Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews
Review Report

Alia National School
Sitra – Southern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date of Review: 8-10 January 2018
SP059-C2-R047

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 eight reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed lessons and other activities, scrutinized students' written works and analysed school's performance data and other documents. They met with staff members, students and parents. This Report summarises their findings and recommendations.

Summary of review judgements

Outstanding	1	Good	2	Satisfactory	3	Inadequate	4

Aspect		Grade			
		Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Quality of outcomes	Students' academic achievement	3	3	3	3
	Students' personal development	2	2	2	2
Quality of processes	Teaching and learning	3	3	3	3
	Students' support and guidance	3	3	3	3
Quality assurance of outcomes and processes	Leadership, management and governance	3	3	3	3
Capacity to improve		3			
The school's overall effectiveness		3			

The chart demonstrates the school's overall effectiveness throughout the review cycles.

1 Outstanding	2 Good	3 Satisfactory	4 Inadequate
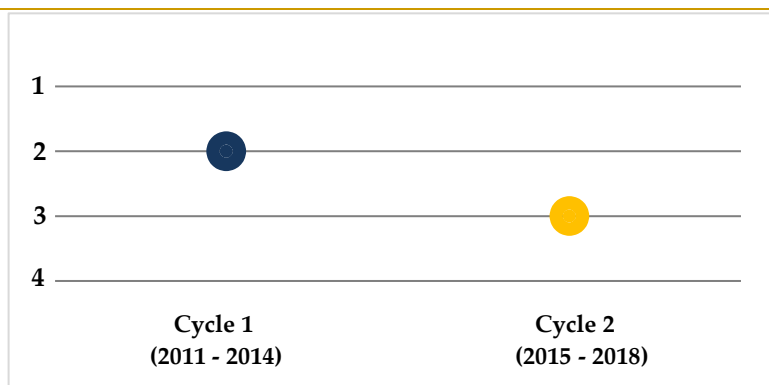
School Report

Percentile words used in relation to different judgements

Grade	Relative words used	Interpretation
Outstanding	All / Almost all	Indicates completeness and comprehensiveness/about to reach completeness and comprehensiveness.
	The vast majority	Indicates an amount that exceeds most.
Good	Most	Indicates an amount that exceeds majority.
Satisfactory	Majority / Adequate / Suitable / Variable	Indicates more than average.
Inadequate	Minority / Few	Indicates less than average.
	Limited	Indicates less than minority.
	Very limited	Indicates scarcity/rarity.
	None	Indicates unavailability/nothing.

☐ School's overall effectiveness 'Satisfactory'

Judgement justifications

- Use of self-evaluation results in developing the strategic plan is inconsistent. There is lack of departmental action plans and clear working mechanisms.
- The impact of professional development programmes on teachers' performance is adequate in the majority of lessons.
- Students' high pass and proficiency rates are inconsistently reflected on their standards in the majority of lessons, which is more evident in English and the classroom teacher system, and in a satisfactory manner in nearly half of the lessons, whereas it is poorly reflected in most mathematics lessons.

- The implementation of teaching strategies and their appropriateness for age groups and categories of students is adequate in the majority of lessons. However, learning time management and use of the assessment in meeting students' different academic needs are inconsistent.
- Variable support is provided to students with disabilities and learning difficulties who represent nearly 40% of students, as teachers vary in terms of catering for their individual learning needs in lessons, and so do 'shadow teachers' in carrying out their roles, in accordance with clear support procedures.

- The harmony and respect demonstrated by students, their mature and responsible behaviour and the punctual attendance of most students.
- The enrichment of students' experiences through various extracurricular activities, positive communication with the local community and parents' participation in school life, which is reflected on students' and parents' satisfaction.

Main positive features

- The regular and punctual attendance, harmony and respect, awareness and sense of responsibility demonstrated by most students.

- The school's effective communication with the local community to enrich students' experiences.

- The enhancement of students' experiences and development of their talents through various extracurricular activities.

Recommendations

- Better use of self-evaluation results in developing a strategic plan that focuses more on improvement priorities and develop comprehensive action plans for all academic departments.

- Improve students' academic achievement, particularly in mathematics, by focussing on:
  – implementing more effective teaching and learning strategies that cater for age groups and all categories of students
  – managing learning time effectively to ensure better productivity
  – using assessment results in meeting the academic needs of all categories of students.

- Further monitor the impact of professional development programmes on the performance of teachers and shadow teachers in lessons.

- Develop the various support programmes provided to students with disabilities and learning difficulties to ensure better progress in line with their abilities, taking into consideration:
  – students' different individual learning needs, and incorporating these in lessons and plans
  – rigorous monitoring of the impact of the support provided to them to meet their different needs based on clear procedures.

