



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

Directorate of Vocational Reviews Review Report

**Al Madrasa for Art
Hamala
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date Reviewed: 20-22 November 2017

VO084-C3-R076

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Introduction

The Directorate of Vocational Reviews (DVR), which is a part of the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA), conducted this review over three days by a team of four reviewers. For this review, reviewers observed training sessions and other related activities, analysed data about the courses and qualifications learners achieve, examined learners' written and other work, examined documents and the materials provided by the provider and met with learners, employers, trainers, management and support staff.

In the previous review, Al Madrasa for Art's overall effectiveness was judged as satisfactory, as were all aspects of its provision except the effectiveness of teaching in promoting learners which was judged as good.

This report summarises reviewers' findings and their recommendations about what the provider should do to improve.

Grading scale

Outstanding	1	Good	2	Satisfactory	3	Inadequate	4
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Table of review judgements awarded

Main Question	Judgement
Learners' achievement	Satisfactory (3)
Quality of teaching / training and assessment	Good (2)
Quality of programmes	Good (2)
Quality of support and guidance	Satisfactory (3)
Leadership, management and governance	Satisfactory (3)
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory (3)
Overall effectiveness	Satisfactory (3)

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in raising learners' achievement and meeting the range of learners' and stakeholders' needs?

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

The overall effectiveness of Al Madrasa for Art (Al Madrasa) is satisfactory, as are all aspects of its provision including the capacity to improve, except the quality of teaching and assessment and the quality of programmes both of which are judged as good. Al Madrasa offers niche courses based on the management's experience, mainly in art and design. These are three long accredited courses leading to the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level and Advanced (A) level from Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) of the UK. The Centre also offers very short non-accredited art workshops. The vast majority of learners achieve the qualification they aim for successfully and in a timely manner. They gain valuable art and design skills and theoretical knowledge that is relevant to their professions. However, a minority face difficulties in mastering the required skills and the added value for a few of them is minimal. Teachers are qualified and knowledgeable, enhancing their delivery with a range of challenging and critical examples. They use an effective learner-centered approach to engage and motivate learners by utilising the available learning resources effectively. However, records kept by teachers on learners' performances are not detailed enough.

Sufficient support is provided to learners throughout the courses. The Centre has highly flexible arrangements, with course timings and language of delivery that suit the needs of learners. Teachers are approachable, providing learners with detailed information about the courses, advice and counselling on learning development skills, and personal projects. However, these support initiatives do not have an explicit support and guidance policy, including for learners with special need. The Centre has suitable strategic direction and daily plans are in place for fostering the art and design education sector in the Kingdom of Bahrain, but strategic planning is not formalised. Arrangements to quality assure the overall performance of the provision are completed by the two owners, who are also the only dedicated teachers, though this is completed on an *ad hoc* basis. Learners' views are regularly collected at the end of each course. Effective links are maintained with the external awarding bodies and a local artist society. Management's monitoring of learners' achievement and progress and trends are sufficient, with yearly data being aggregated and analysed. However, action on these analyses is not sufficiently carried out. There are monthly management meetings where daily operation of the provision and learners' achievement are discussed.

Capacity to improve

How strong is the provider's capacity to improve the quality of learning?

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

Al Madrasa's capacity to improve is satisfactory. The Centre offers international accredited programme in art and design which enable learners to pursue further study and career progression. Since the last review learners' achievement levels are maintained in line with the international achievement rate, and enrolment has remained steady by serving specific sections of the market. The Centre holds an annual public art exhibition that enables learners to exhibit their works and take pride in what they do. The Centre has strategic direction and suitable daily plans, though these plans are not sufficiently detailed to guide improvement decisions.

The Centre maintains effective relationships with the local community and with external artists in the region. The views of learners and their satisfaction with the courses are regularly gathered. Al Madrasa has a fit-for-purpose organisation structure that accommodates the needs of day-to-day activities with the appropriate physical and human resources. The Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) provided for the review is sufficiently detailed and provides useful information about the provision, though the Centre's grades overestimate their provision.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

Learners' achievement at Al Madrasa is satisfactory overall. The majority of learners develop useful knowledge and skills in art and design that are relevant to their course levels. The learners interviewed expressed their high satisfaction with the learning experience and the new technique they develop, acknowledging that attending courses with the Centre is effective in enhancing their skills and knowledge, which enables them to confidently apply what they learn on the artwork they produce. The sessions observed and scrutiny of learners' work standards reveals that the majority of learners achieve the course objectives adequately. The Learners' Performance Data (LPD) sheet provided for the review indicates that the overall retention rate for the long course is 83%, and the retention rate for the workshops is 100%, as expected in such very short courses. Almost all learners who enroll in the CIE courses (IGCSE, AS level and A level) sit for the examination; the vast majority of them achieve the qualifications they aim for successfully and in a timely manner. Learners progress sufficiently

throughout the courses from their starting points. Learners who proceed to AS level and A level courses, of which there are a few, progress adequately throughout the programme. A minority of learners do face difficulties in mastering the skills and the added value for a few of them is minimal.

