Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews
Review Report

Al Wisam School

Abu Saiba – Northern Governorate

Kingdom of Bahrain

Date of Review: 28-30 April 2019

SP017-C3-R006

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 ten reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed lessons and other activities, scrutinised students' written work and analysed the 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		Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Quality of outcomes	Academic achievement	4	4	4	4
	Personal development and social responsibility	3	4	4	4
Quality of processes	Teaching, learning and assessment	4	4	4	4
	Empowerment and meeting special needs	4	4	4	4
Quality assurance of outcomes and processes	Leadership, management and governance	4	4	4	4
Capacity to improve		4			
The school's overall effectiveness		4			

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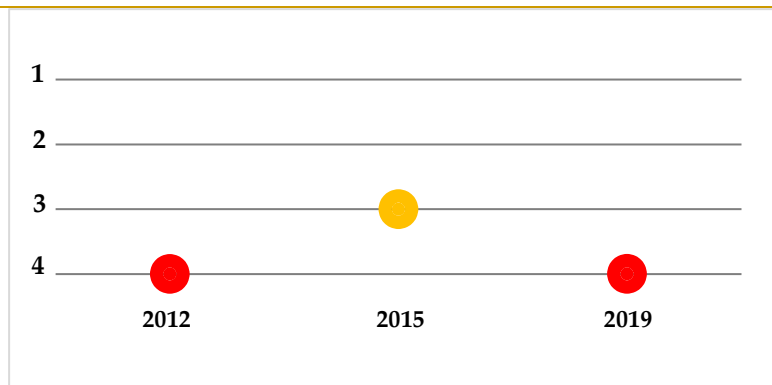
School Report

☐ School's overall effectiveness 'Inadequate'

Judgement justifications

- Students' attainment is inconsistent both in internal and external examinations. Their standards, progress and learning skills are inadequate in most subjects across the school.
- The majority of students behave well and demonstrate adequate understanding of citizenship values. However, their self-confidence, communication and leadership skills are not well developed, particularly in the Middle and High Schools.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate across the school. This is due to the ineffective use of teaching strategies, resources and assessments as per curriculum expectations, inconsistent use of learning time, and insufficient support provided for students, particularly the low achievers.
- Students' personal needs are met sufficiently outside lessons through an adequate range of extracurricular activities that develop students' talents and experiences. However, their academic needs are not rigorously identified or sufficiently met.
- The school's self-evaluation is erratic and lacks consistency in assessing the overall school performance. The strategic plan is not updated based on current priorities. The professional development programmes offered are not based on teachers' individual needs.

Main positive features

- Students' adequate behaviour and their understanding of citizenship values.

Recommendations

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance by:
  - implementing a rigorous and comprehensive self-evaluation system that identifies improvement priorities and clearly shows in strategic planning, with accurate and measurable performance indicators
  - providing targeted professional development programmes for teachers and monitoring the impact on students' achievement and progress in lessons
  - ensuring staff stability and effective delegation of responsibilities among staff to promote teamwork and boost their morale.

- Raise students' academic achievement in core subjects.

- Improve the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment, focusing on:
  - implementing effective strategies and utilising the available resources to engage students in their learning and enable them to develop their basic skills
  - productive use of learning time
  - effective use of assessment methods to rigorously measure students' progress in line with curriculum expectations and to support students' different learning needs
  - developing students' self-confidence and communication skills by assigning them effective leadership roles in lessons.
- Implement appropriate mechanisms to rigorously identify the different categories of students and provide effective academic support programmes.

☐ Capacity to improve 'Inadequate'

Judgement justifications

- The school's review judgements have declined in all aspects when compared to that of the previous review.
- The self-evaluation is not rigorous enough to identify improvement priorities, particularly in students' academic achievement. The school's judgement of its performance in the Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) is higher than that reached by the review team in all aspects.
- Strategic planning is not driven from the school's self-evaluation. It has neither clear timeframes nor measurable key performance indicators.
- Challenges facing the school include the instability in senior leadership and weak standards and basic skills of students in core subjects. Communications across the school are not effective in boosting staff morale, promoting teamwork or motivating staff to improve.
- The school lacks effective support programmes catering to the needs of students, particularly the low achievers.

