



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

Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews Review Report

**The New Horizon School - Jannusan Branch
Jannusan – Northern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date of Review: 28-30 October 2013

SP040-C1-R040

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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 ten 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											
School's type		Private											
Year of establishment		2000											
Age range of students		6 -12 Years											
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High			
		1 - 6				-				-			
Number of students		Boys	419	Girls	379	Total			798				
Students' social background		Most come from average income families											
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Classes	4	9	7	6	4	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Town /Village		Jannusan											
Governorate		Northern											
Number of administrative staff		18											
Number of teaching staff		72											
Curriculum		The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Delhi, India. MoE for Arabic.											
Main language(s) of instruction		English, Hindi and Arabic											
Principal's tenure		13 years											
External assessment and examinations		None											
Accreditation (if applicable)		None											
Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification		Outstanding			Gifted & Talented			Physical Disabilities			Learning Difficulties		
		-			-			-			36		
Major recent changes in the school		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moved to Jannusan branch in 2008 due to space limitations 											

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	3	-	-	3
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's overall effectiveness is inadequate. However, the aspects of students' personal development, curriculum enrichment and support and guidance are satisfactory. Students' levels of knowledge are adequate, however their understanding and skills are less developed due to the overreliance on content and knowledge retention in most lessons. Teaching is didactic with very limited support or activities that challenge all students of different abilities to enable them to make the expected progress. Self-evaluation mechanisms lack rigour and are less effective in clearly identifying school-wide training needs and supporting teachers' professional development. The school develops its community spirit well and sensitively supports students when they have problems. Students express a high degree of feeling safe and secure at school. The majority of parents and students are satisfied with the school.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The school leadership has an aspirational vision shared with members of the board who are committed to providing the best for the students. In recent years the school has planned to expand and develop the infrastructure of the Jannusan campus that they moved to in 2008. However, strategic planning lacks rigorous procedures and processes to effectively monitor the success of planning and its progress. Self-evaluation mechanisms lack rigour and are less effective, with little involvement by stakeholders. Evaluation of teachers' performance against organisational expectations does not clearly identify school-wide training needs and insufficiently supports teachers' individual professional development. The follow-up of lesson observations has limited impact on their productivity and pace. The school leadership faces a constant challenge due to the annual turnover of teachers.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

In core subjects, standards of the majority of students are adequate. Most students throughout the school achieved high pass rates ranging from 92% to 100% in internal examinations in 2012 and 2013. Competency rates in core subjects in grades 1 to 5 vary between 46% and 77%. However, this declines in Grade 6 in Arabic and English, for example only 23% of students scored more than 80% in English.

In lessons throughout the school and in students' written work levels of knowledge are adequate. However, students' understanding and skills are less developed due to the overreliance on content and knowledge retention in most lessons. In Hindi, most students are able to reach appropriate age and grade expectations. They make adequate use of vocabulary, appropriately comprehend texts and can read fluently. In Arabic and English, students throughout the school demonstrate satisfactory listening and speaking skills. However, opportunities for creative and independent writing are very limited in all languages, resulting in insufficient development of writing skills throughout the school.

In science, students acquire basic understanding of scientific concepts but lack inquiry and practical skills. For instance, in Grade 2 students know the concepts of the solar system and the names of planets. In Grade 6 students can identify physical and chemical changes but are not able to explain the reasons for them. In mathematics, students acquire basic concepts and skills but the majority rely on memory recall and have difficulties in applying their knowledge and understanding to solve problems. For example, students in Grade 6 know the concepts of Algebraic expressions but few could correctly write word statements on Algebraic expressions.

School examination results throughout the school show largely stable pass rates over the past 2 years in core subjects. However, in relation to their starting points, students are making inadequate progress during most lessons and in their written work due to the ineffective of teaching and the limited opportunities to develop students' skills. Low and high achieving students make insufficient progress, as most lessons lack the challenge and support to adequately cater for different learning needs.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Most students attend school regularly and respond well to the school's management of absences. Yet cases of late comers to morning assembly still reach 7%. Students understand the diversity in the school community and demonstrate positive relationships with each other. Most students behave well and take good care of the school environment. They express a high degree of feeling safe and secure at school.

The majority of students participate enthusiastically in school activities and events such as 'Personally Useful Productive Activity' (PUPA) and carnival. They compete in various competitions including slogan writing, miming and recycled art. A number of students, with staff and parents, participated in the 'Piece for peace', the world's largest 3D anamorphic painting which set the Guinness world record. Whenever given opportunity, particularly in the better lessons, students participate effectively and work collaboratively.

Opportunities to take responsibility are provided through students' council, where students represent the views of their peers. However, in a significant number of lessons across the school, students are less motivated to learn and lack the confidence to work independently and take responsibility. Students across the school have a good appreciation of ethical values, with in-depth understanding of Bahrain's culture and heritage. They participate joyfully in many national events and festivals such as National day and 'Gurgaon'.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

In many lessons teachers' insecure knowledge is apparent in confused instructions and inability to extend students' knowledge with adequate explanations and examples. In most lessons there is an overreliance on content and knowledge retention rather than the development of students' understanding and differing skills. This lack of in-depth exploration of subjects clearly shows in students' undeveloped higher order thinking skills, since what is presented to them in most lessons does not require them to be critical and analytical thinkers. On the other hand, in the best lessons teachers demonstrate the ability to give clear explanations of their subjects and respond to students' questions.