Overall, the achievement rates in the IGCSE course for year 2015 is higher than the international rate. However, in years 2016 and 2017 the achievement rates dropped in comparison with the international rates. Approximately half of the IGCSE learners achieved C or better for the three years. On the other hand achievement rates for the AS level courses was above the international achievement rates as they achieved E and above in year 2016, though the learners were below the international achievement rate in 2017. However, these AS level learners represent a very small proportion of the total enrolment. Learners show high level of enthusiasm and enjoyment during the lessons observed and are able to work independently and confidently most of the time in their artwork and personal projects. Learners have the ability to be critical when evaluating their own or others' artwork. The majority of learners attend lessons regularly and the Centre has general rules and regulations related to learner's attendance. However, in a few cases punctuality is an issue.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching/training and assessment in promoting learning?

Grade: Good (2)

The effectiveness of teaching and assessment is good overall. Teachers at Al Madrasa are knowledgeable and well-qualified, having the relevant theoretical and practical command of the areas they teach. Lessons are planned and managed well to address the lesson objectives, which are often shared with learners. Teaching methods are mostly learner-centered, with teachers occasionally challenging learners' abilities through further questioning to stimulate self-learning and critical thinking. Teachers provide learners with opportunities to develop their own ideas independently and to improve their performance after they diagnose their mistakes. Teachers in most lessons succeeded in motivating and engaging learners through direct critical thinking questions and challenging discussions. Teaching methods and the language used are adjusted to closely match learners' individual needs and abilities.

Teachers use the available learning resources effectively to promote learning, such as using data show projectors, power point presentations, and a range of art and design tools. Recently, a useful lesson plan has been developed by the teachers which includes sufficient details such as the specific learning objectives, the activities to be undertaken and the resources to be used. However, these plans are not clearly informed by learners' continuous assessment. With the

externally accredited IGCSE, AS and A levels courses learners' work is externally assessed by the CIE. Constructive assessment criteria is based on a clear rubric and marking provided by the awarding body, which is clearly shared with learners through the course syllabus at the start of each course. During classroom visits teachers monitor the art work produced by the learners and continuous guiding comments are provided. Teachers usually encourage learners to evaluate their own work and identify what they need to do to improve further. Appropriate records on external examination results and attendance are maintained. However, the records kept by teachers are not detailed enough to reflect on learners' performance.

How well do programmes meet the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders?

Grade: Good (2)

The effectiveness of programmes in meeting the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders is good overall. Al Madrasa offers externally accredited and non-accredited courses in art and design. The externally accredited courses are of long duration while the non-accredited courses are art workshops of very short duration. The Centre offers three long accredited courses leading to the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level and Advanced (A) level from Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) of the UK. In addition, free study courses are provided to learners who are interested in developing their skills without sitting the final examination by CIE, giving them opportunities to join lessons of international accredited courses. These niche courses are offered based on the management's experience, serving a particular community by providing them international accredited courses in art and design area that enable learners to fulfil the prerequisite requirement of the qualification they aim for prior to university study. The structure of the CIE externally accredited courses is clearly defined to deliver courses on a one-to-one basis that matches learners' individual needs. The syllabuses of the CIE courses are informative and detailed, clearly stating the structure of summative assessment, evaluation criteria, teaching techniques, and materials required. These courses are supported with a range of art books and fit for purpose PowerPoint presentations. However, the art workshops are not as formally structured as the other courses.

The externally accredited courses are designed and approved by the external awarding body. The Centre regularly reviews and updates courses on offer, based on the CIE requirements. However, the process for the design, review and update of the workshop contents are left to the teachers' expertise and are not documented. The courses are well resourced to meet learners' and stakeholders' needs, and the art studio is equipped with a range of resources, such as portable easels, chairs, sink, lighting kits, mirrors and printing press. The art and design courses are enhanced with a relevant range of extracurricular activities which impact

positively on learners' achievement of art skills and their self-confidence, including the in-house annual exhibition, a range of books and references, and participation in the local art community activities. The provider follows the general requirements provided by the awarding body for access and entry level to CIE course levels, which are appropriately implemented.

