



Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews

Review Report

**The New Horizon School – Al Sugayah
Al Sugayah – Capital Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date of Review: 17-19 November 2014

SP 058-C1-R058

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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 seven 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		The New Horizon School - Al Sugayah											
School's type		Private											
Year of establishment		2000											
Age range of students		6 Years											
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High			
		1				-				-			
Number of students		Boys	106	Girls	114	Total		220					
Students' social background		Most come from middle income families											
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Classes	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Town /Village		Al Sugayah											
Governorate		Capital											
Number of administrative staff		7											
Number of teaching staff		13											
Curriculum		Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)											
Main language(s) of instruction		English											
Principal's tenure		2 years											
External assessment and examinations		-											
Accreditation (if applicable)		-											
Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification		Outstanding			Gifted & Talented			Physical Disabilities			Learning Difficulties		
		-			-			-			-		
Major recent changes in the school		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in the Governing Board and the Vice-Principal 											

Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	4: Inadequate			
The school's capacity to improve	4: Inadequate			
	Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	4	-	-	4
Students' personal development	3	-	-	3
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	4	-	-	4
The quality of the curriculum implementation	4	-	-	4
The quality of support and guidance for students	3	-	-	3
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	4	-	-	4

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: 4 Inadequate

The school has serious weaknesses in the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning, curriculum implementation and leadership, management and governance, and in outcome like students' academic achievement. Although in internal assessments and in lessons the majority of students are demonstrating standards in line with their age-related curriculum expectations, they are not gaining sufficient value added in their understanding and skills from lessons. This is the impact of weak teaching with low expectations across the school. Curriculum enrichment and delivery fails to provide sufficient activities to equip the students with life skills to prepare them for next stage of their education. Self-evaluation is not rigorous and is not embedded in all school systems, and strategic and action planning is not sufficiently explicit.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The recent improvement is mainly focused on the leadership and management structure. Poor leadership, management and governance has resulted in weak teaching and learning and flaws in the enrichment and delivery of the curriculum. Consequently, teaching does not sufficiently meet the needs of students of all abilities, so the majority of students are not sufficiently developing their understanding and skills during lessons. The school lacks rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning, with insufficient interaction with professional development programmes to improve the effectiveness of teaching staff, which impacts on students' achievements. In the absence of well-defined strategic and operational planning with clear accountability, and lack of an effective self-evaluation system, the school's ability to improve independently is doubtful. External professional consultation and support is needed.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

In internal examination across the core subjects most of the Grade 1 students consistently achieve high pass rates. In the year 2013-2014 the competency rates are also high, ranging between 69% in Arabic to 85% in mathematics. In lessons and academic work, the majority of students demonstrate standards in line with their age-related curriculum expectations. However, the limited effectiveness and poor quality of classroom teaching is less likely to be the factor responsible for students' satisfactory standards. In Arabic, the oral skills of the native Arabic students are age-appropriate. They can read and identify the abstract letter requested from different words. In English most students can distinguish between nouns and verbs, with sound speaking and reading skills. They can also make antonyms of simple words. In environmental studies, students show age-appropriate knowledge of various means of transport. In mathematics the majority of students have adequate understanding of subtraction and can subtract one digit numbers. Their basic arithmetic skills are adequate. However, in lessons a vast majority of students are not gaining sufficient added value in their knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to their abilities and starting points. This is a consequence of weak whole-class teaching with low expectations. Moreover, classroom teaching lacks sufficient challenge to high achieving students or appropriate support to those who face difficulties with learning which is limiting students' progress within lessons. Due to an excessive teacher-led approach, students' inquiry and practical skills are not sufficiently developed.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Most students attend the school regularly and tardy cases are in a very small minority. The majority of students enthusiastically participate in effective lessons by responding to teachers' queries and other activities. However, in a significant number of lessons their participation is limited due to too few available opportunities. Outside lessons, students eagerly participate in activities like dance, aerobics, yoga, various competitions and celebrations. The majority of students are adequately developing self-confidence and this trait is very apparent during morning assembly. Where opportunities are provided they can work independently, and show adequate sense of responsibility in taking leadership roles such as line monitor. Discussion with students and observation of their interactions effectively demonstrates their ability to work together. When opportunities are provided,

such as group activity, students demonstrate good collaborative working skills. They are well behaved and have good friendly relations with each other. Students feel very safe and secure in the school and have good rapport with their teachers. Behavioural issues are rare and are adequately taken care of. Through the Bahrain history and geography syllabus, assembly time activities, field trips to historic and cultural sites like Bahrain National Museum and Bahrain Fort, and participation in the National Day celebrations, students demonstrate a sound understanding of Bahrain's heritage and Islamic values.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The majority of teachers use their subject knowledge adequately, with clear explanations and use of examples. However, they lack sufficient grasp of the effective use of different teaching strategies to promote students' learning. Teachers' lesson plans are too general and lesson objectives set low expectations for student achievement. They lack specific planning and delivery of a variety of activities to challenge and support students of all ability groups. Most lessons are excessively teacher-centred with over emphasis on teachers' instructions, with few opportunities for students to become involved and work independently. In the better lessons, teaching sufficiently motivates, engages and encourages students to contribute through the use of group work, songs and role play. However, a significant number of students, particularly those with learning difficulties, are insufficiently supported. Teaching mostly focuses on factual recall and repetition. Productivity in the majority of lessons is low due to ineffective use of time and low expectations. In the few better lessons, high achieving students are adequately challenged with extension activities to develop their understanding, such as answering simple verbal expressions, and slow learners are individually supported through re-explanation. However, in the vast majority of lessons these opportunities are too few and a significant number of students are insufficiently challenged and supported. Teaching generally uses a limited range of strategies to develop understanding and skills. In most lessons students are provided with insufficient opportunities to think analytically and justify their views. Teaching has a limited focus on inquiry and problem-solving skills, with available resources being limited to textbooks, worksheets, flash cards and pictures. However, in the better lessons teaching adequately uses these limited resources to engage students' interest and promote learning. Effective use of assessment by all teachers to inform lesson planning and meet students' learning needs is limited. In most lessons teaching depends solely on whole class questioning and worksheets, providing few opportunities to assess students' knowledge. There is a limited consideration for individual differences during learning activities and

