



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

DIRECTORATE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS REVIEWS

DIRECTORATE OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS & KINDERGARTENS REVIEWS

Schools Reviews Handbook

For use in the review of schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain

2019

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Table of Contents

Background to the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA)	5
The Directorate of Government Schools Reviews and the Directorate of Private Schools and Kindergartens Reviews	6
Twenty-first century skills as a basis for the Schools Review Framework	6
Principles of the review process	8
Schools Review Framework	9
Judgement scales	11
Criteria judgements	11
Aspect judgements	12
Overall effectiveness judgements	12
Capacity to improve judgements	13
Explanation of aspects and criteria	14
First Domain: Quality of outcomes	14
Academic achievement aspect	14
Personal development and social responsibility aspect	16
Second Domain: Quality of main processes	20
Teaching, learning and assessment aspect	20
Empowerment and meeting special needs aspect	25
Third Domain: Quality assurance of outcomes and processes	30
Leadership, management and governance aspect	30
Overall effectiveness interpretation	37
Capacity to improve interpretation	38
Review Guidance	39
The approach to reviews	39
The review stages and procedures	40
Reviewing 'Outstanding' schools	42
Monitoring process	42
Non-Compliance with the review procedures	42

Explanations of key procedures	43
Review quality assurance	43
Child protection and security in adherence to the 'Child Protection Protocol'	43
Complaints	43
Appeals	43
Lessons observations	44
Discussions	44
Examination of students' work	45
Issuing judgements	45
Feedback	45

Background to the Education & Training Quality Authority(BQA)

The Authority was established under the name the Quality Assurance Authority for Education & Training under Royal Decree No. 32 of 2008 as an independent national authority governed and supervised by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kingdom of Bahrain. With the promulgation of the Royal Decrees Nos. 83 of 2012 and 74 of 2016 the Authority was renamed the 'Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA)'. Pursuant to the Royal Decree, the BQA mandate is to ensure that the quality of education and training in the Kingdom of Bahrain meets international standards and best practice, with the mandate to 'review the quality of the performance of education and training institutions in light of the guiding indicators developed by the Authority' in accordance with the Kingdom of Bahrain Economic Vision 2030 and the directions of the Government Action Plan.

BQA has three main core businesses, namely performance review of education and training institutions under the General Directorate of Reviews (GDR), managing the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) under the General Directorate of National Qualifications Framework (GDQ), and conducting the National Examinations under the Directorate of National Examinations (DNE). The GDR consists of four directorates: the Directorate of Government Schools Reviews (DGS), the Directorate of Private Schools and Kindergartens Reviews (DPS), the Directorate of Vocational Reviews (DVR), and the Directorate of Higher Education Reviews (DHR). The GDQ consists of the Directorate of Framework Operations (DFO) and the Directorate of Academic Cooperation (DAC).

The Directorate of Government Schools Reviews and the Directorate of Private Schools and Kindergartens Reviews

These two Directorates are responsible for evaluating and reviewing the performance of government and private schools and kindergartens to improve the education level in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The DGS and DPS are responsible for:

- setting guiding criteria for the quality assurance of education in schools and kindergartens
- establishing guiding frameworks and rubrics for success criteria and review procedures
- reviewing and reporting on the quality of provision in all schools and kindergartens
- spreading best practice
- making recommendations for schools and kindergartens improvements.

The review process includes evaluating the schools' performance and the quality of provision against a clear set of indicators. The reviews are independent, objective and transparent. They provide important information about the strengths and areas for improvement, to assist in focusing each school's efforts and resources as part of the school improvement process to raise the overall performance.

Twenty-first century skills as a basis for the Schools Review Framework

With the rapid changes occurring both locally and globally the identification of required learning skills has become essential to enable learners to manage their post-graduation stages. This is essential to students whether they are pursuing higher education or going into the labour market. Therefore, the Schools Review Framework (the Framework) focuses on the development of educational outcomes by building on the skills of the 21st century. These are the starting points for the Framework's aspects and criteria. As a result, individuals will be enabled academically, have the necessary life skills, and be able to adapt, compete and face challenges.

The aim of these skills is to establish a common vision and language in relation to what is expected from the students upon graduation from the different educational stages, and reduce the gap between the outcomes of education and the requirements of the labour market. The following is an outline of the 21st century skills – as shown in Figure 1 – which will underpin the Framework for reviewing the performance of government and private schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain:

- 1. Critical thinking:** Students' ability to analyse, think independently, process information responsibly, and develop the ability to evaluate and act on it impartially.

- 2. Communication and teamwork:** Students' ability to interact and express views efficiently, communicate and work effectively together, and the ability to negotiate and build on the ideas of others using different communication methods to ensure the achievement of results.
- 3. Creativity and problem solving:** Students' ability to break out of stereotypes to face life situations by coming up with new solutions, using unfamiliar resources, and linking information and different facts. Therefore, they are able to contribute to solving the problems they face daily.
- 4. Leadership and decision-making:** Students' ability to lead situations, unify opinions, inspire and motivate others and make sound evidence-based decisions. This is also related to their ability to identify and study options and choose appropriate ones by considering personal and public interests.
- 5. Local and global citizenship:** Students' ability to direct their knowledge, behaviour and values responsibly, to promote intellectual convergence among different components of society and raise their awareness of global challenges. Students increase their contribution to the building and development of their homeland. As a norm they establish environmental sustainability practices, social justice, positive attitudes to wards global problems, and encouraging others to increase global cultural convergence.
- 6. Entrepreneurship and initiative:** Students' ability to self-manage productively, pursue personal goals with strong determination and motivation, and deal with failures and frustrations positively. They analyse risks with a clear vision, show initiative to deal with shortcomings and provide constructive suggestions.
- 7. Technological literacy:** Students' ability to use technology and technological tools effectively to create, access, manage, refute, critique and disseminate information, with full knowledge of the impact of technological contents on the individual and society.
- 8. Language empowerment:** Students' ability to excel intellectually, produce literary and scientific knowledge which enhance citizenship, and preserve cultural heritage and national identity by using the mother tongue, and communicating effectively in more than one language.



Figure 1: 21st century skills

Principles of the review process

The school review process aims to assess the quality of outcomes related to the educational and learning process, the quality of the school's processes, and the mechanisms for ensuring the quality of these outcomes and processes. The review process is based on the following six key principles:

- **The student is the focus of the educational process:** The growth of the students' experiences and development of their achievements and skills are vital to the review process.
- **Teaching and learning:** The review team evaluates the effectiveness of teaching and learning methods comprehensively - including planning and assessment processes, classroom management skills and independent learning in promoting the learning process and its role in enabling students to achieve.
- **Continuous improvement:** The review process is an important factor in improving the effectiveness of school processes associated with self-evaluation, planning and continuous development.
- **Participation and openness:** The review process is initiated through the school's self-evaluation and the participation of the school leadership in all stages of the review process. This includes planning, organising and providing evidence for reaching judgements, according to the principle of 'working with you' and not 'inspecting you'.
- **Transparency:** Review reports are published in a way that ensures all partners have access to information easily, objectively and accurately.
- **Professional compliance:** Reviewers are expected to abide by the 'Code of Conduct' in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Authority, in addition to evaluating the schools objectively and impartially and issuing fair, accurate and consistent judgements.

