



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

# Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews Review Report

**Al Fajer Private School  
Barbar – Northern Governorate  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date of Review: 23-25 October 2023**  
SP066-C3-R036

## Introduction

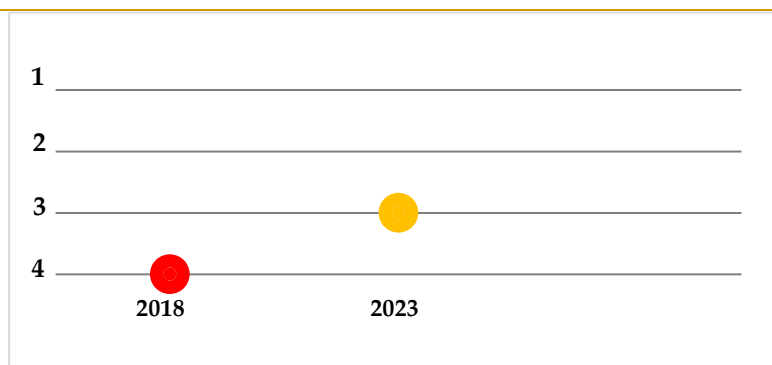
The Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews (DPS), which is a part of the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA), conducted this review over three days by a team of five reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed lessons and other activities, scrutinised students' written works and analysed the school's performance data and other documents. They met with the staff, students and parents. This report summarises their findings and recommendations.

### Summary of review judgements

<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
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Aspect		Grade			
		Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Quality of outcomes	Academic achievement	3	-	-	3
	Personal development and social responsibility	3	-	-	3
Quality of processes	Teaching, learning and assessment	3	-	-	3
	Empowerment and meeting special needs	3	-	-	3
Quality assurance of outcomes and processes	Leadership, management and governance	3	-	-	3
Capacity to improve		3			
The school's overall effectiveness		3			

The chart demonstrates the school's overall effectiveness throughout the last three reviews.



## School Report

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### □ School's overall effectiveness 'Satisfactory'

#### Judgement justifications

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students' attainment in internal examinations is high, their standards and progress in lessons and written work are generally satisfactory.</li><li>• Students behave appropriately, feel safe at school, and are committed to citizenship values.</li><li>• The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment is satisfactory overall. However, some lessons are affected by teacher-centred strategies, inconsistent use of learning time and insufficient challenge and support to students, particularly the low achieving ones.</li><li>• The school diagnoses students' needs and provides relevant support through enrichment and remedial programmes. However, the impact on students'</li></ul> | <p>progress is inconsistent, particularly in English and Arabic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The school effectively communicates with its stakeholders, engages well with parents, and fosters positive school ethos. It ensures the availability of essential resources and facilities in a safe learning environment.</li><li>• The school's strategic plan focuses on improving 'Teaching and Learning' and 'Organising for Results'. However, the plans are not rigorously updated based on the emerging needs. Teachers' training needs are identified and targeted professional development programmes are offered. However, the rigorous monitoring of the impact on teacher performance in lessons is inconsistent.</li></ul> |
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#### Main positive features

- The positive school ethos and effective communication with stakeholders, particularly with parents.
- The availability of essential resources and facilities at school.

#### Recommendations

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership, management, and governance by:
  - ensuring regular updates on the school's plans to enhance its performance and address the emerging priorities
  - rigorously monitoring the impact of the targeted professional development programmes on teachers' performance in lessons.

- Improve the effectiveness of teaching, learning, and assessment, by:
  - using more effective student-centred strategies that focus on the development of students' academics and leadership skills
  - utilising challenging assessment methods and their results to support students, particularly low-achieving ones
  - managing learning time more productively.
- Rigorous follow-up on the academic support programmes provided for the different categories of students.

## □ Capacity to improve 'Satisfactory'

### Judgement justifications

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has improved its performance adequately in all aspects since the last review, impacted by the positive steps taken towards improvement in areas such as academic and personal support for students. Yet, there is varying focus on developing students' academics and leadership skills in lessons.</li> <li>• The school's self-evaluation is regular and involves stakeholders. However, the school's judgement of its performance in the Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) is higher</li> </ul> | <p>than that reached by the review team by two points in 'Personal Development and Social Responsibility' aspect and by one point in the other aspects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers attend regular training sessions based on their identified needs, which have adequately impacted their performance in lessons.</li> <li>• The school's plans are linked to its self-evaluation results. However, the plans are not regularly updated based on the emerging priorities.</li> </ul> |
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## Quality of outcomes

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### □ Academic achievement 'Satisfactory'

