



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

## **Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews**

### **Review Report**

**Al Noor International School  
Sitra – Central Governorate  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date of Review: 23-26 February 2014**

SP047-C1-R047

## Table of Contents

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<b>Directorate of Private Schools &amp; Kindergartens Reviews .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>2</b>
Characteristics of the school .....	2
<b>Table of review judgements awarded.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Review judgements .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Overall effectiveness.....	5
Students' achievement.....	6
The quality of provision.....	7
Leadership, management and governance .....	9
<b>The school's main strengths.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Recommendations.....</b>	<b>12</b>

## Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Reviews

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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 four days by a team of seventeen 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

<b>School's name</b>		Al Noor International School															
<b>School's type</b>		Private															
<b>Year of establishment</b>		1993															
<b>Age range of students</b>		6-18 Years															
<b>Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)</b>	<b>Section (% of students population)</b>	<b>Primary</b>				<b>Middle</b>				<b>High</b>							
	<b>British (73%)</b>	Key stage 1 (KS 1) (Grades 1 & 2) Key stage 2 (KS 2) (Grades 3 to 6)				Key stage (KS 3) (Grades 7 & 8)				Key stage 4 (KS 4) (Grades 9 & 10) IGCSE AS and A Level (Grades 11& 12)							
	<b>Bahraini (17%)</b>	1-6				7-9				10-12							
	<b>Indian (CBSE) (10%)</b>	1-8				-				9-12							
<b>Number of students</b>		<b>Boys</b>			2619			<b>Girls</b>			1889			<b>Total</b>		4508	
<b>Students' social background</b>		Majority of students come from middle income families															
<b>Classes per grade</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>				
	<b>Classes</b>	29	25	24	21	19	18	16	14	12	12	9	9				
<b>Town /Village</b>		Sitra															
<b>Governorate</b>		Central Governorate															
<b>Number of administrative staff</b>		77															
<b>Number of teaching staff</b>		471															
<b>Curriculum</b>		British, Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Bahraini – Ministry of Education															
<b>Main language(s) of instruction</b>		English															
<b>Principal's tenure</b>		2 years															

<b>External assessment and examinations</b>	International General Certificate for Secondary Education (IGCSE), General Certificate of Education (GCE), AS-A-Level, CBSE, City & Guilds, Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) - Information Communication Technology (ICT)			
<b>Accreditation (if applicable)</b>	Cambridge International Examinations - Fellowship Centre CBSE - MOE Examinations - City & Guilds			
<b>Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>Gifted &amp; Talented</b>	<b>Physical Disabilities</b>	<b>Learning Difficulties</b>
	919	200	2	3
<b>Major recent changes in the school</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of a Quality Assurance Department in 2012.</li> </ul>			

## Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	2: Good			
The school's capacity to improve	2: Good			
	Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	2	3	2	2
Students' personal development	2	2	2	2
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	2	3	2	2
The quality of the curriculum implementation	2	2	3	2
The quality of support and guidance for students	2	2	2	2
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	2	2	2	2

### Key:

- 1: Outstanding
- 2: Good
- 3: Satisfactory
- 4: Inadequate

## Review judgements

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### Overall effectiveness

- How effective is the school in meeting the needs of students and their parents?**

#### Grade: 2 Good

The school provides good quality education across all aspects. Academic achievement is good with high pass rates in external examinations. For example, in most IGCSE and GCE subjects the school achieves consistently above worldwide averages. Students behave well and show respect to the multicultural community. Teaching and learning are good in both the British and CBSE sections. However, in the Bahraini section which represents about 17% of students, it is only satisfactory. Throughout the school, students' skills are developed effectively, preparing them well for their on-going education and subsequent employment. Senior leaders motivate and support the staff well and successfully develop a close-knit family atmosphere. Self-evaluation is strongly embedded, providing good quality feedback and support that is based on individual needs.

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

#### Grade: 2 Good

Senior leaders and staff embrace the school's vision and mission of equipping students with the knowledge and skills required for further and higher education. They are well aware of the improvements required and eager to bring changes to the school through teamwork. Decisions are taken through the Academic Committee then shared with the teachers. Detailed strategic planning with ongoing monitoring provides clearly prioritised goals and actions, along with rigorous self-evaluation based on the schools' self-analysis results. These processes have driven many improvements in the school, particularly in the quality of teaching and learning. All staff share a high commitment to further improve student performance in exceeding the IGCSE and GCE examinations world averages.

