



Al Hekma International School



10 – 12 March 2025



Location
Sanad



School Type
Private



No. of Students
842



Grade Levels
1-12

Overall effectiveness

Good with Outstanding Features

Students' Academic
Achievement

Students' Personal
Development and
Wellbeing

Teaching, Learning
and Assessment

Leadership,
Management and
Governance

Review Summary

The school, guided by ambitious leadership and strong stakeholder engagement, provides a dynamic learning environment that fosters student development and innovation. A key strength is its commitment to enhancing Arabic language proficiency through structured programmes and targeted initiatives. Additionally, students demonstrate strong self-confidence and actively participate in diverse extracurricular activities, contributing to their holistic growth. To further elevate its educational standards, the school has to implement more effective teaching strategies in Middle and High Schools to ensure consistent academic progress. Moreover, the school can take a leading role in sharing its best practices in Arabic language education with other private schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain, further contributing to the advancement of the Official language across the sector.

Key Positive Features

- **Ambitious Leadership and Stakeholder Engagement:** The leadership team and Board of Directors demonstrate a clear vision, active involvement, and a commitment to innovation, fostering both student development and strong stakeholder engagement.
- **Commitment to Arabic Language Proficiency:** The school is dedicated to enhancing students' Arabic language skills through structured programmes and targeted initiatives.
- **Holistic Student Development:** Students exhibit strong self-confidence and actively engage in diverse extracurricular activities, nurturing their talents and personal skills.

Recommendations

- **Enhancing Teaching Standards in Middle and High Schools:** Implement more effective teaching strategies in Middle and High Schools to challenge and support students to ensure consistent academic progress across all lessons.
- **Sharing Best Practices in Arabic Language Teaching:** Continue strengthening Arabic language instruction and expand the sharing of best practices in Arabic teaching across Private schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Students' Academic Achievement

Good

- In the 2023–2024 academic year, students' performance is strong across all core subjects, with most students achieving within higher bands, except for a decline in High School mathematics. Internal examinations are well-structured and fairly assessed.
- Performance tracking over the past three years shows consistently high attainment in internal examinations and an upward trend in external benchmark assessments. STAR Reading and Mathematics results from 2019 to 2024 indicate improvements, with more students meeting or exceeding benchmarks and fewer requiring intervention, particularly in reading. Arabic Benchmark Test (ABT) results for 2022–2024 show significant progress, particularly in Grades 4–5 and 10–12. The rise in Arabic proficiency is attributed to the school's focussed efforts on strengthening the language instruction, customising teaching based on students' proficiency levels, and implementing targeted grade-level initiatives. International English Language Testing System (IELTS) scores consistently exceed expectations and SAT scores from 2021 to 2024 surpass world averages.
- Students across all levels demonstrate strong skill development including independent learning, critical thinking, and solid technology mastery. While progress in lessons is evident throughout the school, lower-ability students in Middle and High Schools tend to make slower progress in certain lessons due to inconsistent teaching standards and some students having gaps in their prior knowledge.
- Language and numeracy skills are well developed. Students confidently use both Arabic and English across the school successfully inferring word meanings and analysing literary texts. In mathematics, Elementary students demonstrate strong numerical skills, including working with fractions and coordinate plotting, while older students effectively master inequalities and geometric reasoning. In science, hands-on practical activities enhance experimental and investigative skills, deepening conceptual understanding. For example, Elementary students explore weathering through inquiry-based learning, while High School students apply Boyle's law and analyse collision theory with clarity.

