% as Satisfactory, and 14% as Inadequate. In private schools, 17% achieved Outstanding judgement, 50% as Good, 33% as Satisfactory, and none falling into the Inadequate category, as illustrated in the below Figure.

Results of students' personal development and well-being aspect in 21 government schools and 6 private schools reviewed

Government Schools

2	10	6	3
10%	48%	29%	14%

Private Schools

1	3	2
17%	50%	33%

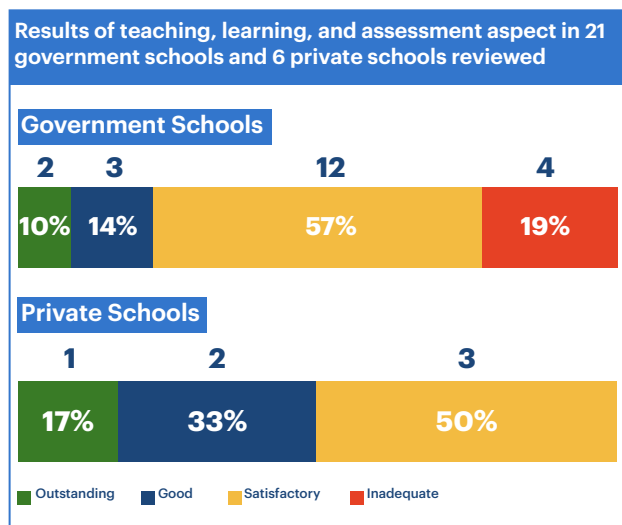■ Outstanding ■ Good ■ Satisfactory ■ Inadequate

When examining the aspect criteria, government schools excelled in Student Behaviour, with 14% achieving an Outstanding judgement, while 10% received the same judgement for Students' Well-being and Inclusion. Similarly, 33% of private schools were judged as Outstanding in Student Behaviour, while 17% attained this judgement in the Students' Well-being and Inclusion criteria.

Schools with clear behavioural policies and expectations have contributed significantly to the improvement in student behaviour. Providing ample opportunities for students to explore their interests and talents outside classrooms has also positively impacted their conduct. Encouraging effective collaboration and acceptance among students has fostered a sense of community within schools. However, there is room for improvement in student attitudes towards learning, their initiative and leadership within classrooms, and motivation levels, especially among boys in very few cases.

Government and Private Schools

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The examination of the Teaching, Learning, and Assessment aspect in government and private schools reveals varying performance levels, as shown in the figure below. In government schools, 10% attained an Outstanding judgement, 14% as Good, 57% within Satisfactory range, and 19% were judged as Inadequate. On the other hand, private schools displayed a different pattern, with 17% achieving an Outstanding status, 33% Good, and 50% Satisfactory, while none were in the Inadequate category.

Results of teaching, learning, and assessment aspect in 21 government schools and 6 private schools reviewed

Government Schools

2	3	12	4
10%	14%	57%	19%

Private Schools

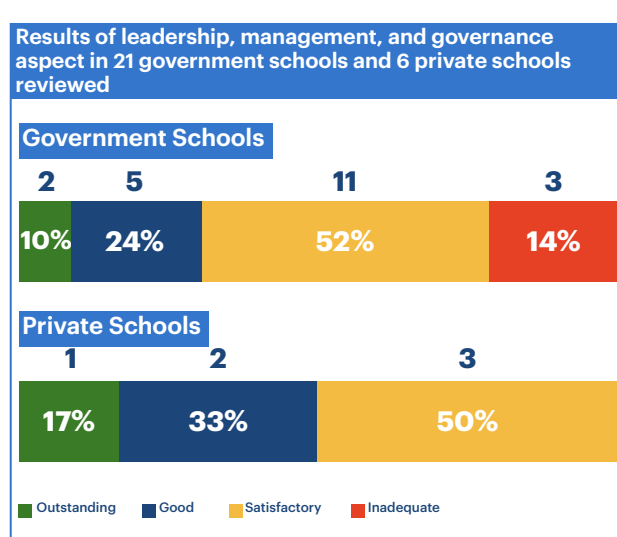| 1	2	3
17%	33%	50%

■ Outstanding ■ Good ■ Satisfactory ■ Inadequate

Looking closer at the criteria, government schools portrayed a similar performance pattern in both Use of Effective Teaching and Learning Strategies and Assessment and Academic Support, with 10% Outstanding, 14% Good, 57% Satisfactory, and 19% Inadequate. In private schools also results in both criteria were identical, where 17% achieved Outstanding judgement, 33% Good, and 50% Satisfactory.

In better-performing lessons, the main emphasis of teaching and learning centres around prioritising student learning, persistently challenging their abilities, and addressing all students' learning needs effectively. Conversely, underperforming schools faced challenges in the assessment, with internal tests often reflecting lower-order thinking skills, falling below age-related expectations, and exhibiting issues of marking inaccuracy. Teaching in these classrooms tended to focus predominantly on catering to the higher-achieving students, while teachers encountered difficulties in managing learning environments and sustaining student engagement.

Leadership, Management and Governance

In analysing the data from government and private schools, Leadership, Management, and Governance performance judgements varied as illustrated in the below Figure. Government schools exhibited a range of scores in this area: 10 % were judged as Outstanding, 24% Good, 52% Satisfactory, and 14% Inadequate. Meanwhile, private schools' results were 17% were judged as Outstanding, 33% as Good, with 50% as Satisfactory, and none deemed Inadequate in this batch of reviews.

Results of leadership, management, and governance aspect in 21 government schools and 6 private schools reviewed

Government Schools

2	5	11	3
10%	24%	52%	14%

Private Schools

1	2	3
17%	33%	50%

■ Outstanding ■ Good ■ Satisfactory ■ Inadequate

Further examination revealed that leaders in government schools excelled in the criteria of Resilience and Innovation, with 38% being judged as Good or above. On the other hand, leaders in private schools excelled in Governance, Parental, and Stakeholders Involvement in School Life criteria, with 60% judged as Good. Additionally, it is essential to note that while school leadership have provided various professional development opportunities, consistency is needed to ensure those initiatives positively impact teaching and learning practices in the classroom.

One third of government schools and half of private schools rated themselves in their self-evaluation exactly as the review team, indicating their high level of adherence to the reviews framework and their ability to learn from previous reviews. The remaining schools differed by only one grade higher in self-evaluation forms compared to the schools' reviews framework criteria, suggesting an area for potential improvement.