## Students' achievement

### □ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

#### Grade: 2 Good

Students' attainment against external benchmarks is significantly high, particularly in CIE and CBSE examinations. In the British section, in most IGCSE and GCE subjects the averages are above the worldwide average. In the CBSE section, a significant cohort of students have obtained CGPA 8 out of 10 and above. Similarly, high school students in the Bahraini section perform well in the City and Guild examinations. Their performance in the MoE (Bahrain) examinations is within satisfactory range in all subjects apart from English, where performance is above average.

Over time, most students in all three sections have attained high pass rates in all subjects in internal examinations. Across the school, a significant cohort of students score above the expected pass rates and a minority achieve high standards. However, there is a dip in the performance of middle school students.

Students in KS1 and KS2 of the British section achieve well and demonstrate standards that are above age-related expectations, particularly in science, mathematics and English. They consistently show a clear understanding of key scientific and arithmetical concepts, and their English reading, speaking and listening skills are strong. However, in Arabic a minority of students' achieve no better than satisfactory. In KS3 and KS4, students attain above average standards across the core subjects.

In the Bahraini section, standards across all grades are in line with age and curriculum related expectations. They have a good command of English and can express themselves fluently.

In the CBSE sections, standards attained by the majority of students are above curriculum and age expectations. Although, Grade 8 and 9 students attain age-appropriate standards, in the lower primary standards of a significant cohort of students are weak in Arabic.

The progress made by students in lessons and in their academic work is good, particularly in the British and CBSE sections. However, a significant proportion of Bahraini section students make only satisfactory progress in lessons, particularly in Arabic and science.

In the British section, most students have well-developed language skills in Arabic and in English. Their problem-solving, practical and investigative skills are strong and secure. In

general the Bahraini and CBSE sections, students' Arabic and English skills are in line with age related expectations; whilst students Arabic skills in CBSE lower grades are weak.

### **□ How good is the students' personal development?**

#### **Grade: 2 Good**

Most students behave well, especially in the CBSE section and the primary and middle schools of the Bahraini and British sections. They are respectful and courteous, behaving responsibly in lessons and around the school. Most students enjoy working in groups as well as independently, showing a keen sense of responsibility. This is evident across the well-organized assemblies, project work, displays around the school and in the litter-free grounds.

Students are punctual for school and lessons. They participate enthusiastically in the many opportunities provided, from in-house activities to representing the school in local, national and international sporting events. They readily accept leadership roles such as membership of the student council or as class monitors. Monitors assist the teaching and administrative staff in supervision of the student community, before and after school, on the bus and during breaks. They show good leadership abilities and create a nurturing environment, showing concern for the welfare of those in their charge.

A particular feature of the school is the multicultural nature of the student community. Students of different faiths and cultural backgrounds not only coexist but enjoy healthy relationships and feel safe. Their respect for Bahraini culture and regard for Islamic values is clearly visible in their enthusiastic celebrations of national festivals and events and observance of local traditions.

### **The quality of provision**

#### **□ How effective are teaching and learning?**

#### **Grade: 2 Good**

Almost all staff are well-qualified, reflected in their strong subject knowledge. This is particularly the case in the British senior sections, where teachers invariably question students well and demand extended answers. They also provide clear explanations that aid learning. This is particularly notable in 'A' level science lessons.

Teaching and learning are strongest in the British section, in which almost two thirds of lessons are of good or better quality. Lessons attended in the CBSE section were good in most cases. Teaching is good in mathematics, science and English across all three sections of the school. Most lessons are characterised by good management of students' behaviour, resulting in most classrooms having a calm and purposeful atmosphere in which students enjoy their learning. However, in the Bahraini section teaching is satisfactory overall, in all subjects other than English lessons being typified by staff providing too little challenge, particularly for higher ability students. Teaching and learning styles are dominated by instructional teaching with students being passive listeners for much of the time. Also, particularly in the Bahraini intermediate section, time management is not very effective and minority of teachers do not manage the students sufficiently well, resulting in progress in learning being satisfactory.

In the most successful lessons, students are highly productive and show clear enjoyment. Students are successfully encouraged to display their understanding either through short presentations from their desks or by demonstrations on the white boards. In these lessons, assessments are used well to amend future learning. In the lower grades, particularly in the British section, oral assessments are used well to help support students' learning.

Across the whole school, teachers' planning is good, being comprehensive and clear and a good aid to learning. The school is rightly proud of its programme of remedial teaching and learning. This provides students who struggle with particular subjects or topics with the opportunity for additional learning before school each day, on Saturdays or during school holidays. These opportunities are not limited to those whose grade expectations are low. For example, 'A' level Biology students are effusive about the holiday support they have been given to boost their 'A' level outcomes from predicted B to A and A to A\*.

