



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

Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews Review Report

Palms School
West Riffa – Southern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date of Review: 12-14 November 2019
SP008-C3-R011

Introduction

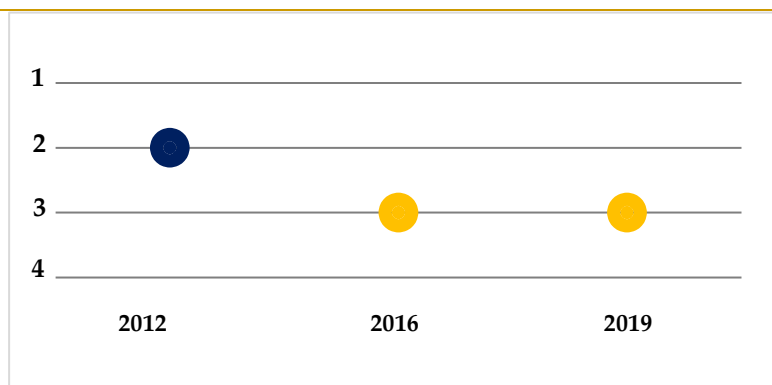
The Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews (DPS), which is a part of the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA), conducted this review over three days by a team of five reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed lessons and other activities, scrutinised students' written work 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

Outstanding	1	Good	2	Satisfactory	3	Inadequate	4
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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	2	-	-	2
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 review cycles.



School Report

□ School's overall effectiveness 'Satisfactory'

Judgement justifications

- Students' attainment in the internal examinations is high. Their standards and progress are satisfactory overall, though less developed in Arabic. The progress of low achievers and development of learning skills is insufficient, as are writing skills in both Arabic and English.
- Students are self-disciplined and behave well. Most of them participate in school activities and events enthusiastically and with confidence. Their leadership roles, competitiveness and innovation are less well developed in lessons.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is satisfactory overall, though it varies in less effective lessons, particularly in Arabic and mathematics. This is due to the inconsistent use of learning time and insufficient use of assessment to meet students' different learning needs, particularly low achievers.
- The school offers a good range of extracurricular activities and supports students in their academic and personal development. The impact of personal support is effective, though that of academic support is inconsistent.
- Regular training sessions are provided for teachers. These positively affect student outcomes in the better lessons, particularly in English and science, though the impact is erratic in the less effective lessons. The school has developed a strong relationship with parents involving them in school events, resulting in the satisfaction of parents and students.

Main positive features

- Students' self-discipline, their positive behaviour and enthusiastic participation in school events and extracurricular activities.
- The integration of technology in lessons.
- The strong relationship with parents as key stakeholders.

Recommendations

- Ensure the impact of the professional development programmes on the effectiveness of teaching and learning, particularly in Arabic and mathematics, with a focus on:
 - more effective use of teaching strategies that develop students' understanding and skills and provide them with leadership roles
 - managing learning time productively

- using assessment results effectively to meet students’ different learning needs, particularly low achievers.
- Raise students’ language skills in Arabic and writing skills in English.
- Ensure the impact of the academic support programmes provided for students of different categories.

□ Capacity to improve ‘Satisfactory’

Judgement justifications

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|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school’s self-evaluation processes are regular and involve stakeholders, with the strategic and action plans linked to the results. The plans have clear key performance indicators and are regularly updated, but their impact is inconsistent in classroom practices. • Students’ high attainment in the internal examinations is not replicated in their standards in lessons and in their written work. • The school’s judgement on its performance in the Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) matches the judgements reached by the review team in ‘personal development | <p>and social responsibility’ aspect and is higher by one grade in all other aspects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school refurbished its facilities in 2018, investing in resources such as a 3D printer and an innovation laboratory. However, the effective use of learning resources is inconsistent in lessons despite the effective integration of technology in the more effective lessons. • The school provides professional development programmes and monitors teachers’ performance through regular class visits, particularly since around 50% of the teaching staff are new to the school in the current academic year. The impact of these procedures is satisfactory overall. |
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Quality of outcomes

□ Academic achievement 'Satisfactory'