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Government and Private Schools

Monitoring Visits results

Monitoring visits are one-day reviews for schools that received an Inadequate judgement in their last standard review. Their purpose is to assess progress against recommendations, ensuring that the school is on the right track to recovery.

During the second semester of 2023-2024, 16 monitoring visits – as illustrated in the below Figure - were conducted, including 15 government schools and 1 private school. Only one school, the private school, achieved a rating of 'Sufficient Progress', while the rest achieved 'In Progress'. No school received an 'Insufficient Progress' rating, indicating that all schools had implemented actions toward improvement. However, schools are facing considerable challenges in addressing issues related to improving students' academic standards and impacting teaching and learning strategies.

Results of monitoring visits for 16 government and private schools

Government and Private Schools

1	15
6%	**94%**

■ Sufficient Progress   ■ In Progress   ■ Insufficient Progress
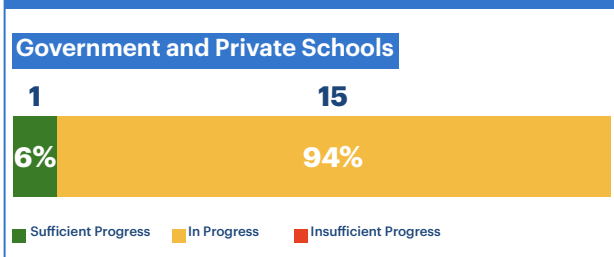
Effective practices in better-performing schools

- Effective leadership: Demonstrating strength in fostering a positive school culture, driving continuous improvement efforts, and making decisions based on student performance data.

- Collaborative Teaching: Fostering a culture of regular collaboration among teachers to share strategies and enhance instructional methods.

- Strong Home-School Partnerships: Engaging parents and caregivers through consistent communication and involvement in school activities, fostering a supportive home-school connection.

- Continuous Professional Development: Offering ongoing training and development programmes for staff based on their needs analysis to ensure they are equipped with the latest educational best practices.

- Extracurricular Enrichment: Providing a diverse range of extracurricular activities to support the holistic development of students beyond academics.

Areas for improvement

- Address the disparity in performance and academic achievement between boys' and girls' schools more effectively and ignite their motivation towards learning.

- Focus on enhancing students' proficiency in core subjects, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

- Ensure more accurate follow-up on professional development by schools to ensure a positive impact on classroom teaching and learning practices.

- Improve the design of learning activities to enhance students' leadership, initiative-taking, and critical thinking skills, fostering a more holistic and skill-oriented approach to education.

- Keep learning from the best practices of 'Outstanding' schools to boost performance and share these methods with other schools.

Vocational Training Institutions

In March 2024, the BQA started a new cycle of vocational education and training Institutes' reviews. The reviews evaluate the performance of the institutes as per the vocational framework's three Aspects: 'Assessment and Learners' Achievement', 'Engagement and Support for Learning', and 'Leadership and Management', where (6) vocational institutes were reviewed.

Five of the vocational institutes were judged as 'Good' in the Overall Effectiveness and across the three framework Aspects, and one institute maintained its previous 'Satisfactory' judgement. It is worth mentioning that (1) institute maintained its 'Good' judgment, while (2) other institutes improved to a good level compared to their performance in the previous cycle of reviews. Furthermore, the other (2) new institutes were reviewed for the first time and were judged as "Good".

The below Figure shows the analysis of the (6) vocational institutes, where (5) institutes were rated as 'Good' in the framework's three Aspects including 'Assessment and Learners' Achievement' Aspect, which is considered as the main focus of the reviews framework to achieve positive outcomes that is compatible with with the labour market's requirements. On the other hand, the institutes judged as 'Satisfactory' retained the same judgement in the framework's three Aspects including 'Assessment and Learners' Achievement' Aspect, which reflect the need for these institutes to develop to improvement plans to increase the learners' mastery of skills and enhance the effectiveness of the monitoring of trainers' performance during the training sessions, to ensure the use of relevant training strategies and assessment methods as indicated in the below Figure.
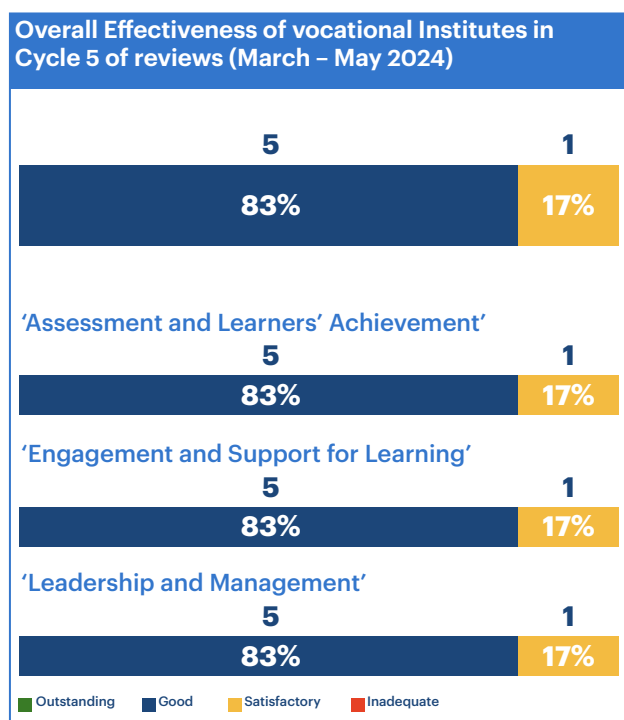
The number of learners in the (6) institutes that successfully met the reviews' requirements , is approximately 4,164 learners, across various areas of learning, which cover three learning areas: 'Information and Communications Technology', 'Business and Commerce', and 'Leadership, Management, and Human Resource Development', each of which accounts for (23%) of the total qualifications awarded, by learners, the remaining remaining (31%) of qualifications are distributed among other learning areas.

Effective Practices in better-performing Institutes

- The strategic direction of the institutes, which is based on an objective self-evaluation process that contributes to improving the quality of the provision.

- The success of learners in achieving the qualifications they aim for in a timely manner.

- Effective implementation of assessment methods, which includes assessing the learners' theoretical knowledge and practical training, and providing purposeful opportunities to develop their vocational skills, such as employment skills and on-the-job training.

- Supportive learning environment that facilitates effective learning and productive engagement of most learners throughout the learning process.