Schools Review Framework

The Schools Review Framework sets out the evaluation requirements to be used in the review of all schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain .It lists the domains ,main aspects and relevant criteria that reviewers must evaluate when reaching judgements ,in order to arrive at the overall judgement of the school's overall effectiveness and its capacity to improve.

The Schools Review Framework focuses on explaining the criteria as a reference point for both the evaluator and evaluated personnel .This helps to guide schoolwork to analyse the current situation and identify priorities and future development .The Framework is intended to evaluate key practices of the whole educational process to enable the school to improve its performance.

The Framework is organised into:

- Domains: representing the main categories that include the school's review aspects
 - Aspects: representing the main areas of schoolwork under each domain. These aspects lead to the judgement of the school's overall effectiveness
 - Criteria: representing the areas to focus on and upon which the aspect is judged
 - Indicators: explaining the key elements that the criteria focus on and upon which the criteria are judged
 - Procedures: outlining the processes and sources of evidence which their effectiveness contribute to judgements on the quality of indicators and criteria.

The Framework explains the judgements that review teams arrive at during each school review, based on the BQA's policies and procedures and on the review criteria. Schools are requested to apply the same criteria and judgements when they carry out their own self-evaluation. **Note: Criteria followed with (*) in this document are key criteria.**

The Framework evaluates the following ,as illustrated in Figure2:

•The First Domain :Quality of outcomes

1. Academic achievement aspect
 - 1.1. Academic standards*
 - 1.2. Progress according to abilities*
 - 1.3. Learning skills

2. Personal development and social responsibility aspect

- 2.1. Behaviour and work ethics*
- 2.2. Citizenship values*
- 2.3. Self-confidence, leadership and decision making*
- 2.4. Communication and social relationships*
- 2.5. Health and environmental awareness
- 2.6. Competitiveness and innovation

• The Second Domain: Quality of main processes

3. Teaching, learning and assessment aspect

- 3.1. Teaching and learning strategies*
- 3.2. Classroom management*
- 3.3. Assessment and learning support*
- 3.4. Expectations and challenging abilities
- 3.5. Technology utilisation
- 3.6. Differentiation

4. Empowerment and meeting special needs aspect

- 4.1. Academic support*
- 4.2. Personal development support*
- 4.3. Reinforcement of experiences, talents and creativity*
- 4.4. Environment safety, security and appropriateness*
- 4.5. Meeting and supporting the needs of students with disabilities

• The Third Domain: Quality assurance of outcomes and processes

5. Leadership, management and governance aspect

- 5.1. Self-evaluation and improvement*
- 5.2. Strategic planning*
- 5.3. Development and monitoring of staff performance*
- 5.4. Modelling leadership principles*
- 5.5. Resources and facilities management
- 5.6. Communication with stakeholders
- 5.7. Governance (for private schools)

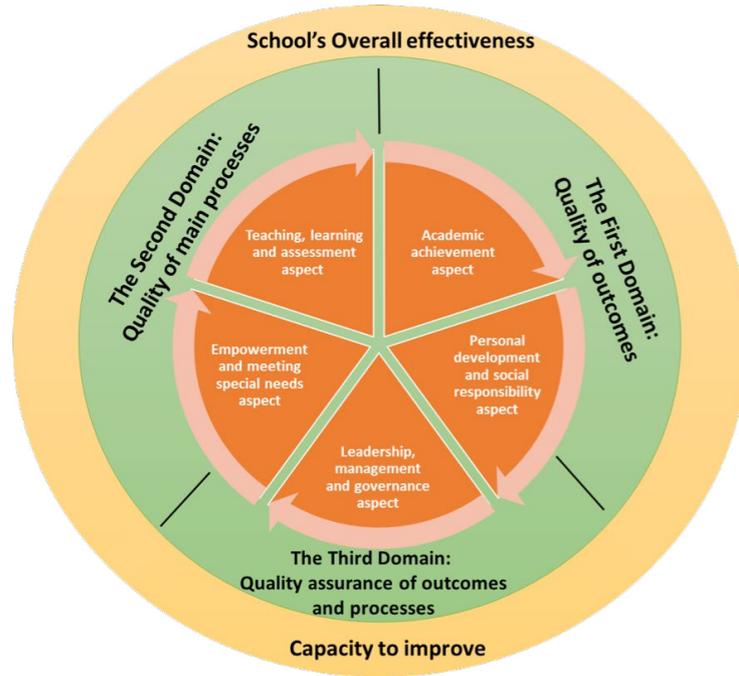


Figure 2: Domains and Aspects of Review Framework

Judgement scales

Criteria judgements

The criteria will be judged in all aspects of the Framework on a four-point scale as follows:

Grade	Interpretation
Outstanding (1)	This judgement is awarded if the quality of practices is reflected in the performance of all or the vast majority of those related to the criterion. Practices are diverse, of highest quality and are highly productive. Performance and initiatives taken are exceptional, significantly exceed expectations and can be considered as models to be followed.
Good (2)	This judgement is awarded if the quality of practices is reflected in the performance of most of those related to the criterion. Practices are diverse, of high quality and productive. Performance is effective, and initiatives are ongoing and exceed expectations. It largely shows improvement and development.
Satisfactory (3)	This judgement is given if the quality of the practices is adequately reflected on the performance of the majority of those related to the criterion. Performance and initiatives are at the expected level and show some improvement and development.
Inadequate (4)	This judgement is given if the quality of the practices is not adequately reflected on the performance of those related to the criterion. The school's performance is at a level less than expected and does not show the desired improvement.

Aspect judgements

Each aspect of the framework areas will be judged on a four-point scale as follows:

Outstanding (1)	This judgement is awarded when key criteria of the aspect are judged as 'Outstanding', and all other criteria of the aspect are at least 'Good'.
Good (2)	This judgement is awarded when key criteria are judged as at least 'Good', and all other criteria of the aspect are at least 'Satisfactory'.
Satisfactory (3)	This judgement is awarded when key criteria are judged as at least 'Satisfactory', and other criteria might vary in their judgements.
Inadequate (4)	This judgement is given when any of the key criteria is judged as 'Inadequate'.