Judgement justifications

- In the internal examinations, attainment across the school has been consistently high in the past three years. In the 2018-2019 examinations, pass rates range between 86% in Grade 6 Arabic and mathematics and 100% in the majority of grades and subjects. Proficiency rates are high across all grades, ranging between 62% in Grade 6 mathematics and science and 100% in Grade 1 mathematics and Grade 4 Arabic.
- In the 2016 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), the school's average score is 465.15, which is below the international average by 34.85 points and below the Bahrain private schools' average by 2.85 points.
- In lessons and written work, students' standards in core subjects are in line with curriculum expectations. Their progress in lessons is adequate overall, though inconsistent in the less effective lessons, particularly Arabic. While high achievers and average students progress adequately, the low achievers make only limited progress across all subjects as too little attention is paid to their learning needs in lessons.
- In the better lessons, particularly in science and English, students adequately develop learning skills such as critical thinking, technological and independent learning skills. However, in the other lessons, these skills are not sufficiently developed due to limited opportunities being provided.
- While students' listening, speaking and reading skills in English are adequate across the school, their writing skills are less developed. Students in the lower grades develop their vocabulary adequately, but their reading comprehension and speaking skills are better in the upper grades.
- Although students' speaking skills are secure in Arabic, their reading and writing skills are inconsistent across the school. Students in Grade 6 show varied understanding of grammatical rules and have difficulty in identifying nouns and verbs.
- The majority of students across the school acquire adequate mathematical skills. For example, students in the lower grades develop an understanding of place value of three-digit numbers and in the upper grades the majority of students can convert fractions to decimals accurately.
- In science, most students apply their knowledge to develop a good understanding. In the lower grades, students explain the difference between living and nonliving things confidently, and in an upper grade they demonstrate how to create a food chain with five organisms.

Areas for improvement

- Students' language skills in Arabic and their writing skills in English.
- The progress made by low achievers in lessons and in their written work.
- Development of learning skills in the less effective lessons.

□ Personal development & social responsibility 'Good'

Judgement justifications

- Students are self-disciplined and well behaved. They feel safe and comfortable at school. Most are aware of their rights and responsibilities and show awareness of work ethics through adhering to school rules, attending school regularly and being punctual to lessons. This is developed through procedures such as the raffle draw for early arrival.
- Students successfully embrace local and global citizenship. They show a good understanding of the culture of Bahrain, participating in Bahrain and global celebrations like 'We Sing in Love of Bahrain' and World Peace Day. They volunteer for charity work, collecting donations through events such as the 'Bake Sale'. They eagerly took part in an external charity run to support special needs and achieved third place.
- Most students participate enthusiastically and confidently in various school activities and events such as Taekwondo and Drama clubs, football league and school carnival. They take leadership roles through Students' Council responsibilities, school Scouts and events such as Palms Future Traders. The Girl Scouts successfully ran an awareness campaign 'Sleep Early, Come Early'. In the better lessons, most students work independently and take responsibility for their own learning. However, leadership skills are not consistently well developed in the majority of lessons across all subjects.
- Students work well with each other in pairs and groups during lessons and outside, showing good collaborative skills and cooperating well to achieve goals. Examples include participating in the 10,000 flags of Bahrain activity, Robotics, Arab Reading Challenge, and Science Fair.
- Most students show good awareness of health and environment issues. They keep the school clean and participate willingly in various recycling projects. Most have developed healthy eating habits.
- The majority of students have a competitive spirit and take the initiative in presenting ideas. For example, they participate in annual novel presentations and have won a silver medal in the premier league for karate. Students in Grade 6 created videos on 'Stay Safe Online' and 'Using Equipment Safely'. However, their competitiveness and innovation are less evident in lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Development of leadership roles in lessons.
- Students' initiatives, innovation and competitiveness, particularly in lessons.

Quality of processes

□ Teaching, learning & assessment 'Satisfactory'

Judgement justifications

- Teachers implement an adequate range of teaching and learning strategies such as collaborative work, discussion and learning by doing, which productively engage the majority of students in lessons. However, strategies are inconsistently used in developing students' understanding and skills in the less effective lessons, particularly in Arabic and mathematics. Teachers use relevant learning resources such as worksheets and video clips in most lessons, the impact of these resources being adequate on students' learning.
- Teachers plan lessons appropriately. The majority of lessons are orderly, with good behaviour management. However, the use of learning time is inconsistent as there is more focus on completing the planned activities rather than ensuring students' understanding, development of learning skills and achievement of lesson objectives.
- Teachers employ different assessment methods in lessons, including oral and written methods. However, group assessment is predominantly used, which affects the accuracy of assessing individual students' progress, particularly the low achievers as the high achievers dominate the completion of the assessment task while the low achieving students are mostly passive. Most assessment is followed by generic oral feedback which does not sufficiently support students in knowing the areas to be developed in their individual performance. Although teachers check students' work regularly, the levels of following up on learning activities and quality of feedback provided are inconsistent.
- There is good integration of technology in learning in the better lessons and the innovation laboratory is used well as part of the planned approach to raise technological skills. Teachers have a positive attitude towards the use of online tools such as class Dojo and Google classroom which positively affects the development of students' technological skills.
- In the better lessons, particularly in science and English, teachers challenge students' different abilities well. This enables students to develop reasoning and critical thinking. However, teachers' stimulation of thinking and challenging students' abilities by developing higher order thinking skills is limited in the less effective lessons, particularly in mathematics and Arabic.
- In the better lessons, learning is differentiated by task and outcomes. However, in the less effective lessons, insufficient attention to differentiation results in fewer opportunities for students, particularly the low achievers, to participate in class activities.

Areas for improvement

- More effective use of teaching strategies that develop students' understanding and skills, particularly in Arabic and mathematics.
- Productive use of learning time.
- The effective use of assessment results to meet students' different learning needs, particularly low achievers.