Areas for improvement

- Further improve learners' mastery of skills and gradual acquisition of the programme's ILOs.

- Adapt training strategies to productively engage the less able learners during the training session and accommodate their diverse needs.

- Enhance the utilisation of the self-assessment process outcomes to guide action planning and promote continuous improvement.

- Enhance the effectiveness of training sessions' observations, to ensureclose monitoring of the quality of training and learning.

Overall Effectiveness of vocational Institutes in Cycle 5 of reviews (March – May 2024)

5	1
83%	17%

'Assessment and Learners' Achievement'

5	1
83%	17%

'Engagement and Support for Learning'

5	1
83%	17%

'Leadership and Management'

5	1
83%	17%

■ Outstanding   ■ Good   ■ Satisfactory   ■ Inadequate

Higher Education Academic Programmes

In the academic year 2023-2024, the Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA) reviewed (37) academic programmes offered by four private and two public higher education institutions (HEIs), and commenced the Cycle 3 of institutional reviews with two private higher education institutions in May 2024.

The BQA published the results of 45 Academic Programme Reviews (APRs) that were reviewed in the current academic year and the end of the previous academic year, out of which 9 academic programmes underwent extension reviews in the current academic year. 42 (93%) of these programmes received a 'Confidence' Judgement, while 3 (7%) received a 'No Confidence' judgement in the fields of business administration, accountancy and finance, human resource management, arts, interior design, health and sport sciences, tourism, Arabic and English languages and visual design.

The cumulative results of the first and second cycles of academic programme reviews show notable improvement in the performance of higher education institutions, compared to the cumulative results at the end of the first cycle of APRs reviews that were completed in the academic year (2017-2018), where (64%) of the academic programmes received a 'confidence' judgement; (20%) received a 'limited confidence' judgement and (16%) received a 'no confidence' judgement.

The cumulative results of (121) academic programmes that were reviewed in the first and second APR cycles show that the overall results are (91%) 'Confidence', (4%) 'Limited Confidence' and (5%) 'No Confidence'*.

Cycle 2 of APRs Cumulative Results

110	5	6
91%	4%	5%

■ Confidence ■ Limited Confidence ■ No Confidence
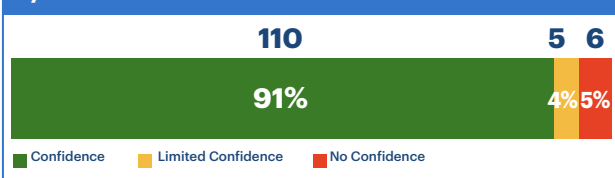
*These results exclude the academic programmes that were closed by the HEIs or HEC but were previously reviewed by the Authority.

The cumulative results of the first and second APR cycles show a significant improvement in the performance of the HEIs compared with the cumulative results at the end of the first APR Cycle which was completed in the academic year 2017-2018. These results were (64%) 'Confidence', (20%) 'Limited Confidence' and (16%) 'No Confidence', as shown in below Figure.

Cycle 1 of APRs Cumulative Results

76	20	16
64%	**20%**	**16%**

■ Confidence ■ Limited Confidence ■ No Confidence

Effective Practices in better-performing Institutes

- The use of a diverse range of formal and informal teaching and learning methods, in addition to the non-formal learning experiences provided in the university environment, encourages students to research, create, and innovate.

- Encouraging students to publish papers in reputable journals which provides students with academic and research experience and supports and increases research in academic specializations.

- Effective and mutually beneficial partnerships supported with active board/committees that regularly monitor the quality and standards of cross-border programmes and make effective improvement decisions based on regular feedback and reporting from all stakeholders.

- Mapping the content of some programmes courses with the content of industrial professional certification eases the transition of graduates to industry roles requiring professionally certified skills.

- The use of a performance management system that systematically manages the staff appraisal process provides a good basis for evaluating performance and identifying opportunities for personal and professional development.

Areas for improvement

- Developing a risk management policy and a tracker/register to ensure effective and continuous mitigation of academic risks, and proper monitoring of mitigation and improvement actions.

- Ensuring that there are sufficient staff members with an appropriate range of academic qualifications, specialisations, professional experience, technical skills, and proficiency to teach the programmes.

- Having mechanisms in place to ensure regular and systematic follow-up with programme graduates to measure their satisfaction and employment rates.

- Ensuring that the achievement of the courses' and programmes' intended learning outcomes are properly measured and that the results contribute to the enhancement of the students' learning and the programmes.

- Regularly conducting comprehensive benchmarking exercises, in line with the institution's policies, covering all aspects of the programmes, with similar programmes locally, regionally, or internationally, to ensure the validity and comparability of the programmes.

- Ensuring that conducted market and feasibility studies are more rigorous and provide relevant qualitative and quantitative data that would enable senior management to make informed decisions regarding the programmes.

National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

During the academic year 2023-2024, the BQA listed (12) Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions in the NQF register, bringing the total number of Education and Training Institutions listed in the NQF to (54), which is equivalent to (56%) of the total licensed institutions, as shown in the below Figure.

