



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

Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews Review Report

Confidential

**City International School
Al Hidd – Muharraq Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date of Review: 6-8 April 2013

SP035-C1-R035

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The 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		City International School											
School's type		Private											
Year of establishment		2008											
Age range of students		6-15 Years											
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High			
		1-6				7-9				-			
Number of students		Boys	237			Girls	143			Total	380		
Students' social background		Middle socio-economic background											
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Classes	5	4	3	3	2	1	1	1	1	-	-	-
Town /Village		Al Hidd											
Governorate		Muharraq											
Number of administrative staff		8											
Number of teaching staff		32											
Curriculum		British – Cambridge Ministry of Education											
Main language(s) of instruction		English											
Principal's tenure		3 years											
External assessment and examinations		International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) Grade 10 approval, but not implemented at 2012											
Accreditation (if applicable)		None											
Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification		Outstanding				Gifted & Talented			Physical Disabilities			Learning Difficulties	
		18				5			-			-	
Major recent changes in the school		-											

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	-	4
Students' personal development	4	4	-	4
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	4	4	-	4
The quality of the curriculum implementation	4	4	-	4
The quality of support and guidance for students	4	4	-	4
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	4	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's overall effectiveness is inadequate as all the key aspects are inadequate. Students' standards and progress are generally below age-related expectations. Teachers use a limited range of strategies and resources, and teaching lacks effective planning and assessment to meet students' different learning needs. The curriculum is neither regularly reviewed nor is it sufficiently enriched to ensure its relevance to students. A significant number of students show unacceptable behaviour towards their colleagues and teachers. Students' academic progress is not monitored in order to provide appropriate support. Parents receive regular information about their children's attainment; however they are not well informed about their children's progress. Self-evaluation, strategic planning and performance management of teachers are informal and not well laid out, which limits school improvement. Students and parents are generally satisfied with the school.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Recent school improvement is generally focused on preparing students for IGCSE as the school has approval for the Grade 10 programme. Although the school's premises are sufficient overall, some facilities are too scarce and others are ineffectively used. The school has significant deficiencies in major areas of its work. School self-evaluation is very informal and is not sufficiently rigorous. The professional development provision and monitoring of subsequent progress are limited and do not have sufficient impact on improving the quality of teaching throughout the school. Additionally, teacher appraisal is insufficiently linked to the few in-house run workshops, to bring about improvements in teaching across the school. Strategic planning is too limited and too general, and lacks mechanisms to monitor progress, review priorities and ensure continuous improvement in all aspects of the school's performance.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Most students throughout the school achieve high pass rates in the school's internal examinations with 40% as the minimum requirement to pass. In 2011 and 2012, results ranged from 81% to 100%. The competency rate is high in Grades 1 to 6, but decreases in Grade 7 to 9, for example only 4% of Grade 7 students score more than 80% in mathematics. These results are based on internally marked tests without any external benchmarking.

In the majority of lessons throughout the school and in most students' written work, students' levels of skills, understanding and knowledge are inadequate, which lead to most students performing below the age-appropriate standards in the core subjects. Nevertheless, most primary students demonstrate satisfactory listening, speaking and reading skills in Arabic and in English. They make adequate use of vocabulary and appropriately comprehend a variety of texts in both languages. However, English writing skills are not well developed throughout the school, while Arabic speaking and writing skills are not well developed in higher grades. In mathematics, students acquire basic skills and concepts across the school, but the majority of them rely on factual recall and have difficulties when applying their knowledge and understanding to solve problems. For example, the majority of students in Grade 8 know the indices rules, but due to their limited understanding they cannot use it in solving mathematical exercises. In science, students do not make sufficient progress in understanding scientific concepts and their inquiry and practical skills are under-developed.

Throughout the school, examination results show largely stable progress over the past three years in core subjects. In relation to their starting points, students' performance is inadequate as they are making limited progress in core subjects in most lessons and in their written work. Moreover, the low and high achieving students are also making limited progress because of ineffective teaching strategies that do not sufficiently cater to their different learning needs.

How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Most students attend school regularly with the attendance percentage reaching 87%. Cases of late comers to the morning assembly are not less than 10%. Despite the presence of a range of whole-school activities, the participation of students is limited. Additionally, students' participation in most lessons is ineffective with them showing limited desire to ask questions and discuss ideas. Students do not show self-confidence in lessons and around school. This is because most of the teaching is too heavily teacher-centred with the students as passive learners, which limits their ability to work independently, take on responsibilities and leadership roles. In general, students' conduct is positive outside the classrooms, however there are a significant number of incidents of unacceptable behaviour involving students and teachers which adversely affect their sense of safety inside and outside classes. A number of students even show reluctance to go to school because of such unacceptable actions. The majority of students show an adequate sense of belonging to Bahrain and an understanding of Bahrain's culture and heritage, as a result of the school's provision of the few traditional corners and some visits to historical sites such as Arad Fort, Bahrain Museum and other places which help instil this understanding. The civics lessons play a significant role in reinforcing the sense of belonging and citizenship.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Teachers have secure subject knowledge, which is reflected in their confident explanations and enthusiastic teaching in better lessons. However, in almost all lessons, teachers show a very limited grasp of teaching strategies and methodologies that effectively cater for the needs of students with different abilities and for evaluating students' understanding. Lessons are predominantly teacher-centred with too limited opportunities provided to help students to develop a better understanding of concepts.

