



الهيئة الوطنية
للمؤهلات وضمان جودة التعليم والتدريب
National Authority for Qualifications &
Quality Assurance of Education & Training

Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews Review Report

**Al Falah Private School – Muharraq Branch – Girls
Section
Muharraq– Muharraq Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date of Review: 23-25 December 2013

SP044-C1-R044

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Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews

The Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews (DPS) is part of the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (QQA) that was officially set up in 2008 as an independent body governed and supervised by the Council of Ministers. It is established to raise standards in education and training.

The DPS is responsible for:

- evaluating and reporting on the quality of provision in all private schools and kindergartens
- establishing success measures
- spreading best practice
- making recommendations for private school/kindergarten improvements.

Review involves monitoring standards and evaluating the quality of provision against a clear set of indicators. The reviews are independent, objective and transparent. They provide important information for private schools and kindergartens about their strengths and areas for improvement to assist in focusing efforts and resources as part of the cycle of school improvement in order to raise standards.

Review grades are awarded a four-point scale:

Grade description	Interpretation
Outstanding (1)	Outcomes or provision are at least good in all areas and outstanding in the majority.
Good (2)	Outcomes or provision are at least satisfactory in all areas and good in the majority.
Satisfactory (3)	A basic level of adequacy. There are no major weaknesses, or the majority of areas are satisfactory. Some areas may be good.
Inadequate (4)	There are major weaknesses or the majority of areas are inadequate.

Introduction

This review was conducted over three days, by a team of five reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed lessons and other activities, examined students' written and other work, analysed data concerning the school's performance and other documents, and talked with staff, students and parents. This report summarises their findings and recommendations.

Characteristics of the school

School's name		Al Falah Private School – Muharraq Branch – Girls Section												
School's type		Private												
Year of establishment		1990												
Age range of students		6-12 Years												
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High				
		1-6				-				-				
Number of students		Boys Grades 1-2	64	Girls Grades 1-6	93				Total		157			
Students' social background		Most students belong to good income families												
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	Classes	3	3	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Town /Village		Muharraq												
Governorate		Muharraq												
Number of administrative staff		4												
Number of teaching staff		19												
Curriculum		MoE and British Syllabus "Get Smart" for English												
Main language(s) of instruction		Arabic												
Principal's tenure		4 Months												
External assessment and examinations		-												
Accreditation (if applicable)		None												
Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification		Outstanding			Gifted & Talented			Physical Disabilities			Learning Difficulties			
		101			19			-			10			
Major recent changes in the school		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment of a new principal in 2013-2014. 												

Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	3: Satisfactory			
The school's capacity to improve	2: Good			
	Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	3	-	-	3
Students' personal development	2	-	-	2
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	3	-	-	3
The quality of the curriculum implementation	3	-	-	3
The quality of support and guidance for students	3	-	-	3
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	2	-	-	2

Key:

- 1: Outstanding
- 2: Good
- 3: Satisfactory
- 4: Inadequate

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

- How effective is the school in meeting the needs of students and their parents?**

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Most aspects are satisfactory, whilst leadership and management and students' personal development are good. The strategic plan is based on accurate and comprehensive self-evaluation, clearly reflected in students' personal development. Students' actively participate in school life, take leadership roles and show confidence in expressing views and ideas. They show good understanding of Islamic values and Bahrain's heritage. Acquisition of basic skills in Arabic and English is good, but varies in mathematics and, to a lesser degree, science. There are inconsistencies in teaching and learning with insufficient use of assessment results to plan for learning. Insufficient differentiation in class activities provides too few challenges to promote students' higher order thinking skills. Learning support programmes provided to various groups of students vary. Parents and students are well satisfied with the school.

- How strong is the school's capacity to improve?**

Grade: 2 Good

The school's capacity to improve is good. This is due to the leaderships' awareness of strengths and areas for improvement, based on comprehensive and accurate self-evaluation and analysis of the school's situation. Strategic planning is based on development priorities, including students' creativity and morals. This is clearly reflected in students' self-confidence, their taking on leadership roles and showing high Islamic values. The school leadership and general directorate focus on teachers' professional development programmes, with an effective role in motivating staff to work as a team, enriching student's learning experience and enhancing their interests with various educational programmes. These factors enable the school to improve performance and develop student leaders, despite the inconsistency in their achievement due to varying teachers' performance.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Students achieved high pass rates ranging between 94% and 100% in core subjects in the school's internal examinations in 2012-2013 in the first and second cycles. These rates are largely consistent with proficiency rates between 63% and 100% in core subjects in the first and second cycles. They reflect the real standards of students in good lessons in Arabic and English as a result of effective teaching and learning strategies and differentiated activities.