#### Judgement justifications

- Students' pass rates are consistently high in internal examinations over the past three years. In the 2022-2023 internal examinations, pass rates are 100% across the school. Proficiency rates are high and range from 68% in Grade 4 Arabic, to 100% in mathematics in all grades, majority of grades in science and in Grade 3 English. In the 'Progress in International Reading Literacy Study' (PIRLS) 2021 test, the school's achievement score is 571, which is at 'High Benchmark', and higher than Bahrain average by 113 points.
- Across the school, the majority of students' standards in core subjects are in line with curriculum expectations, and they make appropriate progress in the better lessons and in their written work, particularly in science and mathematics. However, low achieving students do not make sufficient progress in most lessons due to teacher-centred strategies implemented, inconsistent use of learning time and insufficient support provided.
- In English, students' listening and speaking skills across the school are as per grade level expectations, however, their reading fluency and writing varies. In the lower grades, majority of students develop adequate understanding of singular and plural forms of irregular nouns, while some students in the upper grades, face difficulty in completing sentences with the correct prefix.
- In Arabic, students' reading comprehension and writing skills are inconsistent and speaking is affected by the use of colloquial Arabic. Students adequately distinguish between cutting and connecting 'Hamza', however, their ability to extract gender nouns from the given sentences is inconsistent.
- In mathematics, majority of students have secure numerical skills and they progress adequately in solving word problems by applying arithmetic operations, such as addition by re-grouping in lower grades, and double-digit multiplication in the upper grades.
- In science, students in the lower grades develop age-appropriate understanding of flowering and non-flowering plants, and students in upper grades can adequately explain similarities and differences between plants and fungi.
- Learning skills, such as numerical skills and critical thinking, are adequate for majority of students, however, other supporting skills such as technological and research skills are not as sufficiently developed.

## Areas for improvement

- Students' reading fluency and writing skills in both English and Arabic.
- The progress made by the low achieving students in lessons.
- Students' learning skills.

## □ Personal development & social responsibility 'Satisfactory'

### Judgement justifications

- Students are self-disciplined, they are happy, comfortable and feel safe at school. Behavioural incidents are minimal as they respect one another and are punctual to lessons. The majority show a positive attitude towards learning by completing their tasks on time.
- Students have adequate awareness of Bahrain's culture and heritage, and they showcase this by reciting the National Anthem enthusiastically during morning assemblies and participating in 'National Day' events. They embrace local and global citizenship values through participating in 'United Nations Days' and 'Recycling' activities. They assume social responsibility through donations for a local orphanage.
- Students participate with adequate confidence and enthusiasm in the various school activities, like the 'Arabic and English Week', and 'Art Exhibition'. Members of 'Scouts' and 'Student Council' take leadership roles in activities including decorating the school environment. In lessons, although the majority of students demonstrate suitable confidence, they do not sufficiently develop leadership skills due to the limited opportunities provided to them.
- Students develop communication skills and social relationships satisfactorily while taking part in activities such as the 'Science Fair' and roleplay competitions. However, their communication skills are inconsistently promoted in lessons.
- Across the school, students show suitable awareness of health and environmental issues as they are conscious of their personal appearance and keep the school environment clean and safe. The majority of them participate effectively in activities such as 'Recycling', 'Diabetes Day' and 'First Aid' awareness sessions.
- Students show adequate levels of competitiveness and innovation through participating in interschool competitions, such as the 'Holy Quran Recitation', 'Bahrain Garden Club Annual Show' and 'Bahrain Art', and achieve advanced positions. However, their competitiveness and innovation are less evident in lessons.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Development of students' communication and leadership skills in lessons.
- Students' ability to compete and innovate, particularly in lessons.

## Quality of processes

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### □ Teaching, learning & assessment 'Satisfactory'

#### Judgement justifications

- In the majority of lessons, adequate teaching and learning strategies are implemented, including questions for learning and pair and group activities. Resources are adequately used such as worksheets, whiteboards and educational videos on lesson topics that engage the majority of students. Links to real life experiences are made, like ways to conserve water and energy in daily life. However, in the less effective lessons, particularly in Arabic, strategies implemented are teacher-centred and do not engage students and facilitate their acquisition of knowledge.
- Across the school, teachers share learning objectives and adequately manage students' behaviour through verbal reinforcement, and 'Class Dojo' points. In the majority of lessons, transition between activities is generally smooth and instructions are clear. However, learning time is inconsistently managed, as starters and easier objectives are allocated more time at the expense of more challenging ones, which are done at a faster pace due to focus on procedures. This adversely affects lessons' productivity as well as the quality of support and feedback provided.
- In the majority of lessons and students' work, adequate verbal and written assessments are implemented, that match curriculum expectations. Better practices utilise assessment results to support students, however, in less effective lessons, assessment either poses minimal challenge to students or is well above their level, which results in lack of participation. Feedback is generic with a tendency to overlook mistakes, adversely affecting students' progress and provision of support, particularly to the low achieving ones.
- Teachers attempt to challenge students' abilities and develop their higher order thinking skills, such as solving and creating word problems in mathematics. However, in the majority of lessons, the impact of challenging students varies due to inconsistent levels of their participation and lack of extension tasks for high achievers.
- In most lessons, technology is adequately utilised to support learning such as using Television screens or Interactive White Boards to display PowerPoint presentations. Better practices include utilising educational tools such as 'Kahoot' and the interactive features of smart boards to engage students in learning.
- In the majority of lessons, learning is differentiated through tiered worksheets. However, differentiated activities in some lessons are not adequately implemented due to weak time management.



## Areas for improvement

- Use of student-centered strategies in the less effective lessons, particularly in Arabic.
- More productive use of learning time.
- Use of assessment results to support and challenge students of different abilities, in lessons and students' work, particularly the low achieving ones.