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

#### **Grade: 2 Good**

Clear curriculum guidelines help to ensure continuity and progression as students move through the school. Systematic reviews provide insights into how effectively curriculum plans are implemented. Students' understanding of their rights and responsibilities is promoted very successfully. They have many opportunities to contribute to school life by serving on the students' council, becoming house captains and taking leading roles in assemblies. Students' participation in school and kingdom-wide events such as the annual school athletics meeting and national art and recitation competitions contributes significantly to their confidence and self-esteem. Students in the primary and middle phases have ample opportunities to enrich their learning. In the primary phase, they enjoy a wide

range of activities, provided each week during the school day. In the middle phase, students have numerous opportunities to participate in the creative arts and sport, often attending early in the morning. Music provision is strong, evident from the number of students learning instruments and the opportunities for them to perform in school and for the wider community. Similarly, students benefit from widespread sports opportunities, however students in the secondary phase have limited alternatives to sport activities. Eye-catching displays celebrate students' achievements, provide prompts for learning and promote the school's core values. Attractive displays in the middle school encourage students to read.

### **□ How well are students guided and supported?**

#### **Grade: 2 Good**

Students are smoothly inducted into the school. However, the schools' three sections have different procedures, resulting in some inconsistencies.

Tracking of students' academic progress and personal development ensures that most learners' needs are effectively met. The school keeps cumulative records of students' progress and this information is systematically updated and monitored. Good quality remedial and enrichment programmes are regularly provided across all grades, contributing to the good levels of support. The few students with special educational needs are identified and effectively supported as resources allow.

Most students with classwork or personal issues receive timely and good quality help from teachers, counsellors and section heads. Parents are well-informed about their children's progress through student diaries, regular performance reports, parent- teacher meetings, letters and phone calls. The school provides senior students with well-structured access to advice and guidance for the next stage in education and in preparation for employment. This includes arranging jobs fairs' visits, career counselling sessions, availability of universities' kits and regular invitations to university speakers to the school.

The school effectively manages behaviour with the rigorous rules and routines defining acceptable behaviour. Three health clinics with qualified nurses and the ability to deal with minor injuries are available. Regular risk assessments and emergency evacuations are conducted to identify potential hazards and control risks.

### **Leadership, management and governance**

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

## **Grade: 2 Good**

The school's vision focuses on the development of students' skills and preparing them for the next stage of education. Senior leaders motivate and support the staff well, successfully developing a family atmosphere. New teachers are mentored by their peers, for example by exchanging class visits. The school rewards excellent performance through the annual appraisals, with salary increments and awards.

Self-evaluation is strongly embedded. It is rigorous, continuous and focuses on improvement. Leaders at all levels monitor teaching well, providing good quality feedback and support based on individual needs. Schools quality assurance procedures has a noticeable impact on the GCSE section, however more consolidated efforts are required for the CBSE section and more so in the Bahraini section.

The school has a comprehensive five year strategic and action plan that focuses effectively both on meeting needs and securing the school's principles and vision. There is strong emphasis on students' attainment and skill building, staff recruitment and development. Resource development, such as the plan to re-build the primary stage classrooms and the introduction of interactive whiteboards reflects the expanding needs of the school well.

The school has a wide range of internal and external professional development programmes, tailored well to meet individual needs, including a range of well-conceived workshops. It provides the opportunity to study for the Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) Diploma, over 300 members of staff having achieved this award. The school's rapid increase in size has been led and managed well, with core values and cohesive community having been maintained. The school is well equipped and resources and equipment, such as the science and computer labs, libraries, playgrounds and teaching resources, are utilised by both staff and students. However, sharing best practice across the school is less well developed.

The school responds to the views of students and parents. Examples include the provision of remedial classes in the early morning, educational excursions outside Bahrain and taking extra safety measures in the playgrounds. Strong links to local and international communities are established, with donations to charities, institutes and clubs as well as to disaster areas in Pakistan. The leadership and administrative structure is highly effective and separate roles and responsibilities are understood and respected. Senior staff are monitored, supported and held accountable by the board of directors through regular meetings and consultations.

## **The school's main strengths**

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- Standards of students in the external examinations
- students behave in a mature and responsible way in lessons and around the school
- rigorous self-evaluation and comprehensive strategic planning.

## Recommendations

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### **In order to improve, the school should:**

- raise students' achievements through an effective range of teaching strategies in all middle schools, especially in the Bahraini section by focussing further on;
  - inquiry and analytical skills
  - problem solving skills in mathematics.
- further focus on the progress of students in Arabic across the school
- provide students in high schools with a wider range of extra-curricular activities.