Institutions listed in the NQF

Institutions Listed in the academic year 2023-2024

	12	
12	**100%**	

Total Listed Institutions

	10	44
54	**19%**	**81%**

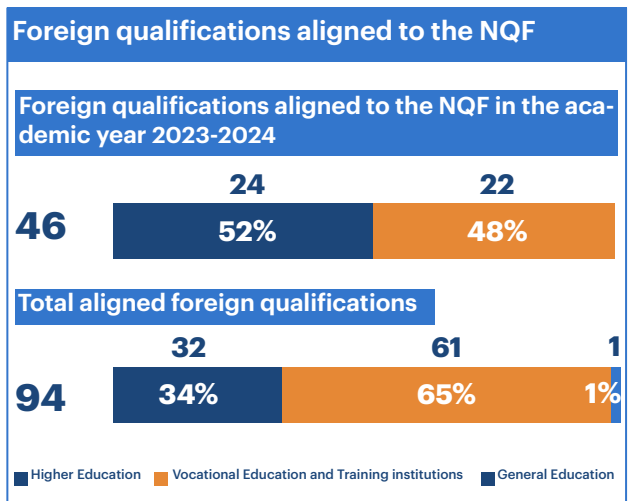■ Higher Education ■ Vocational Education and Training institutions
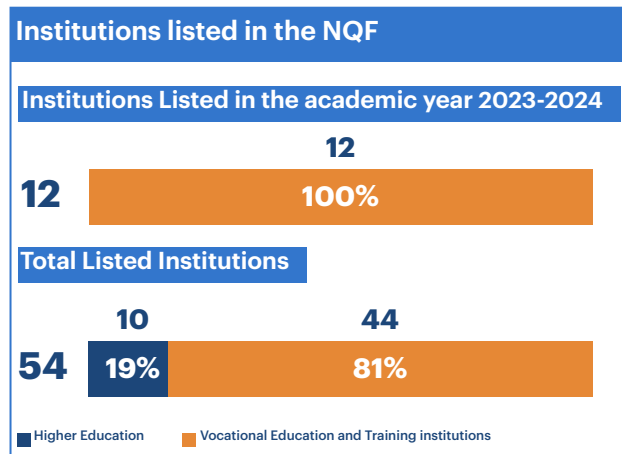
In addition, (31) national qualifications have been placed on the NQF, including (24) Higher Education (HE) qualifications and (7) VET qualifications. In contrast, (2) national qualifications were archived, bringing the total number of qualifications placed on the NQF to (298), which is equivalent to (39%) of the total licensed national qualifications, as shown in the below Figure. Also, (38) qualifications were re-validated, including (20) HE qualifications and (18) VET qualifications.
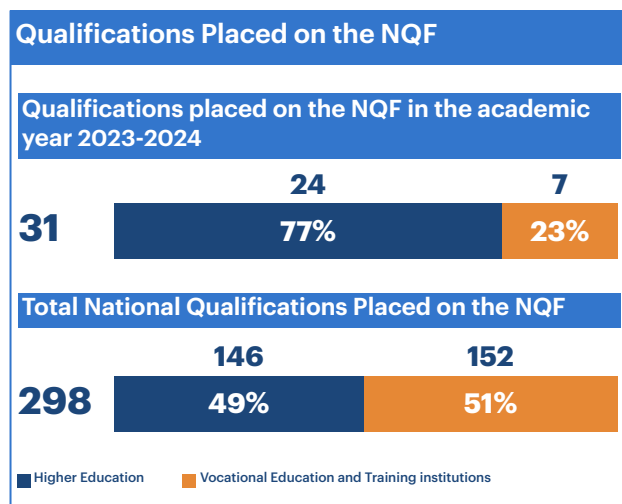
Qualifications Placed on the NQF

Qualifications placed on the NQF in the academic year 2023-2024

	24	7
31	**77%**	**23%**

Total National Qualifications Placed on the NQF

	146	152
298	**49%**	**51%**

■ Higher Education ■ Vocational Education and Training institutions

Qualifications Placed on the NQF in the Academic Year 2023-2024, according to the NQF Level

Level 10 — 1

Level 9 — 9

Level 8 — 12

Level 7 — 2

Level 6 — 4

Level 3 — 2

Level 2 — 1
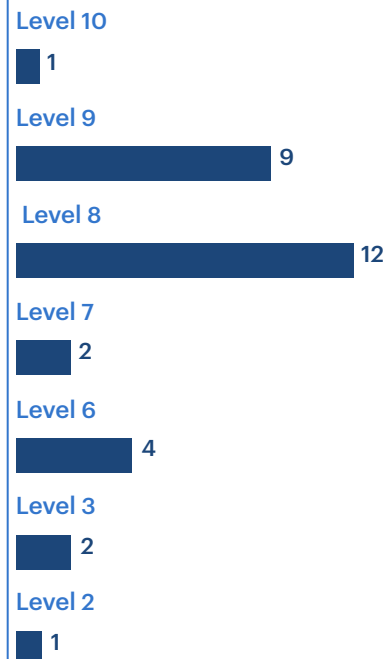
Furthermore, (46) foreign qualifications have been aligned to the NQF, including (24) HE qualifications and (22) VET qualifications. In contrast, (13) VET qualifications were archived, bringing the total number of foreign qualifications aligned to the NQF to (94), which is equivalent to (24%) of the total licensed foreign qualifications, as shown in the below Figure. Also, (22) aligned foreign qualifications were re-validated, including (2) HE qualifications and (20) VET qualifications.

Foreign qualifications aligned to the NQF

Foreign qualifications aligned to the NQF in the academic year 2023-2024

	24	22
46	**52%**	**48%**

Total aligned foreign qualifications

	32	61	1
94	**34%**	**65%**	**1%**

■ Higher Education ■ Vocational Education and Training institutions ■ General Education

The Performance of the Education and Training Sectors in the Kingdom of Bahrain for the Academic Year 2023-2024 - June 2024

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NQF Operations Results

Foreign Qualification Aligned to the NQF in the Academic Year 2023-2024, according to the NQF Level

Level 9
9

Level 8
18

Level 7
9

Level 6
1

Level 5
8

Level 4
1
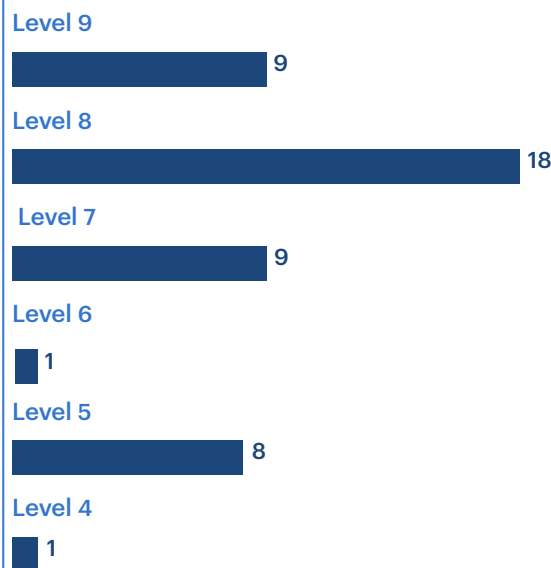
As a result of the coordination between the BQA and its partners, including the Ministry of Labour, the Higher Education Council, and the Labour Fund (Tamkeen), and the inception of the joint mechanisms to link the NQF operations to licensing and funding processes; the following points have been identified:

- A 34% increase in VET institutions listed on the NQF compared to those listed in the previous academic year.

- A 29% increase in placed/aligned HE qualifications on the NQF compared to those placed/aligned in the previous academic year.