Empowerment & meeting needs 'Satisfactory'

Judgement justifications

- A system is in place to diagnose students' learning needs, identify their academic levels and monitor their progress. Support mechanisms include enrichment activities through Google classroom for the more able students and in-class remedial activities for the less able students. However, the implementation of these procedures varies, with an inconsistent impact on students' progress in core subjects.
- Students' personal needs are addressed well. Behaviour management programmes such as Kelso's choices, 'Maan' and a House points system are used effectively. Social values are promoted through visits to local hospitals, special needs centres and homes for the elderly.
- The school efficiently reinforces students' experiences, talents and creativity by providing a range of extracurricular activities which meet their different needs and interests. This includes diverse club activities, competitions such as the Iron Kids 500m race, mini Olympics and field trips to Bahrain Fort, Military Museum and Tasneem Agriculture and Science Centre.
- New students are inducted well to the school and are familiarised with the school rules, policies and facilities. Students in Grade 6 are prepared for their next stage of education through awareness lectures and guiding them to enroll in schools that follow a similar curriculum.
- The school follows-up on the medical conditions of students, regularly carries out maintenance of buildings and facilities and conducts fire drills. Students' arrival and dismissal are monitored well. The school environment is generally safe, hygienic and risk-free. However, a few classrooms are less spacious, with a few students being seated too close to the active board.
- The school integrates students with special educational need into school life effectively. It prepares Individual Educational Plans (IEP) for these students and supports them well.

Areas for improvement

- The academic support programmes provided for students of different categories.

Quality assurance of outcomes and processes

□ Leadership, management and governance 'Satisfactory'

Judgement justifications

- The school's self-evaluation is comprehensive, including several surveys among stakeholders, analysis of examination results, feedback from external consultants, curriculum review and previous recommendation of the BQA.
- The school's strategic and improvement plans are linked to the results of the self-evaluation. The plans have clear key performance indicators, monitoring mechanisms and are regularly updated. The school reviews the implemented curriculum and has a plan to introduce a new curriculum that is focused on linking subjects. However, the impact of these plans and measures is inconsistent in classroom practices.
- The leadership motivates staff and encourages them to work towards development. This impacts positively on their willingness to improve. A system is in place for teachers' training needs analysis and to develop their skills.
- The senior leaders conduct systematic class visits and provide verbal and written feedback to teachers. Regular staff meetings are held and teachers are encouraged to share best practices. A range of professional development opportunities are provided based on school priorities. These include lesson planning, 21st century skills and best teaching practices. However, the impact of these sessions on the performance of teachers is inconsistent, particularly in Arabic and mathematics.
- The school has refurbished its facilities and improved resources such as HUB the management information system, in-door Physical Education (PE) hall and an outdoor play area. The leadership ensures the regular use of learning resources and facilities such as the 3D printer and innovation laboratory. The impact of the use of these resources and facilities is satisfactory overall.
- The school has developed a strong relationship with parents as key stakeholders, involving them in planning and organising school events. For example, shades for the playground are funded through Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). Good links with the local community are established. This includes knowledge sharing sessions with other schools in Bahrain, chess clubs organised in cooperation with Bahrain chess academy, students' visits to local organisations such as the Military Museum and participation in fund raising for local charity. These activities have a positive impact on developing students' social skills.
- The Boards of Governors meet periodically. The roles of the Board and school leadership are separate and understood. The Board monitors the

school's performance, contributes to future plans and provides strategic direction to the school's leadership. It

holds the senior leaders accountable for the school's performance and students' welfare.

Areas for improvement

- Monitoring the impact of school plans and professional development programmes to support their effective implementation in lessons, particularly in Arabic and mathematics.

Appendix 1: Characteristics of the school

Name of the school (Arabic)	مدرسة النخيل													
Name of the school (English)	Palms School													
Year of establishment	2005													
Address	Building 605, Road 2615, Block 926													
City / Town / Governorate	West Riffa / Southern													
School's telephone	17666637								Fax		17766791			
School's e-mail	hello@palms.school													
School's website	www.palms-school													
Age range of students	6-12 Years													
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)	Primary				Middle				High					
	1-6				-				-					
Number of Students	Boys		160		Girls		77		Total		237			
Students' social/ economical background	Most students come from average income families													
Classes per grade in Primary and Intermediate Stages	Grade													
	Classes													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
	2	2	2	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Number of administrative staff	6													
Number of teaching staff	19													
Curriculum	British													
Main language(s) of instruction	English													
External assessment and examinations	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in 2016													
Accreditation (if applicable)	-													

Major recent changes in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refurbishment of school buildings and technology integration in 2018• Changes in 2019 including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Introduction of HUB, the management information system– Appointment of 2 Assistant Principals– Appointment of learning support teachers– Appointment of middle leaders for mathematics and science and a coordinator for 21st century skills.
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