How well are learners supported and guided?

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

The effectiveness of support and guidance at Al Madrasa is satisfactory overall. Prior to the start of the course, learners are inducted into their courses by providing them with a detailed CIE course syllabus that comprises useful information about the course structure and assessment methods. Learners and stakeholders have access to general information about the courses on offer through different means such as brochures, the Centre's website and social media channels. Teachers at Al Madrasa are approachable and tightly focused on their learners, providing learners with effective verbal feedback that enables them to achieve their own objectives. Teachers at the Centre meet with learners regularly and discuss their work, providing comments to learners that enable them to progress well throughout the course. Al Madrasa helps learners in the registration process for the final examination in the externally accredited courses, as well as providing them with samples of previous examination papers to familiarise them with the style of questions. Learners who register for the free study courses are provided with the necessary professional assistance in their personal projects, such as the learners' private art exhibition. Nevertheless, although these support initiatives are provided, the Centre does not have an explicit support and guidance policy including that for learners with special needs.

The Centre has highly flexible arrangements, with course timings and language of delivery always made to suit the needs of learners. Verbal communication with learners is maintained for the purpose of informing them about their performance. However, learners' performance records are not maintained and stakeholders are not informed about learner's performance. Al Madrasa has a fit-for-purpose learning environment that includes a master art studio resourced with the needed art equipment and materials. There is also a shop that provides art materials for learners, such as paper and colors. The Centre promotes an art training course for learners with visual impairment, but the course is not conducted due to the lack of learner registration.

Leadership, management and governance

How effective are leadership, management and governance in raising achievement and improving the quality of the provision?

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

The effectiveness of leadership, management and governance is satisfactory overall. The Centre has suitable strategic direction and daily plans for fostering art and design education in the Kingdom of Bahrain, but strategic planning is not formalised. The organisation structure is fit-for-purpose for the current enrolment numbers and the courses offered, with sufficient human and physical resources to meet day-to-day operations and the nature of delivering courses. Usually, lessons are collaboratively delivered by the only two teachers available in the Centre and they reflect on each other at the end of the lessons, as well as discussing learners' performance and progress closely. Some development opportunities are attended by teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Al Madrasa employs a part-time finance and information technology manager and a full-time security guard. A healthy and fit-for-purpose learning environment is maintained, with essential health and safety procedures in place and practices being monitored. Premises are safe and free from hazard, with learners being made aware of health and safety instructions at the start of each course.

Arrangements to monitor the daily performance and the overall quality are closely covered by the two owners, though they are completed on an *ad hoc* basis. Learners' views and levels of satisfaction are generally collected at the end of each course. Effective links are maintained with the external awarding bodies and local art society. The SEF provided for the review is detailed and provides useful information about the Centre's operation, though some grades overestimate the provision. The management arrangements to monitor learners' achievement, progress and trends is sufficient, with data being aggregated and analysed. However, actions on these analyses to inform improvement decision on learners' achievement are not suitably carried out. Monthly meetings are held to discuss the day-to-day operation of the provision and learners' achievements. Learners' prior attainment is informally completed by observing learners' work throughout the course, and ongoing feedback is given that enables them to improve further.

The provider's key strengths

- The development of art and design skills and knowledge by learners.
- The qualified teachers who have theoretical and practical command of art and design and provide learners with a good role model.
- The international accredited programmes in art and design which enable learners to further their higher education and career progression.

Recommendations

In order to improve, Al Madrasa for Art should:

- ensure that learners develop skills, knowledge, competences and progress to the level set for their course, particularly in the A and AS courses
- ensure that learners are provided with suitable support and guidance that helps them reach their potential, and receive regular constructive updates on their progress
- improve leadership and management by:
 - developing an effective quality assurance system that includes comprehensive policies and procedures
 - ensuring that records of learners' performance and achievement data are kept, aggregated and analysed, and that the outcomes are used for improvements.

Appendix

Description of the provision

Al Madrasa for Art (Al Madrasa) was established in 2005. The Centre is licensed by the Ministry of Education (MoE) to offer three long accredited courses leading to the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level and Advanced (A) level in arts and design from Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) of the UK. The Centre also offers very short non-accredited art workshops.

The Centre is managed by two qualified staff, who are also the only teachers at the Centre. They employ a part-time finance and information technology manager as well as one full-time security guard. Since the last BQA review, the Centre has enrolled 102 learners, broken down as 21 in 2014, 25 in 2015, 36 in 2016 and 20 in 2017 to the date of this review. All of these learners are self-sponsored. Al Madrasa operates from single premises located in Hamala village.