Students' Personal Development and Wellbeing

Outstanding

- With a dynamic blend of leadership, creativity, and responsibility, students actively shape their personal and social development. They make a significant impact on their school community through exceptional extracurricular involvement, such as Sharks X, Model United Nations (MUN), and the highly acclaimed Bahrain Young Entrepreneurs (BYE) programme. Their leadership shines in events like Shark Tank and their success in competitions, including the STEM X and STREAM Fair, showcasing their innovation and problem-solving skills.
- Within the classroom, students take ownership of their learning, engaging in meaningful peer collaboration and critical discussions. Comprehensive induction and transition programmes equip them with the confidence and skills needed for future academic success. A highly effective counselling programme further supports their emotional well-being, ensuring a nurturing environment in which they thrive.
- A culture of excellence is embedded within the school, where students demonstrate outstanding self-discipline, teamwork, and respect. Behavioural issues are rare, as students communicate positively, build respectful relationships and take pride in their responsibilities. Programmes like 'Hi-Five' in Elementary School and 'Champions' in Middle School foster a collaborative and aspirational atmosphere, while 'Positive Vibes' in High School strengthens emotional intelligence and resilience.
- Students passionately celebrate Bahrain's rich culture through active participation in traditional events such as Gergaoun and the 'Iftar of Love' during Ramadan. In addition, they participate in events that promote entrepreneurship and leadership, such as Mini CEO and Future Arab Leaders (FAL). Their compassion and civic engagement shine through student-led initiatives, including the 'Impact Team' and 'Positive Affirmations' programmes, reinforcing their commitment to social responsibility and personal development.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Good

- Teachers foster safe and dynamic learning environments, utilising diverse strategies and resources to inspire and engage students. Lessons across the school are well-structured and thoughtfully planned, incorporating research-based and experiential learning methods. Technology is seamlessly integrated, with digital tools such as Nearpod, Kiddle, and Google Classroom enhancing lesson delivery and interactivity. In the most effective lessons, particularly in Elementary School, students are encouraged to inquire and reflect on their learning. In Middle and High School, while many lessons are effective, there is some variation in impact. In certain cases, teaching strategies do not consistently challenge or support all students. Occasionally, gaps in prior learning affect lesson flow and student engagement.
- The school maintains robust and adaptive assessment strategies, reviewing its policies annually to align with curriculum standards and student development goals. A variety of assessment methods including standardised tests such as STAR, performance-based tasks, self-assessments, and technology-driven platforms like Kahoot, provide comprehensive insights into students' progress. Digital platforms support learning across subjects, including Kamkalima for Arabic, Lexia Core 5 for reading, ALEKS for mathematics and Apex learning for personalised instruction. An effective academic support system, grounded in data analysis, ensures that instruction is tailored to students' needs. Language and numeracy instruction is tailored by proficiency levels, with targeted grade-level initiatives reinforcing skill development. Students learning Arabic as a second language show strong growth with many achieving Level 6 proficiencies, reflecting the school's commitment to inclusive quality teaching across disciplines.

Leadership, Management and Governance

Outstanding

- Driven by visionary leadership and a strong commitment to innovation, the school fosters student development and active stakeholder engagement. A comprehensive self-evaluation process, informed by triangulated student achievement data and classroom observations, supports a well-structured school improvement plan. This plan outlines clear success criteria, baseline data, and learner profiles, ensuring alignment with the school's vision and mission. Annual curriculum and resource reviews further enhance educational provisions, including the recent implementation of the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme.
- Professional development (PD) is a key priority at the school. The (PD) committee conducts regular needs assessments and delivers targeted workshops on assessment strategies, differentiation, data-driven decision-making, and technology integration. These initiatives have led to notable improvements in teaching practices, particularly in Elementary School. To ensure greater consistency in teaching quality, further emphasis is needed on enhancing the impact of professional development in Middle and High Schools. The school fosters collaboration, encouraging teachers to share best practice. Initiatives like 'Employee of the Month' and on-the-spot rewards contribute to staff motivation and well-being.
- A culture of innovation thrives through Science, Technology, Research, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STREAM) and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programmes, equipping students with academic, social, and emotional skills.
- The Board of Directors provides strategic leadership, ensuring efficient resource management and setting goals to drive progress. Effective school-home communication is maintained through initiatives like 'You Said, We Did,' weekly alumni talk, and career discussions. Future developments include an AI chatbot to support teachers and students.

Next Actions

The school must submit an Action Plan to implement the review recommendations four weeks after receiving the draft report.