Overall effectiveness judgements

Judgements of the overall effectiveness of the school are given based on a four-point scale, as follows:

Outstanding (1)	This is awarded when both aspects (academic achievement and teaching, learning and assessment) are judged as 'Outstanding'. This is unlikely to be the case if leadership, management and governance are less than 'Outstanding'. All other review aspects are at least "Good". The school has some exemplary features and practices that other schools may use to develop their performance.
Good (2)	This is awarded when both aspects (academic achievement and teaching, learning and assessment) are judged as 'Good'. This is unlikely to be the case if leadership, management and governance are less than 'Good'. All other aspects are at least 'Satisfactory'. It is expected that there is generally strong performance across the school. Some aspects might even be 'Outstanding', and there are not any major weaknesses.
Satisfactory (3)	The school is judged 'Satisfactory' when academic achievement, personal development and social responsibility, teaching, learning and assessment are at least 'Satisfactory'. This is unlikely to be the case when leadership, management and governance are judged less than that or when the school is facing serious challenges regarding its safety and security.
Inadequate (4)	This is the case when any of the following: academic achievement, personal development and social responsibility, or teaching, learning and assessment are judged as 'Inadequate'. This is likely to be the case when leadership, management and governance are judged as 'Inadequate'.

Capacity to improve judgements

Judgements of the capacity to improve school are given based on a four-point scale as follows:

Outstanding (1)	This is awarded when the school has a continuous history of high performance or is achieving significantly high levels of improvement in its work. The school leadership and management are competent and contribute to this sustained strong performance through accurate strategic planning and systematic monitoring, or through achieving exceptional improvements and overcoming challenges effectively.
Good (2)	This is awarded when the school has proved its ability to improve and develop its general performance. The school leadership and management are aware of the strengths and areas that need improvement. They work confidently to continue improving processes and outcomes, overcoming challenges that might be barriers to improvement, according to a comprehensive and clear self-evaluation and strategic planning with continuous monitoring.
Satisfactory (3)	This is awarded when the school's strategic planning is adequately based on self-evaluation results, in a way that ensures and improves the quality of its general performance.
Inadequate (4)	This is the case when the school faces challenges and obstacles that hinder or prevent it from improving its performance. Strategic planning is not in place, or not in line with work development priorities. Self-evaluation is weak, not in place, or only in its initial stages. Staff responsibilities might be vague, or not well specified.

Explanation of aspects and criteria

The First Domain: Quality of outcomes

1. Academic achievement aspect

Students' academic achievement is related to academic standards and the progress students make from their starting points, especially in core and specialised subjects in the different educational stages during the last three successive academic years. The progress students make in lessons and the skills they acquire in core subjects are also significant. Progress focuses on verifying the growth and development of students' learning skills, including independent learning, research, analysis, etc. The development of these learning skills is important to demonstrate the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes and the school's leadership, management and governance, especially in planning for raising and monitoring students' achievement.

The criteria of students' achievement (standards and progress) are key criteria in this aspect, and usually awarded similar judgements, except in rare cases.

It should be noted that the number of activities in lessons is not a measure to judge the extent of students' learning and the progress they make. Likewise, the availability of various enhancement, enrichment and remedial programmes does not necessarily mean that students make progress according to their abilities. Improvement and progress must show in students' performances and academic attainment.

The aspect is judged by the quality of the following criteria:

1.1. Academic standards*

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- Students' performance in internal tests and external examinations such as ministerial, national and international examinations.
- Students' standards and basic skills, and their acquired knowledge, concepts and skills in lessons.
- Students' standards in their written work and other forms of assessment in subjects, mainly in core subjects: Arabic, English, mathematics, science and specialised subjects according to stage and specialisation streams.
- Students' acquisition of age and curriculum appropriate linguistic, literacy and numeracy skills, such as the ability to use language well, the ability to use Arabic as a mother-tongue language to enrich intellectual creativity, scientific production and to be able to undertake research and study, to use mental mathematics, estimation and rounding skills as per curriculum and age expectations.

To reach a judgement ,reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school's relevant procedures through a range of processes ,including but not limited to:

- analysis of the results of the diagnostic tests, assessment and examinations
- scrutiny of samples of school tests and students' work
- comparison of success and proficiency rates, checking how these two are aligned, across core subjects and different stages which must be reflected in students' skills and abilities, especially their linguistic and mathematical abilities in lessons
- students' acquisition of basic skills during lessons of core and specialised subjects
- students' use of coherent and fluent language in the core subjects' lessons
- comparing students 'standards demonstrated in lessons ,their written work and other tasks within the implemented curriculum.

1.2. **Progress according to abilities***

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- Observing the progress of students in acquiring knowledge, concepts, and basic and acquired skills in lessons.
- Tracking the performance of cohorts according to the implemented assessment policy.
- Observing students' progress in written work, homework and different tasks.
- The progress of the different categories of students in their special programmes (remedial and enrichment), such as high achievers, low achievers and students with learning difficulties.

To reach a judgement, reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school's relevant procedures through a range of processes, including but not limited to:

- the school's assessment of students' abilities when they join the school, to determine how far they progress according to their different abilities
- comparison of success rates over the last three years or three semesters, according to the implemented assessment policy
- students' progress according to their different abilities in lessons, written work and special programmes.

1.3. **Learning skills**

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- Students' abilities to learn independently by being self-driven to take responsibility for their own learning to acquire the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills as well as concepts, attitudes and values.
- Students' abilities to think critically through analysing ideas, information, cases and problems which they encounter to be able to make the right decisions in different situations.

- Students' technological skills, including effective access and use of information.
- Students' mastery of learning enabling skills, such as gathering data, reading charts, drawing and reading maps, problem solving, writing reports and letters, electronic learning, writing resumes and using dictionaries.

To reach a judgement, reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school's relevant procedures through a range of processes, including but not limited to:

- students' acquisition of technological skills in various activities and educational programmes
- students' acquisition of learning enabling skills in various activities and educational programmes
- analysis of organised and random interviews with students, both collectively and individually
- analysis of school documents and records
- following up students' work and their individual and collective achievements.

2. Personal development and social responsibility aspect

Students' personal development and social responsibility is an essential output in the education process. It is not just about their behaviour being disciplined, it is also about students' self-confidence, leadership skills, commitment to work ethics and use of technology resources. It focuses on their behaviour and attitudes towards learning in lessons, relationship with staff and peers, and respect for the school's systems and all they offer. It is also about their adherence to Islamic and national values, health and environmental awareness, and their competitiveness and innovation abilities.