☐ **Capacity to improve 'Satisfactory'**

Judgement justifications

- The school's performance changed from good in all review aspects to satisfactory in most aspects reviewed in this visit, while maintaining a good level in students' personal development.
- Although self-evaluation processes are diversified, the use of the results is inconsistent in terms of focussing on development priorities when setting the strategic plan, particularly in highlighting the particularities of the various categories of students, the variable accuracy of the performance indicators, and the monitoring mechanisms. There is also lack of departmental action plans.
- The school's evaluation in the Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) almost matches the judgements reached by the review team with a one point difference in most aspects.
- The monitoring of the impact of professional development programmes on teachers and shadow teachers varies in accuracy. The improvements achieved by school's leadership focus more on increasing the number of students and classes and adding some facilities, such as the learning resource centre, and a new academic building.
- The school faces challenges, including the lack of middle leadership and instability of the teaching staff, as well as the large percentage of students with disabilities and various learning difficulties.

Quality of outcomes

☐ Students' academic achievement 'Satisfactory'

Judgement justifications

- In school examinations for the academic year 2016-2017, students achieved high pass rates, ranging between 90% and 100%.
- Cycle 1 students achieved high and very high proficiency rates in most core subjects, matching their pass rates, ranging between 61% and 96%, with the lowest being in Grade 2 science and the highest in Grade 1 Arabic. However, their proficiency rates in Grade 1 English and Grade 3 mathematics, which are 51% and 58% respectively were inconsistent, and their low proficiency rate of 42% in Grade 3 science does not align with their pass rates.
- Cycle 2 students achieved variable proficiency rates, ranging between 24% and 84%, with the highest rates aligning with the high pass rates in English in general and Grade 6 mathematics and science. However, students' proficiency rates in Grade 4 Arabic and mathematics, which are 55% and 53% respectively, and the other low rates, particularly in most Grade 5 subjects, do not align with the pass rates.
- Intermediate Stage students achieved high and very high proficiency rates in core subjects, ranging between 56% and 73%, with the lowest being in Grade 7 science and the highest in most Grade 8 subjects.
- The high pass and proficiency rates reflect students' levels in good lessons, particularly in English and most Cycle 1 lessons, but they do not match their levels in almost half the lessons, which are satisfactory, and less than satisfactory in most mathematics lessons. It is worth mentioning that teachers vary in the accuracy of marking examination papers, which is reflected in the inflated scores and some high proficiency rates.
- Students acquire basic skills to varying degrees, with the highest being in reading aloud and comprehension of texts in English, and understanding scientific concepts in science in Cycle 1 and Intermediary Stage. Their acquisition of reading skills and use of grammar rules in Arabic, writing skills in English and scientific experimentation skills in science, is satisfactory; whereas, their acquisition of writing skills in Cycle 2 Arabic and arithmetic skills in general is less than satisfactory.
- Tracking results for three academic years 2014-2015 to 2016-2017, students maintain the high pass rates in all core subjects and all stages of education.
- Students progress satisfactorily in most lessons and written work, and even better in English lessons, Cycle 1 science and Grade 10. However, their progress in most mathematics lessons is inadequate.
- Outstanding and talented students progress appropriately in lessons and extracurricular programmes, while low achievers and students with disabilities and learning difficulties make inconsistent progress in line with their abilities in lessons and written works.

Areas for improvement

- Students' skills in core subjects, particularly mathematics.

- Students' levels, in terms of proficiency rates in the majority of core subjects in Cycle 2, particularly Grade 5.

- The progress achieved by students in line with their abilities in most lessons and written work, particularly low achievers and students with disabilities and learning difficulties.

☐ **Students' personal development 'Good'**

Judgement justifications

- Most students participate with enthusiasm and motivation in and outside lessons, take part in curricular and extracurricular activities, such as the morning assembly and recess activities, and participate in science, mathematics and sports competitions and various events, such as the "World Children's Day".

- Most students show self-confidence, good persuasion abilities and assume leadership roles in students' committees, such as the school's health and safety committee, and educational clubs, such as English, Arabic and science clubs. They also support their fellow students when needed and participate in voluntary activities, such as the Beach Clean-up Campaign.

- Most students act with awareness and responsibility that is reflected in their good behaviour, harmony and mutual respect. They also preserve school's property and cleanness, uphold Islamic values and greet one another, which contribute to creating an atmosphere of friendliness and a sense of security.

- Students demonstrate their loyalty, patriotism and understanding of Bahrain's heritage and culture by singing the National anthem, participating positively in various events, such as "Hiya Biya", celebrating the National Action Charter Day and visiting heritage sites, such as Bahrain National Museum, Traditional Sweets Factory, as well as activating heritage corners.