- Significant increase in the number of aligned foreign qualifications by 84%, compared to the same number in the previous academic year. This evident the awarding bodies' confidence in Kingdom of Bahrain's NQF.

Effective practices in high-performing institutions

- The HE institutions are keen to include potential career progression and learning pathways for qualification graduates in the programme handbook and publish them on the institution's website.

- The majority of HE and VET institutions are committed to developing general policies for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in preparation for their implementation upon regulators introducing the guidelines in cooperation with the BQA.

- Increased awareness of VET institutions of the importance of benchmarking their qualifications with similar qualifications to ensure they are in line with good practices.

- Promotion of an internal quality assurance culture in the institution, enabling it to drive internal improvements and become more accountable for the

quality of its provision. The participation of Bahrain Polytechnic with BQA in the pilot implementation of the self-validation process, which gives the institution the right to validate its qualifications internally before placing them on the NQF.

- Several HE institutions link their programmes' curricula to the content of professional qualifications. This allows learners to acquire professional and academic certificates at the same time, thereby enhancing their chances of joining the labour market.

- Several HE institutions implement international student exchange programmes, which aim to exchange learners among the countries offering the same academic programme. This provides learners with opportunities to study in an international environment, helps them gain new experiences and develops their academic and professional skills.

Areas for improvement

- VET institutions need to enhance their quality assurance policies and procedures to include sufficient details regarding roles and responsibilities and the timeframe of operations.

- VET institutions need to enhance their policies and procedures regarding the accumulation and transfer of credit hours, by including a clear mechanism for identifying, accumulating, and transferring credits, in preparation for the RPL processes.

- HE and VET institutions still need to enhance their policies and procedures to identify the needs and rationale for introducing their qualifications based on accurate and up-to-date information about the labour market and learners' needs for such qualifications.

- VET institutions need to enhance their policies and procedures for internal and external reviews of the qualification and the institution as a whole by developing a clear mechanism with roles and responsibilities, emphasizing the importance of utilizing surveys and benchmarking results, and regularly following up on their implementation.

- VET institutions need to enhance their policies and procedures relating to assessment design and measuring the achievement of the Learning Outcomes.

The Performance of the Education and Training Sectors in the Kingdom of Bahrain for the Academic Year 2023-2024 - June 2024

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National Examinations

The Education and Training Quality Authority held the national examinations for Grades 12 and 9 during the following periods:

Grade 12: 28-30 April 2024

Grade 9: 14-22 May 2024

**Grade 12 national examinations cover the following subjects:**

- **Arabic:** Paper 1 for Writing and Paper 2 for Reading.
- **English:** Paper 1 for Writing and Paper 2 for Listening and Reading.
- **Mathematical skills:** 1 Paper.

**Grade 9 national examinations cover the following subjects:**

- **Arabic:** Paper 1 for Listening and Writing and Paper 2 for Reading.
- **English:** Paper 1 for Writing and Paper 2 for Listening and Reading.
- **Mathematics:** 1 Paper.
- **Science:** 1 Paper.

National examinations consist of essay questions in Arabic and English writing examinations, whereas the remaining examinations consist of multiple-choice questions that are marked automatically. The Education and Training Quality Authority analyses the results in cooperation with the international partner from Cambridge International Examinations department at the University of Cambridge, using the cohort referencing methodology, by classifying students' performance in comparison with the performance of the rest of the students in the same cohort. Students' performance is classified into four performance quartiles, where the performance of students in the third and fourth quartiles is considered above median, with the fourth quartile being the highest, while the performance of students in the first and second quartiles is considered below median, with the first quartile being the lowest.

The following grades took part in this cohort of the national examinations:

Grade 12

11,880 students from **37 government schools**
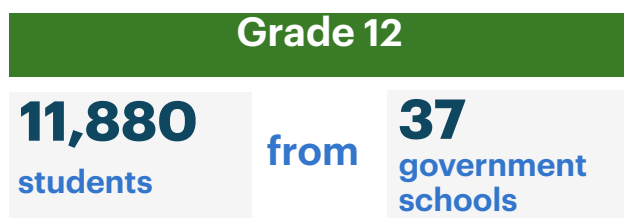
Representing all government secondary schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

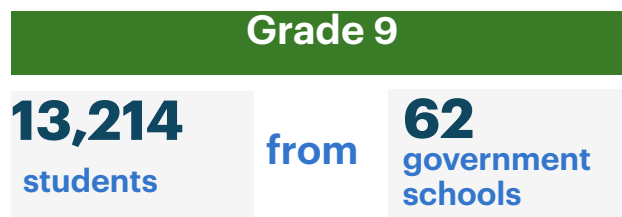**619 students** from **18 private schools**
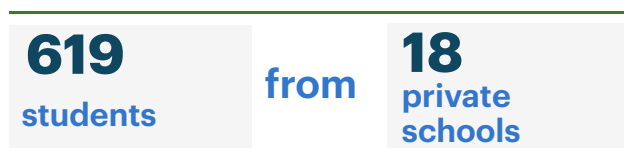
participated voluntarily in the English and mathematical skills examinations.

576 students from **16 private schools**

participated voluntarily in the Arabic examination.

Grade 9

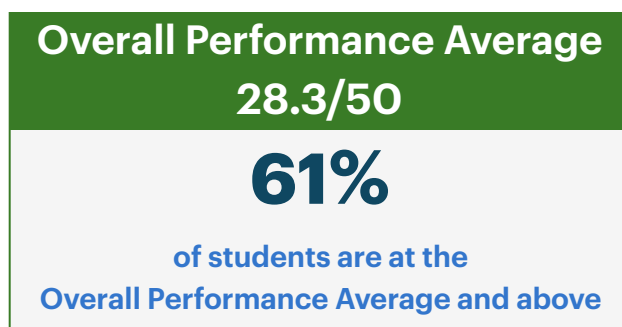**13,214 students** from **62 government schools**

Representing all government intermediate schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The Grade 12 National Examinations results show a similarity between students' performance in national examinations in the years 2023 and 2024 and the same applies to Grade 9 national examination results in 2024. Students' performance was better in basic skills that mainly focus on general comprehension of reading and listening texts in Arabic and English as well as the skills of recalling and general understanding in the scientific subjects. However, most students faced a challenge in meeting the more complex requirements relating to critical and analytical reading of texts in Arabic and English and understanding the implicit meanings and linguistic connotations in them, as well as application and implication skills in the scientific subjects. Additionally, girls continued to outperform boys in the majority of subjects.