The aspect is judged based on the quality of the following criteria:

2.1. Behaviour and work ethics*

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- Students' awareness of their rights, duties and responsibilities, and their full understanding of the school's procedures with reference to 'Child Protection Protocol'.
- Students' good conduct, self-discipline such as their respect for their teachers and colleagues, and their overall consideration of others' feelings.
- Students' positive attitudes towards lifelong learning and work ethics, such as taking up the responsibility of their learning, integrity in completing tasks and not cheating, and punctuality in the submission of required work with a focus on product quality.
- Students' punctuality and regular attendance at school.
- Students' physical safety and psychological comfort, ensuring that they are not involved or causing disruptions which affect students' safety and security and the educational process. Such disruptions might include verbal, written or physical

troubles, such as threats, extortion and harassment. Students are able to report such incidents to the relevant staff.

- Students deal positively with pressures from their learning and school demands.
- Students' responsible and ethical utilisation of resources available in the online database, bearing copyright in mind.

To reach a judgement, reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school's relevant procedures through a range of processes, including but not limited to:

- direct observation of students' behaviour
- organised and random interviews with students, both collectively and individually
- meeting social counsellors and administrative supervisors
- analysis of school documents and records
- evaluating the implemented systems and procedures that deal with harassment, aggressive behaviour, and physical and cyber bullying
- analysis of information from parents' interviews and surveying their opinions.

2.2. **Citizenship values***

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- Students' awareness of the principles of human rights and their tolerance and ability to adapt while dealing with peers of diverse cultures and backgrounds; demonstrating respect for others and dealing with them with fairness and equality.
- Students' embracement of local citizenship values and Islamic values, and their abilities to defend them against any intellectual or moral deviations which conflict with the norms, culture, traditions and social status of the society.
- Students' handling of social responsibility in school life and society, such as contributing to voluntary work and awareness of social and global issues.
- Students' respect and pride in Bahrain's leadership, heritage, culture and language, and their commitment to the Kingdom's customs, traditions and respect for its local context.
- Students' awareness of rights and responsibilities as individuals, in the local and global communities and when using digital platforms.

To reach a judgement, reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school's relevant procedures through a range of processes, including but not limited to:

- observing students and interacting with them in and out of lessons to gauge their understanding of life in Bahrain and its context
- monitoring students' participation in school activities and programmes which emphasise citizenship values, such as respecting the National Anthem and participating in national events

- direct observation of students' behaviour
- organised and random interviews with students both collectively and individually
- analysing school's documents and records
- analysing parents' questionnaires, and their opinions of citizenship issues
- ensuring students are active citizens who contribute positively to society.

2.3. **Self-confidence, leadership and decision making***

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- The self-confidence of students of different categories and how it contributes to their growth and productivity and character building.
- Students' enthusiasm towards participating in school activities and events, both in and outside lessons.
- Students' abilities to work independently, their eagerness to solve problems, their desire to formulate meaningful questions, and ability to respond seriously and enthusiastically to enhance learning.
- Students' abilities to lead as individuals and in different situations.
- Students' abilities to make and justify decisions based on reliable evidence and data.

To reach a judgement, reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school's relevant procedures through a range of processes, including but not limited to:

- monitoring students during their participation in school activities and programmes in and outside lessons, with a focus on participation percentage and quality
- evaluating students' leadership roles in all areas of school life and ensuring that these leadership roles are diverse and involve a large proportion of students
- analysis of organised and random interviews with students, both collectively and individually
- analysis of school documents and records
- observing students' responses to newly assigned responsibilities.

2.4. **Communication and social relationships***

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- Students working together to establish relationships based on emotional and social intelligence, including the ability to express their feelings courteously, persuade, delegate and listen to one another.
- Students' contributions to their and others' learning through taking part in presentations, exchanging views and collaboration to achieve goals. They build on

each other's ideas and assign responsibilities among themselves when working on practical tasks.

- Students interacting and communicating together, using different forms such as verbal, written and physical methods, and through various communication tools, particularly those that are modern and technological.
- Students' flexibility when dealing with others and benefitting their experiences, and providing support to each other especially when facing any difficulties.

To reach a judgement, reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school's relevant procedures through a range of processes, including but not limited to:

- observing and noting the verbal and physical interaction between students in different situations, both in and outside lessons
- analysis of organised and random meetings with students, both collectively and individually
- analysis of school documents and records
- students' work scrutiny and their individual and collective achievements.

2.5. **Health and environmental awareness**

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- Students' interest in their psychological and physical health and general appearance.
- Students' interest in the school environment, including its facilities and resources and maintaining its safety.
- Students' conscious selection of a healthy diet and eating habits.
- Appreciation of the importance of fitness to maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- Students' awareness and health risks avoidance, such as smoking and recreational drugs.
- Involvement of students in issues related to the environment and the safety of their resources, such as reduction in the use of water and electricity to contribute to the society wellbeing.
- Students' awareness of the importance of recycling of resources, reducing waste of all types, and making use of modern approaches to this.
- Students' contributions to raising health and environmental awareness, and changing harmful lifestyles.

To reach judgement, reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school's relevant procedures through a range of processes, including but not limited to:

- students' participation in internal and external health and environmental programmes and projects
- analysis of organised and random meetings with students both collectively and individually

- observing students' health and environmental practices
- analysis of questionnaires, documents and records
- students' work scrutiny and their individual and collective achievements.

2.6 Competitiveness and innovation

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- Students' ability to identify risks and face any challenges they encounter, solving life problems after gathering the necessary information, experimenting with different solutions to problems.
- Students' sense of responsibility, leading situations and presenting solutions independently.
- Students showing the spirit of competitiveness through showing dedication, focused efforts to excel and maintaining quality of work in an enthusiastic and enjoyment ethos.
- Students' initiative to present ideas and develop these into innovative projects.
- Students' alignment of modern ideas and traditional methods to come up with new solutions.

To reach a judgement, reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school's relevant procedures through a range of processes, including but not limited to:

- evaluation of students' initiatives in the preparation of pioneering programmes and projects in and outside lessons
- evaluating students' participation and their projects in competitions and in local, national and international events
- analysis of organised and random meetings with students both collectively and individually
- analysis of school documents and records.

The Second Domain: Quality of main processes

3. Teaching, learning and assessment aspect

Teachers' subject knowledge and qualifications are reflected in the quality of planning for teaching and learning processes. These should be organised and productive, focusing on the design of the lesson and the application of teaching and learning strategies that stimulate and motivate students. Teachers should recognise that students are at the centre of the educational process and can deliver the required information, answer students' questions presenting different examples, and use alternative methods of dealing with problems. Teachers demonstrate the ability to expand students' perceptions, impart knowledge and concepts, and develop students' basic skills using differentiated activities and modern technology. Emphasis should be on caring for students with different categories of educational needs and meeting those needs. These include students with special educational needs (SEN). Teachers should demonstrate their ability to handle unacceptable behaviour during lessons.