Most students master listening, reading aloud and oral expression in Arabic and English. Essay writing skills in Arabic are good, with students in the second cycle being able to compile a short story using appropriate grammar and dictation rules. Students' performance is lower in writing skill in English, being limited to writing short sentences. The acquisition of algorithmic skills in mathematics such as subtraction and division varies. While the majority of students are able to do simple mathematical exercises, their mastery of solving word problems is below the expected level. Students' acquisition of scientific skills such as inquisition is low, the direct result of ineffective teaching and assessment methods to meet students' learning needs.

Students' results over the last three years from 2011-2013 show stable high pass rates in core subjects in the first and second cycles. Students' performance in the second cycle is better than the first cycle in most core subjects, with remarkable progress in Arabic and English lessons and in written work in Arabic in particular. This is the result of effective teaching strategies and challenging of students' abilities in written work. They make sufficient progress in mathematics and some science lessons, while grade 6 students make less progress.

In good lessons and school enrichment programmes, outstanding students make sufficient progress according to their abilities, with the school supporting them adequately. Students with learning difficulties achieve sufficient progress in the special education programme. Low achievers make sufficient progress in most lessons, though with inconsistent support; consequently their achievement varies.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 2 Good

Most students participate enthusiastically in school activities and events, also in student committees such as the morning assembly and school police committee. They take leadership roles, including the student council and preparing wall displays of their activities. They also participate in lessons and academic departments activities. They exhibit self-confidence and the ability to express their views, leading class groups and implementing the role of student-teacher.

Most students are well behaved and respect each other and their teachers, making them feel safe. They act responsibly inside and outside classes, maintaining the cleanliness of the school and its facilities. This reflects in their participation in the educational awareness programme titled "Think with Anos" and in the school environment committee. Most students are punctual for morning assembly and lessons, though with a few who are late for school. This all contributes positively to their personal development and adherence to school rules and regulations.

The vast majority of students exhibit deep understanding of Islamic values. These are enhanced in morning assembly through short plays and the implementation of educational awareness projects such as the "My Importance is Represented in my Values" project. The school is keen to encourage students to pray willingly. Students show a high understanding of Bahrain's culture and heritage through their remarkable participation in national events, festivals and activities organised by the school such as Citizenship Week that includes national songs, free traditional dishes, popular games, electronic games, and popular displays.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Teachers have secure subject knowledge, evident in their interaction with students, enthusiasm in explanations, the logic flow of lessons, answers to students' questions. Learning resources such as smart boards, flash cards, pictures and models that contribute to attracting and motivating students towards learning are used. Effective teaching strategies and methods are used in good lessons, particularly in Arabic and English, such as the use of questions for learning, collaborative learning, problem-solving, prediction and role play.

These help increase students' participation and enable them to acquire skills, concepts and knowledge such as basic skills in reading and speaking in Arabic and English and writing in Arabic. However, their acquisition of scientific and mathematical skills varies in half of the science lessons and some mathematics lessons. Students' are often challenged in lessons, written work and homework. Their higher order thinking skills are enhanced through prediction and analysis, as well as by free extended writing activities in Arabic and English that contribute to broadening their horizons.

Most teachers effectively manage lessons in terms of productivity, achievement of learning objectives and behaviour control. Clear instructions and guidance are given which clearly reflect in students' personal development, increase of their knowledge and achievement of appropriate standards. Students are motivated and encouraged through praise, awarding stars, gifts and display of their pictures on class walls. This results in their enthusiasm and effective participation in good lessons and the majority of satisfactory lessons, though the inconsistent learning support given to different categories of students limits productivity in the remaining lessons.

Various assessment methods are used by teachers. These include individual, group, written and oral methods as well as observations, which clearly impact effectively on students' achievement of lesson objectives and acquisition of most concepts and basic skills. Use of assessment results to plan for learning is inconsistent, negatively affecting students' awareness of areas to improve in their performance. Appropriate planned tasks and homework are assigned. These are marked on a regular basis and feedback is given to students, which is mostly followed up.

□ How well does the implementation and enrichment of the curriculum meet the educational needs of the students?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Students' experiences and interests are enriched through participation in extracurricular activities and student committees such as Library Friends committee in which grade 6 students excelled by preparing and implementing programmes for first cycle students. Talented students participate in internal and external competitions in which they do well, including first place in the short story competition. The curriculum is enhanced through projects such as 'The Dictation Training' in Arabic, and short stories in Arabic and English, contributing to broaden students' learning. However, programmes for low achievers are limited.