Quality of outcomes

☐ Academic achievement 'Inadequate'

Judgement justifications

- In internal examinations over the past three years, students' pass rates are mostly high. In the 2017-2018 examinations, students achieved high pass rates in all core subjects in both Primary and Middle Schools and in a majority of core subjects in the High School. However, their proficiency rates varied.

- In the Primary and Middle Schools, pass rates are very high, reaching up to 100% in most subjects. Proficiency rates in the Primary School range between 52% in Year 6 Arabic and 100% in Year 4 science. In the Middle School, the range is between 29% in Year 9 English and 84% in Year 7 science. In the High School, pass rates range between 67% in Year 12 business and 100% in a majority of subjects. Proficiency rates range between 0% in Year 12 economics and 87% in Year 11 ICT.

- In the National examinations in 2017, the performance of students in Year 10 was well above the national average in English and very close to the national average in Arabic. In 2018, Year 13 students' pass percentages were high in English and low in Arabic, being 96% and 64% respectively.

- In the first batch of Cambridge Primary Checkpoint in 2018, the percentages of students in Year 6 attaining 3 or above and 5 or above were high in English and science but low in mathematics. In the Secondary 1 checkpoint, the percentage of Year 9 students attaining 3 or above was very high, above 90% in English, mathematics and science. However, the percentage of students attaining 5 or above was too low in all three subjects.

- The International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) examinations results are inconsistent. In 2018, the percentages of students attaining A* to C ranged between 25% in business studies and 100% in Arabic. The percentages of students attaining A* to B ranged between 0% in science double award and English as a second language and 100% in Arabic. However, the number of students who attempted these exams were low in all subjects except mathematics.

- In the 2018 Advanced Level examinations, the percentage of students attaining A* to C ranged between 0% in economics, physics and chemistry and 100% in Arabic, English and mathematics. The percentages of students attaining A* to B ranged between 0% in economics, business, physics and chemistry and 100% in Arabic and mathematics. The number of students attempting these exams is too low, ranging between 1 and 4 per subject.

- In lessons and written work, students' standards and progress in the core subjects are inadequate across the school in English, mathematics and Arabic, while satisfactory in science. The vast majority of students across the school show limited ability to learn independently, think

critically, use technology and solve problems.

- Students show secure reading skills in Arabic across the school. However, they use colloquial Arabic when speaking and their writing skills are underdeveloped.
- In English, speaking and reading skills of the majority of students are adequate, while their writing skills are underdeveloped, particularly in the Middle School.
- The majority of students have adequate understanding of scientific concepts and

develop practical skills across the school. For example, in Middle School the majority can explain types of energy and in High School they can experiment the properties of acids and bases.

- Across the school, students' mathematical skills are weak, though students in the Primary School perform basic arithmetic operations adequately. In the Middle and High Schools, students' skills in subtracting fractions, simplifying algebraic expressions and calculating trigonometric ratios are underdeveloped.

Areas for improvement

- Students' attainment in external examinations and in the majority of core subjects in internal examinations in the Middle and High Schools.

- Standards, progress and learning skills in core subjects, particularly in mathematics in the Middle and High Schools and in English and Arabic across the school.

☐ Personal development & social responsibility 'Inadequate'

Judgement justifications

- Students' participation in the vast majority of lessons is limited to the more able students, particularly in the Middle and High Schools. This negatively affects the development of self-confidence and decision-making skills of the majority of students.
- Students behave appropriately. They show awareness of their rights and responsibilities and respect their peers and teachers. This is developed through participating in anti-bullying programmes and awareness campaigns such as 'Feed the Need'.
- The majority of students have an adequate understanding of Bahraini culture. They

embrace local citizenship and demonstrate respect while dealing with peers of diverse cultures and backgrounds.

- The majority of students assume leadership roles while participating in Students' Council activities, Injaz programme and morning assemblies. In lessons, students in the Primary School develop communication and self-confidence adequately. However, in the Middle and High Schools, their communication and leadership skills are not sufficiently developed. This is because the student-led presentations and group activities are focused only on high

achieving students, who are a low proportion.