Teachers focus on students' participation in the learning process and readiness to take on the responsibility for their own learning, such as correcting their own mistakes, as well as utilising assessment for learning. This enhances the growth of students' personalities through their achievement of targeted learning outcomes. The successful teacher is also able to empower students with learning skills, constantly challenging their abilities, and expect them to perform according to their abilities or even surpass them.

To ensure effective learning, no specific learning patterns or strategies will be identified. Reviewers will focus on assessing how successful and effective the strategies are in supporting students in all categories and enhancing their learning.

The aspect is judged by the quality of the following criteria:

3.1. **Teaching and learning strategies***

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- Teachers' employment of effective teaching and learning strategies in different and varied ways that interest and attract attention.
- Teachers' employment of various learning resources while utilising the school grounds effectively and providing opportunities for students to develop their expertise and increase their knowledge in innovative ways.
- Teachers' use of shared teaching and learning processes which are student-centred and encouraging them to discuss and learn independently.
- Teachers' levels of enabling students to understand and grasp subjects, acquire knowledge and concepts, and develop basic skills including literacy and numeracy.
- Teachers' degree of linking the process of learning to curriculum competencies, employing what students learn through subjects and life beyond just relying on textbooks.

To reach judgements, reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school's relevant procedures through a range of processes, including but not limited to:

- focus on classroom visits and analysis of findings
- ensuring that teachers are professionally qualified to perform their jobs and are knowledgeable on their subjects
- analysis of lesson plans and teaching and learning strategies
- evaluating the educational resources used for teaching and their effectiveness
- identifying the extent of the impact of various activities in the learning process, as seen in lesson observations and students' work
- analysis of meetings with students, their parents, and various educational and administrative bodies
- analysis of parents' questionnaires
- analysis of school documents and records.

3.2. **Classroom Management***

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- Teachers' planning of lessons in an organised manner and managing educational situations efficiently, while ensuring smooth and logical transition through the lesson stages.
- Teachers' provision of various guidelines and clear instructions in lessons to ensure the quality of productivity.
- Teachers' optimisation of the use of learning time.
- Teachers' degree of sharing learning objectives and assessing students' achievements.
- Teachers' motivation of students and stimulation of their interest in learning through encouragement techniques that are age-appropriate and suitable to their abilities and previous knowledge and that inspire them to participate effectively within lessons and activities.
- Teachers' management of students' behaviour and handling of emerging situations of inappropriate conduct wisely and firmly.

To reach a judgement, the reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school's relevant procedures through a range of processes, including but not limited to:

- analysis of lesson plans, effectiveness and flexibility of implementation
- observing lessons and assessment of students' behaviour management in class
- observing the start and end of lessons and their punctuality
- assessing the balance and suitability of activities directed at students, with the time allotted for them
- analysis of meetings with students, their parents, and various educational and administrative bodies
- analysis of parents' questionnaires
- analysis of school documents and records.

3.3. **Assessment and learning support***

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- Teachers' degree of ensuring the achievement of learning objectives by using a variety of effective assessment methods.
- Teachers' development of lesson plans and preparation based on assessment results.
- Teachers' use of assessment results to identify students' academic levels and performance and supporting them accordingly.
- Teachers' levels of following up learning activities and homework with regular correction and marking, while providing encouragement and guidance.
- Teachers' provision of comprehensive feedback on the assessment process to help students identify strengths and areas to be developed in their performance.

To reach a judgement, reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school's relevant procedures through a range of processes, including but not limited to:

- analysis of lesson plans and the school's assessment policy
- lessons observation and talking to students to assess their understanding and performance whenever opportunities are present
- work scrutiny of students of different abilities
- evaluation of the balance and suitability of assessment activities, considering their diversity and quality
- evaluation of teachers' feedback to students
- analysis of meetings with students, their parents, and various educational and administrative bodies
- analysis of parents' questionnaires
- analysis of school documents and records.

3.4. **Expectations and challenging abilities**

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- Teachers' stimulation of thinking and challenging students' abilities by developing their higher order thinking skills, such as critical and creative thinking, problem solving, reasoning, deduction, interpretation and synthesising.
- Teachers' development of students' curiosity to explore and question constantly and to enable them to discover new information.
- Teachers' provision of opportunities for students to develop their abilities to justify and interpret their answers, express their views in an intuitive, fluent and independent manner, and demonstrate their abilities to predict and anticipate.
- Teachers' development of students' abilities to formulate ideas and innovations and compare them to facts and data.
- Teachers' abilities to broaden students' perceptions, challenging them with activities that are appropriate to their educational levels, and raising their expectations to expand their knowledge and develop their abilities.

To reach a judgement, reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school's relevant procedures through a range of processes, including but not limited to:

- analysis of lesson plans and identifying the school's policy to develop higher-order thinking skills and challenge abilities
- observation of lessons, student activities and assigned tasks
- observation of educational and learning questions in lessons and tasks, and students' comments and responses
- scrutiny of students' work of different categories
- analysis of school documents and records.

3.5. Technology utilisation

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- Teachers' demonstration of positive attitudes towards the use of interactive technology, utilising educational resources through using modern technological methods. Such methods might include making use of the internet, digital tools and the different educational platforms in lesson planning, delivery, and activating enrichment activities as well as educational, assessment and learning activities appropriate to the curriculum.
- Teachers' development of students' abilities to use modern technology effectively to access information.
- Teachers enabling students to create and produce educational digital content through different materials, and manage, exchange, publish and critique it.
- Teachers' degree of training students to manage information using technology by searching and storing data and digital content, such as pictures, tables, movies, etc.
- Teachers' level of enabling students to deal with computers, tablets, mobile applications, and various software applications.

To reach a judgement, reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school's relevant procedures through a range of processes, including but not limited to:

- analysis of lesson plans and teachers' attitudes towards the use of modern technology
- observation of lessons, student activities and tasks
- scrutinising the work of the different categories of students
- analysis of school documents and records
- identifying the use of modern technology resources, facilities and educational corners.

3.6. Differentiation

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- Teachers' identification of students' different abilities in order to differentiate between them and meet their individual needs, including students with special educational needs (SEN).
- Teachers' consideration of students' age-appropriate learning patterns and their multiple intelligences, expanding their perceptions and diversifying their experiences with age-appropriate learning activities which align to learning objectives.
- Teachers' consideration of students' different cultures, their interests and ambitions, their levels of awareness, and their responses to the learning requirements.
- Teachers' utilisation of differentiated educational activities, which are used as the basis for the development of innovation skills, creativity and progress across the different groups of students.