Detailed Analysis of Grades 12 and 9 Students' Performance:

Grade 12:

The overall performance average in core subjects in government schools is shown in the following Figures:

Overall Performance Average 28.3/50

61%

of students are at the
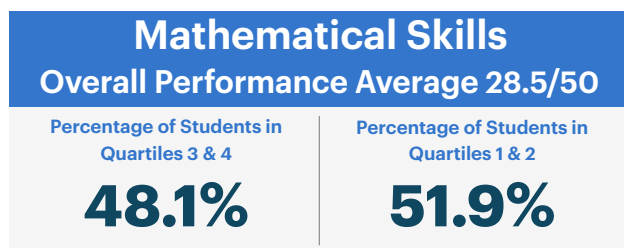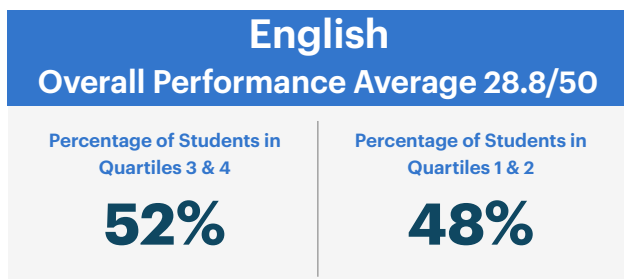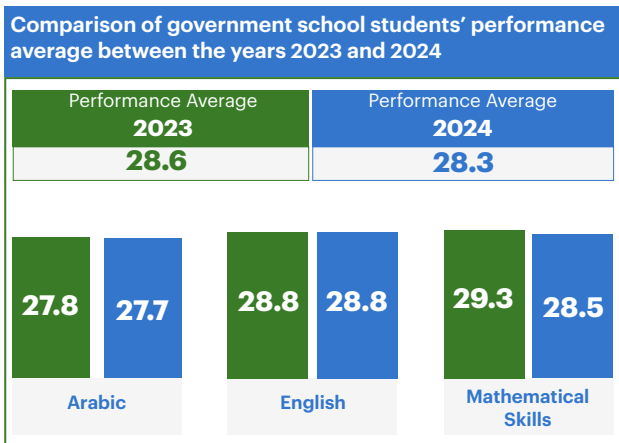Overall Performance Average and above

The below Figure shows the overall performance average in various subjects.

Overall Performance Average

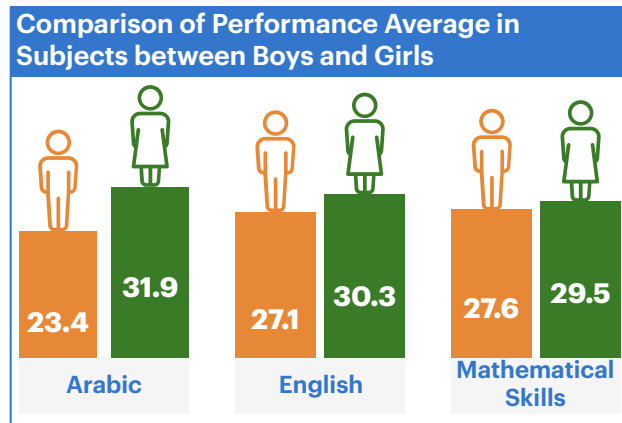| Arabic	English	Mathematical Skills
27.7 / 50	28.8 / 50	28.5 / 50

National Examinations

From the graph, it is clear, the performance of students in the national examinations in government schools was similar between the years 2023 and 2024, as the overall average performance in the three core subjects presented was close.
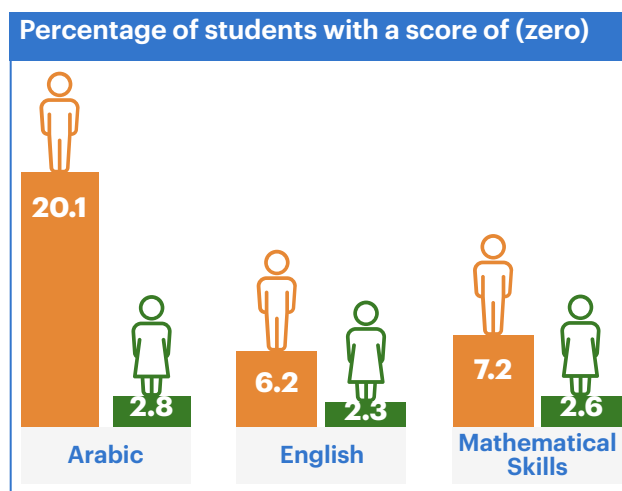
Comparison of government school students' performance average between the years 2023 and 2024

Performance Average 2023	Performance Average 2024
28.6	28.3

	Arabic	English	Mathematical Skills
2023	27.8	28.8	29.3
2024	27.7	28.8	28.5

Arabic
Overall Performance Average 27.7/50

Percentage of Students in Quartiles 3 & 4	Percentage of Students in Quartiles 1 & 2
49.1%	**50.9%**

English
Overall Performance Average 28.8/50

Percentage of Students in Quartiles 3 & 4	Percentage of Students in Quartiles 1 & 2
52%	**48%**

Mathematical Skills
Overall Performance Average 28.5/50

Percentage of Students in Quartiles 3 & 4	Percentage of Students in Quartiles 1 & 2
48.1%	**51.9%**

Students' Performance by Gender and Type of Education:

Girls continue to outperform boys in various subjects, particularly in Arabic as shown in the below Chart:

Comparison of Performance Average in Subjects between Boys and Girls

	Boys	Girls
Arabic	23.4	31.9
English	27.1	30.3
Mathematical Skills	27.6	29.5

In addition, more boys scored (zero) than Girls, including those who were absent from the examination, as shown in the following Chart:

Percentage of students with a score of (zero)

	Boys	Girls
Arabic	20.1	2.8
English	6.2	2.3
Mathematical Skills	7.2	2.6

Comparisons of students' performance show that students in the general education outperform students in religious, and technical and vocational education in both English and mathematical skills. However, students in religious education slightly outperform students in the general education in Arabic, and the performance of students in technical and vocational education in Arabic is significantly lower than that of students in the general and religious education; as shown in the following Chart:

Comparison of Students' Performance by Track

	General Education Average	Religious Education Average	Technical and Vocational Education Average
Arabic	29.4	29.9	15
English	29.5	26.8	22.9
Mathematical Skills	29.2	26	23.9