- Students interact and communicate together adequately while taking part in activities such as Trade Quest, UN International Day and club activities. However, opportunities to exchange views and work in collaboration are limited in lessons, particularly in the Middle and High Schools.
- Across the school, students show an adequate awareness of health and environment issues. They keep their school clean and are proud to have won

the eco-schools' flag of the Northern Governorate.

- Students participating in interschool football and basketball matches and international art competitions have won prizes. However, those opportunities are limited to a few students and hence development of students' competitiveness and innovation is limited across the school. Students show insufficient ability to face challenges, take responsibility for their own learning and initiate ideas.

Areas for improvement

- Students' self-confidence and ability to assume leadership roles, particularly in the Middle and High Schools.

- Students' communication skills while working together in lessons.

- Students' competitiveness and innovation skills.

Quality of processes

☐ Teaching, learning & assessment 'Inadequate'

Judgement justifications

- The teaching and learning strategies used in more than one-third of the lessons are ineffective in developing students' understanding or basic skills. Strategies mainly focus on the few more able students, which limits the progress of most remaining students.
- In the few better lessons, particularly in science, teachers use teaching methods such as role play and scientific experimentation involving the majority of students, which enable them to develop understanding and skills adequately. However, in the majority of lessons, particularly in mathematics and English, ineffective strategies hinder students' learning and development of their skills.
- Although teachers use educational resources such as models and videos in most lessons, their effectiveness varies and has limited impact in attracting students' interest or engaging them productively in the majority of lessons.
- Behaviour management is appropriate in most lessons due to the respectful conduct of students and positive teacher-student relationships. However, use of learning time is inconsistent due to the extended duration of introductory activities such as sharing of objectives, or quick transition between activities without ensuring students' understanding. These limit the productivity of a significant proportion of lessons across the school.
- Most teachers focus on group and verbal assessments targeting high achievers, with minimal attention given to the rest of the class to ensure the achievement of lesson objectives. Assessment results are not used effectively to inform teaching or to provide support to low achieving students.
- Across the school, teachers fail in developing students' curiosity, stimulating thinking or challenging their abilities. Learning activities and practice work are at too easy a level in the majority of lessons, which do not match curriculum expectations, particularly in mathematics and English.
- Teachers use the internet and projectors to display educational resources related to the topics taught in most lessons. However, students' abilities to use modern technology is not sufficiently developed across the school.
- Although differentiated activities are used in a few lessons, these do not sufficiently match students' different learning patterns or abilities. This is due to teachers' inability to accurately identify students' different abilities and efficiently plan for differentiated learning.

Areas for improvement

- Use of effective teaching and learning strategies and resources to engage students and enable them to progress and develop their basic skills as per curriculum expectations.

- Productive use of learning time.
- Use of assessment for learning to support students of all categories, particularly the low achievers.
- Implementation of differentiation to meet students' varying learning needs and challenge their abilities.

☐ **Empowerment & meeting needs 'Inadequate'**

Judgement justifications

- The school depends on diagnostic tests to classify students into different categories. However, there is a lack of rigorous identification of students' abilities or proper implementation of support programmes to meet students' academic needs.
- High achievers, who are only a small proportion, are given a few opportunities to participate in activities such as the 'Spelling Bee' and 'Arabic Reading Challenge', though their abilities are not well enriched in and outside lessons.
- Students with learning difficulties receive insufficient support. Although remedial lessons are offered, these are not targeting students' specific academic needs in core subjects and students' progress is not rigorously tracked.
- The school adequately supports students who are facing personal problems and takes appropriate actions to help reduce bullying through programmes such as 'The Ideal Student' and 'The Best Class'. The positive impact of these programmes is evident in students' appropriate behaviour.
- The school provides adequate opportunities for students to participate

in activities related to art, music and sports. Talented students participate in interschool events and international competitions such as MUN (Model United Nations), swimming competition and the art contest held in France. Field trips to Al-Areen Wildlife Park and Reserve and Eco-Venture are organised. Adequate transition programmes are provided to help students move through year levels. High school students visit local institutes such as the Bahrain Polytechnic.
- Students with physical disabilities are appropriately supported through providing the necessary services, including assistance with mobility.
- The school carries out adequate risk assessments, monitors students with chronic diseases and holds lectures on topics such as 'Diabetes and Obesity' and 'Chronic Disease Support'.
- The school facilities are appropriately maintained. However, a few classrooms are crowded and the procedures around students' dismissal at the end of the day are not well organised.