To reach a judgement, reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school's relevant procedures through a range of processes, including but not limited to:

- analysis of lesson plans taking in consideration planning for differentiated learning
- observation of lessons, activities and tasks, and the extent to which these cater for students' different needs
- scrutinising the work of the different groups of students
- analysis of school documents and records.

4. Empowerment and meeting special needs aspect

The school has plans and procedures that lead to the development of its main outputs, namely students' academic achievement, learning skills, personal development and social responsibility. The aspect focuses on the quality of the academic and personal support programmes and procedures offered to the students, and the extent to which these cater for students of different abilities including the high achievers and gifted and talented, to ensure that their creativity and innovation is developed. The school promotes the experiences and abilities of students of different categories and abilities, especially those with special needs and disabilities, as well as making various arrangements to ensure that a safe and secure environment is provided.

The aspect is judged by the quality of the following criteria:

4.1. Academic support*

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- The school's adoption of systems to evaluate and monitor the academic progress of students of different groups and educational categories.
- The school's diagnosis of students' learning needs and identification of their academic levels and basic skills.
- The school level of implementation of plans, support and enrichment programmes to support students of different educational categories and enhance their learning outside the classroom.
- The school's rigour and detail in tracking students' levels and progress according to their different groups and categories, such as high achievers, low achievers, non-native speakers, and those with learning difficulties such as those suffering from dyslexia, attention deficit, and hyperactivity.
- The school's clear policy for informing parents about their children's results and progress.

To reach a judgement, the reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school's relevant procedures through a range of processes, including but not limited to:

- monitoring the scope of support systems and programmes, their diversity, and appropriateness of access to meet the educational needs of different groups of students
- ensuring the school's implementation and analysis of diagnostic tests or other abilities-measurement tools, and tracking records of students' academic progress

- conducting meetings with those responsible for monitoring students of different abilities such as social counsellors and gifted and talented specialists
- evaluation of the effectiveness of enrichment and remedial programmes
- ensuring that parents are informed of their children’s academic progress
- scrutiny of the work and portfolios of students in the different educational categories
- analysis of school documents and records.

4.2. **Personal development support***

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- The school’s positive impact on students’ personalities and the support offered to them, financially and morally.
- The school’s programmes and mechanisms for managing students’ behaviour.
- The school’s support for students in different situations, particularly in addressing their personal problems.
- The school’s degree of open-door policies, with students able to communicate with members of the administrative and educational staff, encouragement for them to reveal their personal problems and situations, the challenges they face, or to submit their complaints to the support body.
- The school’s handling and monitoring of students’ cases, and documenting them while ensuring their privacy and the confidentiality of their problems.
- The school’s practices for solving any problems occurring among students, such as harassment, physical, psychological and cyber bullying, exploitation and abuse in its various forms.
- The school’s culture for taking the necessary measures with any members of the administrative or teaching staff demonstrating non-educational practices, such as corporal punishment and verbal abuse.
- The school’s provision of various programmes and activities to induct new students at the beginning of school year and at other times to enable them to settle into the school.

To reach a judgement, reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school’s relevant procedures through a range of processes, including but not limited to:

- ensuring that the school is sufficiently familiar with students and the problems they face
- reviewing the procedures taken by the school in response to violations and non-educational practices, whether made by administrative and teaching staff or students

- identifying the school's provision to promote proper behaviour
- ensuring that the school documents abnormal behaviour and how it is dealt with
- ensuring safe cyber usage
- analysis of meetings with students, their parents, and the various educational, administrative and technical staff
- ensuring that the school focuses on special cases and physical and psychological problems, such as students coming from broken homes or suffering voluntary mutism, and the schools' procedures in dealing with and monitoring these problems and evaluating their effectiveness
- observing students in and out of lessons
- ensuring that parents are informed of the personal development of their children
- scrutiny of students' portfolios and special profile cases
- ensuring that the of number of social counsellors and administrative supervisors is appropriate to the number of students with particular needs
- ensuring that the school maintains records related to monitoring students' personal development.

4.3. **Reinforcement of experiences, talents and creativity***

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- The school's enrichment of learning and enhancement of students' abilities through providing activities and programmes that meet their interests and needs and develop their gifts and talents.
- The school's promotion of students' creativity, such as diversity of thinking, imagination, perception, fluency, expression, diversity and generation of ideas to expand their perceptions.
- The school's enhancement of the curriculum, with various classroom and extracurricular activities which meet students' different needs, interests and talents.
- The school's encouragement of staff, students and stakeholders to engage in field and educational trips and host visitors, which contribute to enhancing the experiences of students and developing their talents.
- The school's provision of transition programmes and activities to prepare students for the next stage of education or employment and support them in choosing different educational or vocational specialisations or tracks.

To reach a judgement, reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school's relevant procedures through a range of processes, including but not limited to:

- ensuring the breadth, diversity, suitability and regularity of activities and programmes that enhance students' experiences and enrich their life skills
- ensuring the variety of choices offered to students of different categories and the effectiveness of students' participation

- evaluation of programmes, activities, services and support resources
- analysis of meetings with students, their parents and the various educational and administrative staff
- scrutiny of work, portfolios and achievements of the different categories of students
- analysis of school documents and records.

4.4. **Environment safety, security and appropriateness***

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- The school's meeting of all legal and regulatory requirements regarding the safety and security of its buildings and facilities.
- The school's provision of a safe, risk-free learning environment to all its stakeholders at all times, despite any changing circumstances.
- The school's continuous maintenance of buildings, the quality control of various facilities and their appropriateness and comprehensiveness for the educational process, such as adequate sizes of classrooms for the numbers of students, the safety of laboratory materials and their upkeep and validity, hygiene and appropriateness of washrooms, suitability of drinking water, and adequate shaded areas.
- The school's provision of programmes and projects to raise health and environmental safety awareness.
- The school's monitoring of health, safety and security aspects during various school activities.
- The school's monitoring of students' attendance and departure and ensuring the safe use of school transportation.
- The school's supervision of the school canteen and ensuring the safety and validity of the food and healthy drinks.
- The school's follow-up of students' chronic and other illness cases.

To reach judgements, reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school's relevant procedures through a range of processes including, but not limited to:

- monitoring the school's risk assessment procedures and the necessary measures taken to address risks, such as evacuation drills and/or lock down
- ensuring the existence of firefighting systems, the validity of the fire extinguishers, and the validity of materials, tools and devices such as those used in scientific laboratories and workshops
- identifying the extent to which administrative and teaching staff are attentive, and students are aware of, potential risks and how to deal with them
- analysis of meeting with students, their parents, and various educational and administrative bodies
- analysis of parents' questionnaires

- observing classrooms and school grounds to identify the extent of students' safety during the school day and during their arrival and departure from school
- analysis of school documents and records.