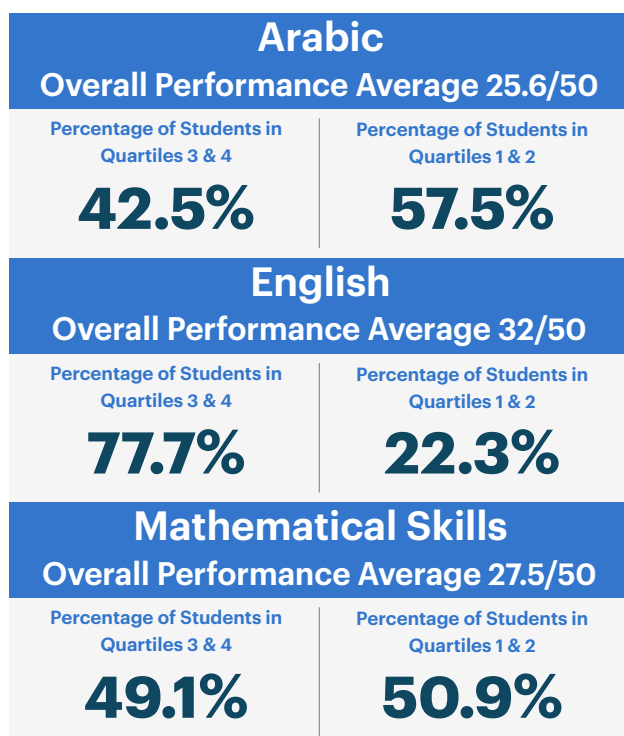Legend: ■ Arabic ■ English ■ Mathematical Skills
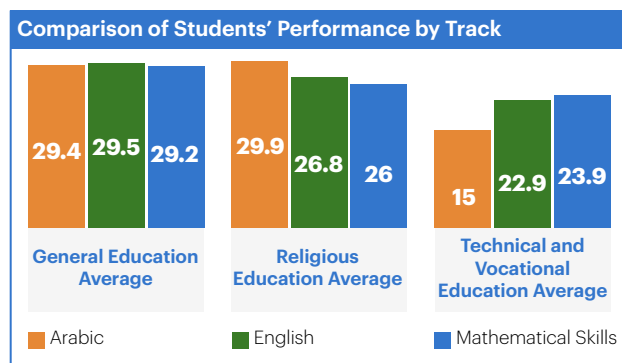
National Examinations

Private School Students' Performance:

Private school students sat the Grade 12 national examinations voluntarily, as 619 students from 18 private schools took part in the English and mathematical skills examinations, while 576 students from 16 private schools sat the Arabic examination. The following figure shows the performance average and percentage of students in the different performance quartiles, where quartiles 3 and 4 are above the median, while quartiles 1 and 2 are below the median:

Grade 12:

Arabic
Overall Performance Average 25.6/50

Percentage of Students in Quartiles 3 & 4	Percentage of Students in Quartiles 1 & 2
42.5%	**57.5%**

English
Overall Performance Average 32/50

Percentage of Students in Quartiles 3 & 4	Percentage of Students in Quartiles 1 & 2
77.7%	**22.3%**

Mathematical Skills
Overall Performance Average 27.5/50

Percentage of Students in Quartiles 3 & 4	Percentage of Students in Quartiles 1 & 2
49.1%	**50.9%**

Below are the positive areas and areas for improvement of Grade 12 students' performance:

Positive Areas:

- Expressing personal opinion and understanding the main implicit requirements in the writing questions in Arabic.
- Listening skills and ability to identify the purpose of writing in English.
- Writing an essay and listening and reading skills in the private schools in English.
- Extracting and processing data in mathematical skills.
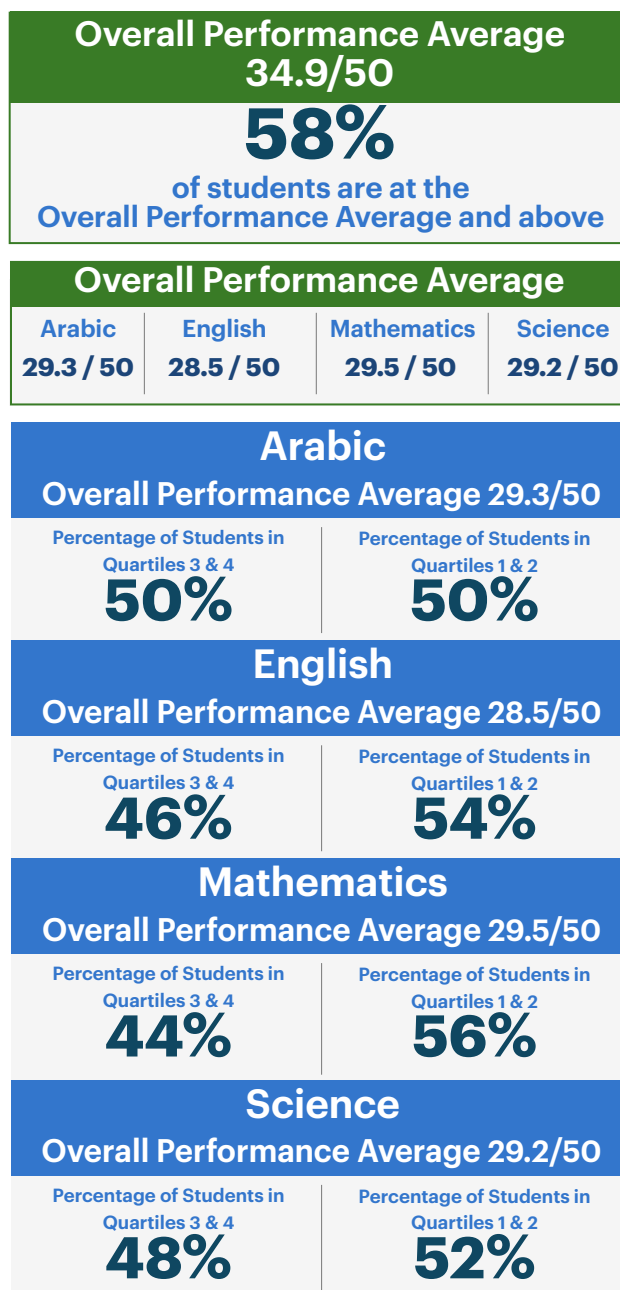
Areas for Improvement:

To develop students' skills and abilities in:
- Comprehensive understanding of English reading and listening texts and their coherence and logical progression.
- Critical and analytical reading of Arabic and English texts, and understanding the implicit meanings and linguistic connotations in them.