assessments. Homework is set to either complete or reinforce class work. Although most of the students' work is regularly marked, critical feedback for improvement is too limited.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The school provides an adequate mix of subjects to Grade 1 students. However, the whole class teaching culture offers a limited range of learning experiences to meet the needs of all students. The curriculum is adequately revised after consultation with the teachers. As a result, a few textbooks are changed and a few topics are modified to meet students' needs. However, beside the incidental links, the curriculum delivery fails to make links between the subjects. Consequently, in most lessons, students are not experiencing a coherent curriculum, adversely impacting on their writing skills. The school sufficiently promotes a spirit of community and takes deliberate steps to encourage good relationships among students. It also seeks to develop students' understanding of the rights and responsibilities of being part of a community by adequately enabling and encouraging them to contribute to national activities by celebrating Bahrain National Day and other international celebrations. The curriculum is adequately enhanced by a decent range of extra-curricular activities including sports, aerobics, yoga, music, competitions and field trips to Bahrain National Museum and printing press and Bahrain Science Centre. Although resources such as an audio-visual room and library are available to enrich the curriculum; their effective utilisation is limited. Furthermore, the curriculum delivery fails to provide sufficient opportunities for students to develop inquiry skills.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

New students are adequately inducted through morning assembly on their first day at school which, along with entertaining activities such as songs and drawing, helps them to settle quickly. Students' academic progress is sufficiently monitored through teachers' observations and internal assessment results analysis. High achievers are provided with programmes such as competitions and quizzes. Those with learning difficulties are adequately supported in teachers' free time. However, in the absence of individualised planning to meet the needs of slow learners, the school relies heavily on support from parents. Students' personal development is adequately monitored through individual portfolios including comments, with a positive impact on behaviour. Through class teachers

the school offers sufficient sensitive support to students when they face problems, which is appreciated by students and parents. Students receive good advice and support for the next stage of their education from class teachers and through a tour of the school's main campus in Jannusan, and students share sports activities with the Jannusan students. Parents are sufficiently informed about their child's academic progress through report cards, meetings and student's diary. However, report cards lack sufficient details about students' personal development traits. Students and staff work in a safe and healthy environment. The school nurse is available on school days, and the arrival and departure of students is efficiently monitored.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The school aspires to educate and rebuild, and attempts to share this with teachers on different events and through training sessions. However, these attempts are ineffective in sharing the school's vision and mission with the staff. The school's efforts to inspire and motivate staff with monetary incentives, certificates and professional development training are not very successful in retaining staff, with around half of the teachers being new. Although the self-evaluation includes day to day monitoring of school matters by the senior leadership and identifies infrastructure development as a key area for improvement, it is not sufficiently systematic, lacks rigor and is not embedded in all school functions. Teachers' appraisal is not sufficiently stringent to identify key areas for improvement. Consequently, professional development provided to teachers is too general with limited impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

The strategic planning mainly focuses on improving infrastructure, retention of teaching staff and improved staff communication skills. However, strategic planning lacks explicit action planning with clear time frames, success criteria and accountability. The effective translation of these plans into better practice is also limited. Though the school conducts workshops on effective class management, implementation of teaching methods and lesson planning, and model lessons are delivered by coordinators to teachers, the impact on lessons is limited as these programmes insufficiently link to staff appraisal and to teachers' individual professional needs. Resources are limited to a library, audio-visual room and a few teaching aids. These are not utilised effectively to facilitate students' knowledge development, understanding and skills. The school seeks the views of parents through a

suggestion box, emails, Parent Teacher Association meetings and open-door policy, and is adequately responsive to their views. Satisfactory links have been developed with the local community through visits to the Science Centre and Bahrain National Museum. The school sponsors students in collaboration with the Royal Charity Organisation Bahrain and conducts charity campaigns. The Board of Management provides strategic and financial guidance, with the school's professional leadership being responsible for provisions and outcomes. These roles are adequately separated and respected. However, the Board does not sufficiently hold the professional leadership accountable for the school's performance. Additionally, the Board fails to sufficiently ensure that the school fully delivers on its promise to parents.

The school's main strengths

- Students' behaviour and understanding of Bahrain's heritage and culture.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- improve the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance by:
 - developing and implementing a rigorous self-evaluation system in all the functions of the school
 - implementing and monitoring explicit action planning firmly focused on improvement in the school's provisions
 - maximising the effectiveness of teaching staff through targeted professional development.
- raise the progress of students within lessons by improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning by:
 - using a range of strategies and resources effective in impacting learning
 - using assessments and their results to ensure that all groups of students are making at least the expected progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills development.