- Most students attend regularly and punctually, which reflects their obvious attachment and sense of belonging to the school community.

- Students work together effectively in lessons and school events, despite their different categories and cultural backgrounds. They also communicate with one another and express their opinions and needs in a positive manner, as in making suggestions regarding the development of the sports field and improvement of bathrooms. Most students demonstrate an ability to engage in dialogues, present justifications and make constructive criticism in line with their abilities.

- Students demonstrate an appropriate ability to learn and work independently by utilising various sources of knowledge, such as dictionaries, magazines and the internet in their educational and research projects.

Areas for improvement

- Students' ability to utilise sources of knowledge further in their independent learning.

Quality of processes

☐ **Teaching and learning 'Satisfactory'**

Judgement justifications

- Teachers employ teaching and learning strategies appropriately in most lessons, such as discussion, questions for learning, cooperative learning and 'think, pair and share', and use learning resources, such as the data show, documentary camera, individual boards and working papers. This helps the majority of students to acquire skills, knowledge and concepts and motivates them to learn. This was more evident in some English lessons and the class teaching lessons, particularly in science, and less evident in most mathematics lessons.

- Most teachers encourage students in a way that enhances their motivation to learn and enjoy various classroom situations, such as verbal reinforcement, applause, encouragement stamps and praise.

- Most teachers manage their lessons in an organised and productive manner, in terms of student behaviour management, structured planning and logical progress of lessons' objectives, as well as the ability to include students, particularly those with special needs, in the learning process in most lessons. However, the productivity of some lessons is undermined by inconsistent learning time management in terms of prolonged introductory activities or learning activities and procedures at the expense of achieving lesson's objectives, or

conducting final assessment, as in mathematics and Arabic lessons.

- Most teachers assess their lessons using various methods, such as written and oral assessments, individual and group, and practical application. However, the use of assessment results in supporting students and meeting their different academic needs varies, particularly for low achievers who do not receive adequate support in most lessons. Teachers' variable awareness of the characteristics of students with disabilities and learning difficulties, and failure to incorporate their individual objectives in lesson plans, hinders this category's progress in most lessons, despite assigning 'shadow teachers' to follow up on them.

- Most teachers give students an appropriate amount of curricular activities and homework and follow up on their progress almost regularly, while the accuracy of the marking is often varied and feedback on their performance is limited. Additionally, some activities are below students' age level, such as some Arabic and science activities and works.

- Teachers develop students' higher order thinking skills appropriately, such as justification and critical thinking in the best lessons in the class teaching, and questioning and text analysis in Arabic in higher Grades.

- Activities are presented in a standard manner that does not cater for learning

patterns or differentiation among students. Moreover, students' abilities are not adequately challenged in lessons and written work, particularly with respect to low achievers and students with disabilities and learning difficulties.

Areas for improvement

- Effective utilisation of teaching and learning strategies in line with the abilities of students in all categories.

- Learning time management in a manner that ensures higher productivity of lessons.

- Better use of assessment results in meeting students' needs and supporting them, particularly low achievers and students with disabilities and learning difficulties.

- Catering for differentiation in lessons and written work, and challenging the abilities of students in all categories.

☐ Students' support and guidance 'Satisfactory'

Judgement justifications

- The school meets students' academic needs appropriately, benefiting from the results of admission and diagnostic tests to identify them. Outstanding and talented students are supported by engaging them in school's competitions and clubs, such as the Arabic Club and Spelling Bee Contest, whereas the support provided to low achievers is limited to a few activities in some lessons.
- Students with disabilities and different learning difficulties are supported by preparing an appropriate physical environment, following up on them during examinations and assigning student groups to support them. Additionally, creative students from this category participate in some events, such as the 'Children's Art Exhibition', but the educational support they receive varies as some are supported well in the 'Resources

Room' programme, while most of them are supported less in the 'Full Integration' programme. This is due to shadow teachers' – who follow up on this category - variable awareness of this category's characteristics and individual learning objectives, and the appropriateness of the activities for their actual needs, in light of the unclear mechanism for monitoring the impact of this support on their progress.
- The school meets the personal needs of most students, supports them when they encounter problems, studies and follows up on special cases and provides awareness raising programmes, such as the 'Autism Awareness Week'. However, the curricula adopted by the school do not meet the needs of students with disabilities and learning difficulties associated with Islamic education in line with their own abilities.