The daily lesson plans are too brief and lack sufficient attention to differentiation, specific learning objectives and outcomes. In the most effective lessons, which are few in number, and particularly in the primary school English and Arabic lessons, teachers facilitate group work and encourage discussions to enhance students' participation. Conversely, in many lessons teaching does not focus enough on catering for the differing abilities of students and

too often teachers merely impart knowledge, leaving insufficient time for the students to develop understanding and skills.

Lessons are orderly, however, low expectations overall, along with whole-class teaching lead to ineffective use of time and low productivity. A limited range of teaching strategies used in almost all grades does not adequately promote students' independent learning nor effectively develop their higher order thinking skills. In the few better lessons, teachers adequately support and encourage the low achieving students to complete the required activities. On the other hand, teaching across the school provides limited challenge and insufficient support for high achieving students, which lessens their motivation towards learning. Consequently they do not make the progress expected of them.

The school provides a limited range of resources and in many cases these are not effectively used to engage students or develop their interests. Homework is regularly assigned to reinforce and practice work done in lessons. Yet it does not provide enough opportunities to develop their research and investigative skills. Students' work is inconsistently marked and lacks constructive feedback to help them improve. Assessment during lessons is mostly oral, dominated by closed questions. It engages few students, and its results are not used effectively to diagnose and meet the students' diverse learning needs and to inform the teaching accordingly.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Curriculum implementation provides an adequate mix of subjects which follow the English National Curriculum until Grade 9, and the Ministry of Education in Arabic subjects. Breadth is adequate for students particularly for older students who may choose between science and commerce subjects. However, within the scope of the curriculum, the school provides a limited range of interactive and practical activities during lessons and these do not sufficiently meet students' needs, including high and low achievers. Curriculum review is limited to proposals for changes in textbooks, for example in mathematics, English and in science, in different grades. Additionally, the school-wide approach and planning to ensure that the knowledge and skills of one subject can be used in other is insignificant. Moreover, curriculum delivery does not effectively equip students with requisite skills for their futures, such as independent learning and collaborative learning. Students' understanding of their responsibilities is promoted through limited activities which develop citizenship, including celebrations of National Day, participation in national activities such as 'Bahrain First' and talks during morning assembly. The school also offers a significant range of extra-curricular

experiences which adequately caters to students' interests. The curriculum is not effectively enriched by the use of school environment and resources available in the community. Limited resources and their less than effective use restrict students' learning opportunities.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The induction process is informal and does not effectively help students to settle easily and quickly into school. New students are introduced to their classes and cope by themselves. Although the school offers tuition-lessons after the school hours in core subjects, and assesses students' attainment through termly tests, it lacks a systematic procedure for monitoring students' academic progress and personal development. In addition, assessment data and information is rarely analysed.

Most students do not feel comfortable in approaching their teachers or supervisors as they feel that most of their problems and issues will not be resolved. Generally, students say they are discouraged to approach the concerned staff, but in better situations some students do receive immediate advice and matters are solved. Parents receive sufficient information about their children's attainment through SMS, phone calls, reports and parental meetings that are conducted in each term to discuss academic issues. The school also does not provide well-structured educational guidance for older students who rely on themselves for the choice between science and commerce streams. Advice that is offered is offered occasionally. The school has a clinic providing first aid and the school adequately ensures that students and staff are working in a safe environment. Although the school is satisfactorily maintained, rigorous and effective risk assessments and evacuation drills are not conducted.

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 has a vision which focuses on achievement, but is insufficiently shared with its stakeholders and, therefore, is less efficiently reflected in its daily practices than it should be, particularly in teaching and learning. Self-evaluation and planning is too limited to make the

necessary improvements in the school. The school lacks strategic planning with well-defined performance indicators and key priorities.

The leadership maintains positive relationship with teachers, however the support provided is not sufficiently effective to assure quality in teaching with a positive impact on raising students' standards.

Teachers' professional development programmes are rarely conducted and insufficiently linked to their needs, which does not improve the quality of teaching and learning. A significant mismatch between the staff's professional and academic qualifications and their deployment adversely affects the performance of students within lessons, for example, some science teachers who teach Arabic do not do it well.

While the budget is mainly linked to sustaining the school, it does not provide an adequate allocation to improving the learning experiences of students with different learning needs. Not enough resources are available, such as learning materials, so this limits students engagements in lessons. Accommodation and other facilities, such as the science laboratory and reading materials in the library are also scarce and do not sufficiently provide support to develop the essential skills .

The school is usually responsive to parents concerns, for example unifying examination timetables for both junior and senior students. Nevertheless, it does not successfully implement channels to seek their views. The Parents' Council and Students' Council have limited roles in the school's life. Moreover, links with the local community are not well-developed, which is limited to a few field trips, mainly for entertainment.

The roles and responsibilities of the governing body and the school's professional leadership are not well understood nor well separated. Although reports and meetings are often held with the leadership, the governing body does not hold the leadership accountable for matters such as planning, monitoring and standards. Consequently, it has insufficient impact on improving the school's overall performance.

The school's main strengths

- The range of extra-curricular activities
- English listening and speaking skills particularly in primary stage.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- develop the quality of leadership, management and governance by:
 - establishing procedures and mechanisms to critically evaluate the school's overall performance and set key priorities
 - providing professional training programmes which match the needs of individual teachers and middle management in order to improve teaching quality.
- improve students behaviour and raise their academic achievement by developing students' skills, and externally benchmarking and tracking their attainment and progress
- improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - selecting a wider range of strategies and more varied activities that are better designed to develop students' understanding and skills
 - implement effective assessment procedures to judge the understanding and skills of students and use assessment results to inform teaching to meet the different needs of students.
- develop the school environment substantially to facilitate learning.