Students' understanding of their rights, duties and responsibilities is developed by the school, as is developing citizenship through the implementation of several projects such as 'Citizenship Week' and 'Together We Build our Country'. 'Be a Leader' is a project for grade 6 students to develop their personality and leadership skills. Voluntary work is done to help needy families. The curriculum is enhanced through learning corners, displays and notice boards, celebrating students' work .

Curriculum content, such as analysis of the English curriculum, is analysed and reviewed, the results enhancing learning through hand-outs and summary notes. This contributes to improved learning for the different groups of students. Links between knowledge and basic skills in different subjects are made in most lessons, particularly in English by comparing the classical and modern histories of Bahrain in English. This helps students acquire good IT skills, but is less effective in developing problem-solving skills.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Effective induction of new students includes educational and entertainment programmes and competitions to familiarise them with school facilities and regulations. Students are inducted to the next phase of education at grade 2, boys students and their parents to the Boys Section's teachers and supervisors, as well as organizing visits to the intermediate school for grade 6 students and providing lectures such as "Maturity and Adolescence".

Students' personal needs are effectively monitored and met. Projects to enhance students personality are organised, including 'The Outstanding Leader' and 'Be a Leader'. Students facing problems receive thoughtful care. Students' behaviour is enhanced through patience and kindness, values through the 'My Importance is Represented in my Values' project. The school meets students' learning needs through diagnostic testing, developing appropriate out of lessons programmes for outstanding and talented students such as their participation in external competitions like the "Short Story Writing", and support by the special education specialist for students with autism. However, low achievers are less well supported, with limited programmes provided, though some individual efforts are made at the end of the school day.

The school communicates with parents through educational meetings, regular reports, weekly bulletins, follow-up notebooks and phone calls. It evaluates health issues, carries out evacuation drills and checks fire extinguishers regularly. Health and awareness lectures are provided such as 'Balanced Nutrition' and 'First Aid', with well organised days contributes

to provide a safe and healthy environment for staff. This achieves good satisfaction with the school.

Leadership, management and governance

- How effective are leadership, management and governance in promoting high achievement, strong personal development and school improvement?**

Grade: 2 Good

The school has a shared vision that focuses on pioneering and total quality alongside the acquisition of Islamic values. This is reflected inconsistently in most aspects of the school's work. Comprehensive self-evaluation is conducted using SWOT analysis, the qualitative and quantitative analysis of students' results, assessment of teaching and learning practices, school events and projects and assessing teachers' and students' satisfaction. This identification of school priorities and strengths and areas for improvement, reflects well in development of the strategic plan and in students' personal development. Action plans for academic departments are based on this, though implementation and monitoring is inconsistent across the school with Arabic and English departments being the best.

The school leaders motivate staff through involvement in decisions making, setting team work, enhancing social relationships and awarding recognition certificates. Senior roles are delegated, such as assigning two teachers to manage the principal's duties in her absence, or carry out administrative roles. The school is keen to promote teachers' professional competency in cooperation with middle management, including conducting class visits and organising training workshops. Educational bulletins are also used such as 'The Enlightening Guidelines'. This reflects well in the performance of teachers in the Arabic and English departments, but the impact varies across other departments.

Work flow is followed up by the Board of Directors through meetings, monitoring teaching and learning practices, distribution of roles and implementation of recommendations in cooperation with the general directorate of Al Falah private Schools. They hold regular meetings with departments and individual sessions with teachers. Available learning resources and facilities are used to support the learning process, with smart boards, the learning resource centre, computer laboratory and arts room. However, the science laboratory is below standard, being small and lacking instruments.

Students' and parents' views are sought through questionnaires, student and mother councils, meetings and the open day. Suggestions are responded to whenever possible, for example parents' participation in school events and a role in organising the open day and national week events. The school has effective links with the local community, the Muharraq Health Centre delivering health lectures such as the 'personal hygiene' and visits to 'Bait Al Quran' to train students on the role of religious guides. The school cooperates with other government schools, participating in the Hassan bin Thabit Primary Boys School sports day to enrich students' learning experience and interests.

The school's main strengths

- The accurate and comprehensive self-evaluation, alongside the school leaders' awareness of the school's strengths and areas for improvement
- Most students' enthusiastic and effective participation in school life and taking on responsibilities, leadership roles and opportunities to express their views and ideas in a confident manner
- Understanding by the majority of students of Islamic values and Bahrain's heritage and culture.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- raise students' academic achievement and develop their basic skills in science and mathematics
- develop teaching and learning by further:
 - using assessment results to plan for learning
 - differentiating and challenging students' abilities in lessons and homework
 - developing students' higher order thinking skills.
- implement more effectively the support and guidance programmes undertaken in order to meet the various learning needs of students.