- Extracurricular activities enhance the experiences of most students, through their participation in school clubs' activities, football leagues and voluntary campaigns, such as 'Feed those in Need, as well as the participation of Intermediate and Secondary Stage students in school committees, such as the Water and Electricity' committee.
- The school provides an appropriate, healthy and safe environment for its students and staff, by conducting evacuation drills, maintaining buildings, activating daily monitoring, organising arrival and departure and identifying and following up on health conditions by the nurse.
- The school inducts most new students by welcoming and educating them about regulations and facilities and organising meetings with their parents. The school also prepares students for the next stages of education by means of introductory visits to higher classes, counselling lessons and raising Grade 10 student's academic and vocational awareness of the disciplines that fit their interests and tendencies.
- The school enhances life skills of most students, as in training them on computer skills, oration and scientific research. However, these skills are variably enhanced in lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Better support for students with disabilities, learning difficulties and low achievers, and monitoring their academic progress.
- Better enhancement of students' life skills.

Quality assurance of outcomes and processes

☐ Leadership, management and governance 'Satisfactory'

Judgement justifications

- The school has a shared vision that focuses on providing an attractive learning environment and is appropriately reflected in most aspects of schoolwork.
- The school assesses its reality, using SWOT analysis. Furthermore, the recommendations of the previous review visit and the results of class visits are used in developing a strategic plan with variable accuracy in terms of setting improvement priorities, clarity of performance indicators and implementation and monitoring mechanisms, in light of the lack of departmental action plans. This has affected the school's performance in most work aspects and caused it to regress from good to satisfactory.
- School's assessments of its work aspects as in the Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) matches the judgements reached by the review team, with a difference of only one point in most aspects and a complete match in personal development.
- The school identifies teachers' training needs using special forms and the results of lesson observations, and meets most of them appropriately by organising internal workshops, such as 'Assessment for Learning' and 'Autism', and offering specialised professional development programmes to train teachers and shadow teachers on how to deal with students

with disabilities and learning difficulties. However, the monitoring of the impact of these programmes on students' academic progress and the effectiveness of teaching and learning varied.
- The school has a positive atmosphere, as the school's management adopts an open-door policy, promotes a family spirit, motivates its excellent staff with certificates of recognition and financial awards as part of the 'Teacher of the Year' project and delegates certain administrative duties to them, such as administrative supervision and curriculum monitoring to ensure better work progress in the absence of middle leadership for all academic departments.
- The school utilises its financial resources and activates its educational facilities appropriately in various lessons and events to enhance students' experiences, such as the learning resources centre in which certain activities and lectures are offered, the gymnasium and science and computer laboratories.
- The school communicates effectively with local community institutions to enrich students' experiences, such as cooperating with 'Alia Early Intervention Centre' and the 'Saudi-Bahraini Institute for the Blind' and hosting specialists to give awareness raising lectures to students, such as 'How to Protect Ourselves'. The school also activates the Parents Council's role in

giving lectures, such as those relating to dental health, as well as conducting the parents' storytelling project in Cycle 1.

- The Board of Directors monitors school's performance appropriately and provides the necessary financial and strategic support, it also participates in providing professional development programmes that partially meet the needs of teachers and shadow teachers to support students with disabilities and learning difficulties. The Board also appropriately holds the school's leadership accountable for its performance, caring for students and fulfilling its pledges to parents.

Areas for improvement

- Using self-evaluation results in setting schoolwork improvement priorities and developing the strategic plan to ensure the improvement of overall performance.

- Developing departmental action plans and incorporating clear performance indicators and accurate implementation and monitoring mechanisms.

- Monitoring the impact of professional development programmes on students' academic achievement and development of teaching and learning.

Appendix: Characteristics of the school

Name of the school (Arabic)	عالية الوطنية												
Name of the school (English)	Alia National												
Year of establishment	2007												
Address	Building 301, Road 1111, Block 611												
Town /Village / Governorate	Sitra / Southern Governorate												
School's Contacts	17737377		-		**Fax**		17912155						
School's e-mail	aliaprimary@aol.com												
School's website	www.alaischool.com												
Age range of students	6-16 years												

Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)	**Primary**	**Middle**	**High**
	1-6	7-9	10

Number of students	**Boys**	166	**Girls**	78	**Total**	244

Students' social background	Most students come from average-income families

Classes per grade	**Grade**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**
	Classes	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-

Number of administrative staff	8
Number of teaching staff	24
Curriculum	• Canadian curriculum for English, mathematics, science and social studies. • Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum for Arabic, Islamic education and citizenship.
Main language(s) of instruction	Arabic and English
Principal's tenure in the school	7 years

External assessment and examinations	-
Accreditation (if applicable)	-
Major recent changes in the school	• Main changes in the academic year 2016-2017, namely: − the appointment of curriculum coordinator and specialist for the English department − the appointment of an assessment specialist and an educational supervisor − adding a new academic building to accommodate the increase in the number of students − expanding the learning support department − installing interactive smart boards in all classrooms.