4.5. Meeting and supporting the needs of students with disabilities

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- The school's effective use of human, equipment and physical resources to support students with different disabilities, and provision of optimal assistance to them in the learning process.
- The school's allocation of students with disabilities appropriately within the school environment, utilising the appropriate assistive technology, and providing them with multiple aids and programmes to complete their work inside and outside the classroom efficiently.
- The school's removal of obstacles to their physical and mental needs, and provision of the necessary services and facilities such as a means of transport and ramps.
- The school's integration of students with disabilities into school life and enabling them to contribute to all its aspects.

To reach judgement, reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school's relevant procedures through a range of processes, including but not limited to:

- ensuring the availability of required specialists such as a students' integration specialist, speech difficulties specialist, or any other provision to match students' disabilities
- examining school support and guidance plans and assessment of the quality of the school's programmes and services and provision of physical resources to support students with disabilities
- identifying the extent of awareness of the members of the administrative and educational bodies, and the awareness of students and others for dealing with students with disabilities
- analysis of meetings with students, their parents, and various educational and administrative bodies
- analysis of parents' questionnaires
- observation of the care given to students with disabilities in and out of classrooms
- analysis of school documents and records.

The Third Domain: Quality assurance of outcomes and processes

5. Leadership, management and governance aspect

This aspect focuses on verifying mechanisms to ensure the quality of all existing processes which are mainly the responsibility of the senior and middle management of the school. The aspect concentrates on accurate and rigorous self-evaluation processes, strategic planning which includes ambitious goals, effective mechanisms to develop employees, commitment to collaborative leadership principles, and development of work ethics and values to enhance a teamwork spirit among all. The aspect also focuses on the ability of the school's leadership at different levels to enhance positive practices in teaching and learning in order to raise students' academic achievement, in addition to organisational and administrative aspects.

The school's leaders are expected to utilise resources efficiently, ensuring an educational environment that provides high quality education. It is expected that this will be supported by programmes of local and community-shared activities with stakeholders, parents, influential figures, and the surrounding society in order to enhance students' learning experiences.

In private schools, a professional dialogue should be maintained at all times with the Board of Directors or Advisory Group – as applicable – to achieve effective cooperation with the school's leadership. The Board of Directors or Advisory group is expected to take responsibility for the school's performance and participate in setting the strategic plan. It is expected that private schools will undergo the processes of institutional listing and their qualifications placement on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), to develop and implement mechanisms to meet NQF requirements.

This aspect is judged on the quality of the following criteria:

5.1. Self-evaluation and improvement*

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- The school leadership's ability to implement a comprehensive and accurate shared self-evaluation and update it when needed.
- The leadership's use of the results of school self-evaluation to identify strengths and areas that need improvement.
- The leadership's identification of schoolwork priorities to bring about improvements in performance.
- The leadership's identification of available opportunities and potential threats and risks that might affect overall performance.
- The leadership's commitment, attention and ability to manage the self-evaluation processes continuously.
- The leadership's continuous review and evaluation of the school curriculum, updating it to reflect recent developments.
- The leadership's monitoring of the impact of school self-evaluation on development and improvement, especially those areas related to students' academic achievement and their personal development.

To reach a judgement, reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school's relevant procedures through a range of processes, including but not limited to:

- ensuring the availability of self-evaluation, analysis and monitoring mechanisms
- monitoring the extent of objectivity and transparency of the school's self-evaluation and identification of work priorities
- identifying the extent of awareness of the school's administrative and teaching staff of the importance of the self-evaluation and its results
- ensuring the extent of the availability of suitable human resources
- ensuring the school's ability to face challenges in a way that will enable it to improve its performance
- identifying the school's history of performance and its recent improvements
- analysis of meetings conducted with the school's different teaching and administrative staff and parents
- analysis of school documents, records and questionnaires.

5.2. **Strategic planning***

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- The school's links between the self-evaluation results and strategic planning based on schoolwork priorities.
- The school's translation of its mission and vision into procedures that lead to the achievement of desired improvements.
- The setting of the strategic plan, school improvement and departmental action plans, committee and team plans, with clear performance indicators to guide monitoring and evaluation based on the school's needs.
- The school's implementation of measures, processes and procedures in its plans, as scheduled.
- The monitoring and assessment of school plans based on specific performance indicators and accurate monitoring mechanisms.
- The school's application of the curriculum according to the educational standards, in line with students' needs and their age appropriate competencies.
- The school's organisation of curriculum schemes of work and sequence, and the processes linking subjects and different learning experiences.
- The school's compliance with curricula requirements as approved by the regulatory bodies, whether national or international, in terms of curricula choice and/or design (for private schools).

To reach a judgement, reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school's relevant procedures through a range of processes, including but not limited to:

- ensuring that strategic and action plans are realistic, aligned, and linked to the outcomes of the self-evaluation processes
- focusing on the implementation and clear impact of the plans on schoolwork aspects (the existence of written plans is not sufficient if they are not having an impact on practices)

- monitoring the school leadership’s awareness of schoolwork priorities, implementation and monitoring – through following up on their decisions, actual classroom practices, and procedures around the school
- identifying the awareness of the administrative and teaching staff of the importance of school plans and their implementation and follow-up
- ensuring the availability of curriculum schemes of work, sequence and implementation
- ensuring that the school holds regular and continuous curriculum reviews and updates
- analysis of meetings conducted with the school’s various teaching and administrative staff and parents
- analysis of the school’s documents and records
- ensuring accreditation of the implemented curricula by the relevant official authorities (for private schools).

5.3. **Development and monitoring of staff performance***

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- The leadership’s ability to motivate the employees towards professional development and to follow up the process.
- The efficiency of the leadership’s management of the administrative and teaching staff, and the delegation of roles and responsibilities in committees and internal teams according to their qualifications and expertise and the organisational structure.
- The leadership’s identification of teachers’ and other staff’ individual and group needs, including those related to their training and development, particularly with newly recruited staff.
- The leadership’s monitoring of teachers’ performance through classroom visits.
- The leadership’s efforts to raise professional competency for teachers and other staff, based on a system of continuous performance evaluation, supported by relevant professional development programmes.
- The leadership’s encouragement of its members to be creative, innovative and seek self-development.

To reach a judgement, reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school’s relevant procedures through a range of processes, including but not limited to:

- ensuring the clarity of senior and middle leadership and management roles in securing and monitoring professional development programmes provided to teachers and measuring the impact on their performance
- ensuring the implementation of the school leadership professional development programmes, activities and events to raise teachers’ and staff members’

professional competency

- ensuring the transition of the impact of training programmes on classroom practices and the extent of its reflection on students' achievement and progress
- identifying the extent of the awareness of the administrative and teaching staff of their training needs
- analysis of meetings conducted with the school's different teaching and administrative staff as well as with parents
- analysis of the school's documents and records.