Areas for improvement

- Identification of students' different abilities and the academic support provided to students of all categories.

- The school's procedures in relation to students' dismissal.

Quality assurance of outcomes and processes

☐ Leadership, management and governance 'Inadequate'

Judgement justifications

- As part of self-evaluation, the school analyses students' internal and external examinations results. Initial steps have been taken to adopt the Cambridge curriculum for all subjects across the school based on its curriculum review. However, self-evaluation of all aspects of school work is erratic and lacks comprehensiveness of the entire school performance.
- The 2018-2021 strategic plan aims to improve students' academic achievement, teaching and learning, and leadership. However, planning is based on outdated results with no updates on current priorities. Although the three-year action plan is linked to the strategic goals and contains objectives and steps to achieve them, it has insufficient focus on areas of improvement targeting students' achievement. Timeframes are too generic and measurable key performance indicators are not clearly indicated.
- The school has provided several professional training workshops to teachers on topics such as 'Lesson Planning' and 'Time Management', in addition to other external training sessions in cooperation with Tamkeen. However, training is mostly general and not based on teachers' individual needs; therefore, these have insufficient impact on classroom practices and developing students' basic skills. Monitoring of teachers' performance in lessons is by senior and middle leaders. However, the procedure lacks rigour in evaluating the effectiveness of lessons or identifying areas for improvement in a significant proportion of observations.
- Roles and responsibilities are unclear within the senior leadership. There is disagreement among members in the middle leadership team, and communications across the school are not effective in promoting teamwork, boosting staff morale or motivating them to improve.
- The school uses the available resources such as the computer and science laboratories and library adequately. In classes, teachers use an adequate range of resources. However, the impact is not evident in students' learning except for the few better lessons, particularly in science.
- The school has an active Parents' Council through which parents' voice is heard. The school encourages students to be involved in charitable activities such as offering Iftar for those in need and visiting the elderly in Yoko House.
- The school faces different challenges which include the instability in the senior leadership and a new Board of Governors in the current academic year. The role of Board members in providing strategic direction is not evident yet, and currently there is no formal mechanism for holding the school leaders accountable for the school's performance.

Areas for improvement

- Rigorous and systematic self-evaluation to identify school priorities and develop the strategic plan with clear actions, time frames and measurable key performance indicators.

- Professional development programmes based on individual teachers' needs and monitoring their impact on actual classroom practices.

- Effective delegation of responsibilities among staff to promote teamwork and boost their morale.

- The contribution of Board members in providing strategic direction, ensuring staff stability and holding the leadership accountable for the school's performance.

Appendix 1: Characteristics of the school

Name of the school (Arabic)	مدرسة الوسام													
Name of the school (English)	Al Wisam School													
Year of establishment	2004													
Address	Building 81, Road 54, Block 475													
City / Town / Governorate	Abu Saiba / Northern													
School's telephone	17699595			-			**Fax**		17699883					
School's e-mail	info@awis.edu.bh													
School's website	awis.edu.bh													
Age range of students	6-18 years													

	Primary	**Middle**	**High**
Years (e.g. 1 to 12)			
	1-6	7-9	10-13

Number of Students	**Boys**	540		**Girls**		448		**Total**	988					
Students' social/ economical background	Most students come from average income families													

Classes per grade in Primary and Intermediate Stages	**Year**	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	Classes	6	6	5	6	5	4	3	3	3	2	2	2	2

Number of administrative staff	18
Number of teaching staff	86
Curriculum	British
Main language(s) of instruction	English
External assessment and examinations	Cambridge Checkpoints, IGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education), A Level (Advanced Level)
Accreditation (if applicable)	MSA (Middle States Association)
Major recent changes in the school	• Appointment of a new Director of Academics and Quality Assurance in December 2018. • Appointment of a new Vice Principal in September 2018.