In the better lessons teachers motivate and encourage students to be actively involved, using appropriate questioning techniques and resources such as pictures and real objects. However, in most lessons the teaching is didactic, with very limited support or use of activities that challenge students of different abilities to enable them to make the expected progress. This is mainly due to the monotype teaching strategies used in most lessons, where teachers depend solely on long explanations and short sessions of direct questions and answers aimed at certain groups of students. Although class management is appropriate in most lessons, the pace of the majority of lessons is slow with activities taking too long or being mismatched to students' abilities. These lessons finish quickly with the lesson time being ineffectively used.

Wall charts are used effectively to regularly assign homework in the core subjects. This homework appropriately provides practice and reinforcement of the work done in class. Nevertheless, it is usually of the same level for all students and does not sufficiently extend their learning or target the areas that need improvement. The school uses both formative and summative assessment to measure students' attainment, but does not effectively use the results to plan and modify teaching in order to meet students' different learning needs in lessons and activities.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school curriculum is broad and balanced with activities and events that widen the students' learning experiences beyond core subjects and build wider interests. Activities within the school timetable such as performing arts, mime and mimicry and public speaking help build confidence and communication skills. Thematic celebrations and events organised by the school promote cultural pluralism, cooperation and tolerance in the students' community, helping to better understand the behaviour of fellow students. Extra-curricular activities are optional, however, limiting access by students.

The curriculum is revised regularly but often comprises of text book reviews, not always being based on rigorous analysis of students' needs and interests. Modifications to the curriculum are made for new students or slow performers during remedial lessons, to meet their specific needs. However, curriculum planning does not sufficiently cater the needs of different ability groups in classrooms. In a few lessons links are made between the subject and themes, but very few have consciously planned cross-curricular links that enable students to transfer knowledge across subjects and experience the curriculum as a cohesive and meaningful whole. The school environment and the local community are underutilised

in enriching students' learning experiences. Opportunities to build and exercise leadership skills within the school are minimal.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school inducts new students by arranging meetings, alongside their parents, to introduce them to school policies and rules. This helps students settle easily within the school. The school monitors students' personal and learning needs adequately, as it provides remedial sessions to low-achieving students and keeps track of their term results. Yet it still lacks sufficient rigour in identifying needs and better ways of meeting these in planning for teaching. The school provides a well implemented programme and effective support to students with special educational needs, their performance is monitored, they make good progress and enjoy doing activities.

Students' counsellors sensitively support students when they face issues, giving attention to monitoring discipline and providing students with advice and guidance where needed. Most students do approach their class teachers as well and their concerns are attended to. Parents are well informed about their children's performance through various means such as feedback written in students' diaries, sms contact, and monthly parents-teachers meetings. The management adequately assesses health and safety issues in school, monitoring the cleanliness of the facilities, providing a nurse and putting teachers in charge of school buses. However, evacuation drills are not conducted yet.

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 leadership has an aspirational and inspirational vision, focussed on provision of holistic education and shared with all stakeholders. The roles and responsibilities of the leadership and academic staff are well understood, with clear job descriptions. While the leadership sufficiently inspires and motivates the staff, the impact is not significant as the turnover rate is adversely affecting the noble mission.

Self-evaluation mechanisms lack rigour and the involvement of all stakeholders is limited, reducing their effectiveness. Furthermore, these processes are not systematic and are not embedded in the school culture. Although examinations results are recorded over time, their analysis is not sufficiently comprehensive and is not built in to effective planning for improvement. Strategic goals are realistic and workable. However, the strategic planning is not sufficiently explicit, lacking rigorous procedures and processes to effectively monitor the success of planning and its progress. Consequently, planning is not effectively translated into better practices and its impact is limited.

Although there is a school-wide effort to provide in-service training programmes to staff, they are not well directed to each faculty's needs. Senior and middle leaders evaluate teachers' performance against organisational expectations. However, this does not clearly identify school-wide training needs and insufficiently supports teachers' individual professional development. The follow-up of lesson observations is also ineffective, with limited impact on the productivity of lessons.

Budgeting is not firmly linked with resource allocation. While resources are scarce and are adversely affecting the quality of provision, they are not always used effectively inside classrooms to enhance students' knowledge, understanding and skills. Parents' and students' views are sought through the Parent Teacher Association, the student body and regular parent-teacher meetings. The school is sufficiently responsive to parents' suggestions such as improving the system for buses. However, it still lacks a mechanism to ensure input by all stakeholders.

The school has developed adequate links with the local community, predominantly through involvement in celebrations, carnivals, talks by guests and field trips arranged mainly for entertainment. The board of management understands its separate governance role and responsibilities alongside those of the school's professional leadership. However, as yet, planning and support by the board is not sufficiently explicit to impact on the quality of provision and outcomes.

The school's main strengths

- Most students are well behaved and demonstrate positive relationships with each other and their teachers, respecting the diversity in the school community
- Students have in-depth understanding of Bahrain's culture and heritage
- Students with special educational needs are sensitively supported and make good progress.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- raise students' academic achievement, with more focus on acquisition of skills and understanding as well as knowledge
- establish rigorous and systematic self-evaluation processes in order to develop the strategic plan
- provide more effective professional development training programmes, with better focus on enhancing the quality of teaching and learning and monitoring its impact on students' achievement
- implement a broader range of effective teaching and learning strategies to:
 - challenge all groups of students so that they progress up to their abilities
 - develop students' higher order thinking skills
 - effectively use assessment results in planning for lessons and meeting all students' learning needs.