## □ Empowerment & meeting special needs 'Satisfactory'

### Judgement justifications

- The school conducts diagnostic tests, systematically analyses test results and adequately tracks students' academic progress. Outstanding, gifted and talented students participate in some competitions and events such as 'Spelling Bee', 'Essay Writing' and 'Resonance' with the Gifted Care Centre. 'Enrichment and Support' lessons are planned in the school schedule for all grades to support students in Arabic and English. However, their impact is inconsistent, particularly for low achievers, due to sessions including all categories of students, which hinders the provision of the targeted support required.
- Students' personal problems are sensitively addressed through guidance sessions and fee concessions when needed. Their personal development is adequately supported through 'Life Skills' lessons, and programmes such as 'The Ideal Student', and use of 'Behaviour Traffic Light' charts. Additionally, orientation sessions are conducted at the beginning of the academic year to help students settle.
- An adequate range of extracurricular activities is offered to broaden students' experiences including 'Art Fair'. They participate in external activities such as designing the best banner on the occasion of 'National Day', and go on field trips, such as to 'Bahrain International Airshow', 'Bahrain Energy Factory' and 'Bee Farm'.
- The school ensures a safe and healthy environment for all stakeholders through regular maintenance of facilities and supervised procedures for students' arrival and dismissal. The school involves students in health and environmental activities, such as the 'Gulf Nutrition Week', 'First Aid' workshop and recycling competitions as well as adequately follows-up on students with chronic diseases.

## Areas for improvement

- The effectiveness of the academic support programmes to meet the different educational needs of students, especially low-achieving ones.

## Quality assurance of outcomes and processes

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### □ Leadership, management and governance ‘Satisfactory’

#### Judgement justifications

- The school evaluates itself by different means, such as (SWOT) analysis, stakeholders’ surveys, class observations and analysis of examinations results. However, the scope of self-evaluation process is inconsistent in identifying areas for improvement related to teaching and learning and students’ language skills. This is reflected in the one-point judgement difference in the (SEF) in comparison to the findings reached by the team in most aspects and two-point difference in ‘Personal development and social responsibility’ aspect.
- The five-year strategic plan aims at improving ‘Teaching and Learning’ and ‘Organising for Results’, which is translated to an improvement plan for yearly follow-up. However, plans are not regularly updated to address the emerging priorities, and monitoring their impact on enhancing school’s performance varies in rigor.
- Teachers’ training needs are identified through lesson observations and ‘Self Accomplishment and Evaluation Reports’. Targeted training workshops such as ‘Effective Planning for Better Outcomes’ and ‘Implementing Highly Effective Instructional Strategies’ are provided. However, impact on teachers’ performance is inconsistent in the observed lessons, particularly in Arabic and English.
- The school leaders successfully promote positive school ethos and collaborative working atmosphere, which is appreciated by staff, students and parents. Teachers are valued and supported emotionally through programmes such as ‘Voice and Heart’ and ‘Staff Fellowship’ which reflected positively on their satisfaction.
- The school ensures the availability of essential resources and facilities including smartboards, computer laboratory and a library. In lessons, teachers use a suitable range of resources to facilitate the teaching and learning process such as smartboards and worksheets.
- The school communicates adequately with parents through various means, such as surveys, emails and WhatsApp, and seeks their opinions and responds to suggestions, such as revising the homework policy. Adequate links are maintained with the local community, such as students participating in soccer and chess competitions, and invite guest speakers to discuss topics, like ‘First Aid’, and ‘Cyber Security’.
- Members of the school Board meet regularly to discuss school’s main activities. They provide general guidance to the school’s senior leadership while holding the principal accountable for the school’s overall performance.

## **Areas for improvement**

- Regular updates on the school's plans to address the emerging priorities and rigorous monitoring of its impact on school performance.
- Monitoring the impact of professional development programmes on teachers' performance in lessons, particularly in Arabic and English.

## Appendix 1: Characteristics of the school

Name of the school (Arabic)	مدرسة الفجر الخاصة												
Name of the school (English)	Al Fajer Private School												
Year of establishment	2013												
Address	Building 1788, Road 85, Block 520, Budaiya Highway												
City/ Town / Governorate	Barbar / Northern Governorate												
School's telephone	17550011	-			Fax		-						
School's e-mail	alfajerprivateschool@gmail.com												
School's website	https://www.afs.edu.bh/												
Age range of students	5-12												
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)	Primary			Middle					High				
	1-5			-					-				
Number of Students	Boys	103		Girls	100		Total	203					
Students' social/ economical background	Most students are from average and high-income families												
Classes per grade in Primary and Intermediate Stages	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Classes	3	3	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of administrative staff	7												
Number of teaching staff	22												
Curriculum	American Curriculum Common Core State Standards and Ministry of Education (MOE) curriculum for Arabic, Islamic studies, citizenship and social studies												
Main language(s) of instruction	English/Arabic												
External assessment and examinations	-												
Accreditation (if applicable)	-												
Major recent changes in the school	Installing Smart boards and TV units in classrooms.												