- Employing writing skills in Arabic and English report and essay writing, while elaborating on ideas and presenting arguments and examples; to support points of view.
- Using problem handling skills; particularly those related to making choices and decisions and looking for solutions, in addition to dealing with data; particularly in terms of choosing and working with models in mathematical skills.
- English language skills for technical and vocational education students in general, and Arabic language skills in particular.
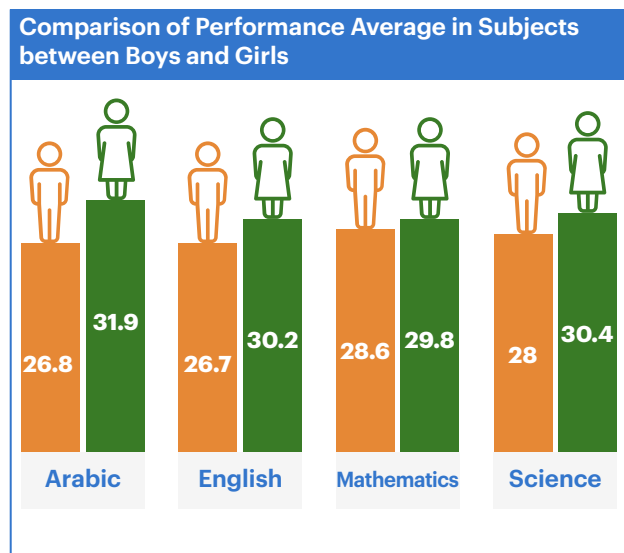- Writing skills in Arabic for private schools' students.

Grade 9:

Grade 9 overall performance average in core subjects in government schools is shown in the following Figures:

Overall Performance Average 34.9/50
58%
of students are at the
Overall Performance Average and above

Overall Performance Average

Arabic	English	Mathematics	Science
29.3 / 50	28.5 / 50	29.5 / 50	29.2 / 50

Arabic
Overall Performance Average 29.3/50

Percentage of Students in Quartiles 3 & 4	Percentage of Students in Quartiles 1 & 2
50%	**50%**

English
Overall Performance Average 28.5/50

Percentage of Students in Quartiles 3 & 4	Percentage of Students in Quartiles 1 & 2
46%	**54%**

Mathematics
Overall Performance Average 29.5/50

Percentage of Students in Quartiles 3 & 4	Percentage of Students in Quartiles 1 & 2
44%	**56%**

Science
Overall Performance Average 29.2/50

Percentage of Students in Quartiles 3 & 4	Percentage of Students in Quartiles 1 & 2
48%	**52%**

National Examinations

Students' Performance by Gender:

The analysis of boys and girls results in intermediate schools shows that girls continue to clearly outperform boys in Arabic and English and, to a lesser degree, in science, while both genders achieved almost similar performance in mathematics, as shown in the below Figure:

Comparison of Performance Average in Subjects between Boys and Girls

Subject	Boys	Girls
Arabic	26.8	31.9
English	26.7	30.2
Mathematics	28.6	29.8
Science	28	30.4

The following are the positive areas, and the areas that need improvement in the performance of Grade 9 students in general:

Positive Areas:

• Meeting the main requirements and explicit questions in Arabic and English.

• Listening skills in Arabic and English, and understanding the general meanings.

• The knowledge and concepts in the fileds of numbers, algebra, geometry and measurement.

• Recalling and understanding of the basic knowledge skills and application of scientific concept in natural sciences.

Areas for Improvement:

• Developing students' higher order thinking skills, including extracting implicit meanings in Arabic and English.

• Developing Arabic and English writing skills, in terms of the ability to produce ideas effectively, use description, construct arguments and viewpoints and present logical arguments and justifications.

• Improving Arabic summarisation skills, while maintaining the main events and expressing them clearly.

• Using and applying mathematics in the fields of numbers and algebra and geometry and measurement and benefiting from it in life situations.

• The knowledge, use and application of mathematics in the field of data analysis and probability.

• Application of scientific concepts in the fields of natural sciences, life science, environment, earth and space.

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Summary

The key recommendations for **government and private schools** include addressing the disparity in performance and academic achievement between boys and girls schools, focus on enhancing students' proficiency in core subjects, ensuring more accurate follow-up on professional development efforts by schools, improving the design of learning activities and keeping the publication and dissemination of the best practices of 'Outstanding' schools.

The **vocational training institutes** show the need to further improve learners' mastery of skills and gradual acquisition of the programme Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs). They also should adapt training strategies to productively engage the less able learners during the sessions, enhance the utilisation of the self-assessment process outcomes, and enhance the effectiveness of session observations.

The key recommendations for **higher education institutions** include the need to ensure developing a risk management policy, ensure that there are sufficient staff members with an appropriate range of academic qualifications to teach the programmes, have mechanisms in place to ensure regular and systematic follow-up with programme graduates, ensure that the achievement of the courses' and programmes' intended learning outcomes are properly measured, and regularly conduct market and feasibility studies in a more rigorous manner to provide relevant qualitative and quantitative data to ensure they meet the labour market requirements.

In terms of the **National Qualifications Framework (NQF)** operations, it is recommended that the VET institutions develop their policies and procedures regarding the accumulation and transfer of credit hours, identify the needs and rationale for introducing their qualifications, enhance their policies and procedures for internal and external reviews of the qualification and the institution as a whole, and enhance their policies relating to assessment design and measuring the achievement of the Learning Outcomes.

As for **Grade 12 students' performance in the national examinations,** it is recommended to develop students' skills and abilities in understanding reading and listening texts, critical and analytical reading of Arabic and English texts, writing skills in reports and essay writing, and problem solving skills, in addition to developing English skills for technical and vocational education students in general and writing skills in Arabic for private schools' students.

With regard to **Grade 9 students' performance in the national examinations,** it is recommended to develop students' higher-order thinking skills, develop Arabic and English writing skills, improve Arabic summarisation skills, use and apply mathematics in the fields of numbers and algebra and geometry, measurement and data analysis and probability. It is also recommended to apply scientific concepts in the fields of natural sciences, biology, ecology, geology and astronomy.