5.4. **Modelling leadership principles***

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- The leadership's focus on being a source of inspiration and a model in the commitment to professional values and quality of performance among the staff, making staff enthusiastic about work and motivating them to bring about change.
- The leadership's ability to manage and organise daily schoolwork and tasks.
- The leadership's attention to the quality of teaching and learning processes and avoiding being isolated from the process.
- The leadership takes responsibility for complying with the legislative, regulatory and legal requirements of the concerned authorities.
- The leadership's enhancement of a positive relationship between themselves and staff in order to influence and improve performance and increase the sense of responsibility.
- The leadership's adherence to the principles of consultation, participation, teamwork, fairness and objectivity.
- The leadership's ability to handle and deal with initiatives, suggestions and complaints, thereby achieving the satisfaction of all stakeholders and increasing staffs' motivation to work and develop.
- The leadership's development of a well-established work mechanism which is systematic and is not affected by individual personal change.

To reach a judgement, reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school's relevant procedures through a range of processes, including but not limited to:

- identifying the extent to which the school leadership provides guidance and support to its members
- ensuring the school leadership's adoption of an open-door policy and team work
- observation of the involvement of the school's leadership team in the school and across its community, and in being an active role model
- identifying the responsiveness of the school's leadership team to school members' and stakeholders' suggestions, views and initiatives, and the nature of communication between it and the administrative and teaching staff and students

- noting the effectiveness of motivation and guidance methods and assessing their effectiveness
- analysis of meetings conducted with the school's teaching and administrative staff and parents
- analysis of the school's documents and records.

5.5. **Resources and facilities management**

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- The leadership ensures the availability and organisation of the physical and learning resources such as textbooks, tools, office equipment and communication technology services.
- The leadership's provision of guidance to school members on the wise and optimal use of educational resources.
- The leadership ensures the optimal activation and use of the learning resources to enable students to acquire and develop their knowledge, concepts and skills, to motivate them to learn, and to encourage them to participate actively in school life.
- The leadership ensures the optimal use of school buildings, facilities, grounds and other available resources to facilitate and support the teaching and learning processes.

To reach a judgement, reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school's relevant procedures through a range of processes, including but not limited to:

- assessing how well leaders use physical, financial and educational resources to achieve school goals and priorities
- reviewing lesson observations, evaluating how efficiently resources and facilities are used and how sufficient are they to support learning
- focusing on enrichment of the learning environment and utilisation of facilities that ensure a conducive educational environment and support high quality teaching
- ensuring the impact of the use of educational resources on students' learning, to enhance their expertise and broaden their experiences rather than promote the quality of the resources themselves
- analysis of meetings conducted with the school's different teaching and administrative staff and with parents
- analysis of the school documents and records.

5.6. **Communication with stakeholders**

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- The school makes use of national institutions, local facilities, various community events and programmes, local expertise such as the legislative assemblies, exhibitions, charitable societies, and other schools in educating, developing and expanding students' knowledge and expertise.

- The school is open to society through providing opportunities for the local community to participate in some of the school's activities and benefiting from students' participation in various external events, thereby raising the awareness of members of the local community.
- The local communities making use of the school's facilities to hold beneficial events and activities (the Parents' and Students' Councils should be encouraged to play an active role in achieving this).
- The school's utilisation of its website to provide diverse educational electronic services.
- The school's participation in the establishment of professional learning communities with other schools, to exchange experiences and provide support to each other.

To reach a judgement, reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school's relevant procedures through a range of processes, including but not limited to:

- determining the extent of the availability of strong relations between the school and the community, including parents and community institutions
- ensuring that the school is taking advantage of available resources in the local and wider communities to serve the teaching and learning process
- analysis of meetings conducted with the school's different teaching and administrative staff and with parents
- analysis of the school documents and records.

5.7. **Governance (for private schools)**

This can be inferred through the following indicators:

- The amount of strategic direction provided by the Board of Directors/Trustees/ Governing Body (the Board) to the school's leadership.
- The Board's effective contribution to developing the school plans and providing and supporting the school in financial matters.
- The Board's degree of taking responsibility for monitoring and investing in the staff, the school environment, and the learning resources.
- The Board's consideration of the separation of professional and administrative roles without interference, so that each level of leadership can perform its role effectively.
- The Board's regular and continuous accountability of the school leaders, holding them responsible for the school's performance and students' welfare based on the highest educational standards.
- The role of the Board in drawing and reviewing school policies.
- The degree by which the Board is held responsible to the related authorities for school results.

To reach a judgement, reviewers assess the effectiveness of the school's relevant procedures

through a range of processes, including but not limited to:

- evaluating the Board's role in providing a clear vision for the school's work consistent with its goals
- ensuring the role of the school owner(s) in supporting schoolwork without negatively affecting the school's technical processes
- focusing on whether management and/or the owner(s) are sufficiently aware of the ongoing work at the school
- ensuring the Board's provision of appropriate support and motivation that activates growth and development
- monitoring the Board's role in ensuring that the school has effective procedures and systems to meet its commitment to parents in relation to providing high quality outcomes, and its capacity to bring about further improvement
- evaluation of the relevant regulations and laws, and the extent that the school's staff have knowledge of them
- ensuring the availability of job descriptions that explain roles and responsibilities of Board members, committee members, administrative and teaching staff.
- analysis of meetings conducted with the school's different teaching and administrative staff
- analysis of the school documents and records.



Overall effectiveness interpretation

Judgement on the overall effectiveness is mainly dependent on the quality of the school's outcomes, namely students' academic achievement and their personal development and social responsibility. The quality of processes is taken into account, namely the aspects of teaching, learning and assessment and empowerment and meeting special needs. Consideration is also given to the role of leadership, management and governance in ensuring the quality of outcomes and processes, considering the extent to which these succeed in meeting students' needs, parents' satisfaction and pursuing the school's mission. Parents' views are sought through online questionnaires available on the BQA's website (www.bqa.gov.bh). Parents may also highlight any concerns during the interview with members of the review team. The school might also have its own evidence regarding parents' satisfaction.

The impact of both teaching and support on students' outcomes is checked. A focus is placed on the provision by leadership and management, and subsequently its impact on students' academic achievements and personal development. All these factors are considered and interlinked to enable the review team to reach a collective professional judgement on the school's overall performance.

In most reviews, there is symmetry and correlation between the judgements across the five key aspects. If outcomes are 'Good' it is generally due to the good quality of the school's processes, supported by its leadership and management. However, there may be exceptions, in a way that does not affect the overall effectiveness, in the symmetry and correlation of judgements between the school's processes and the effectiveness of its leadership and its outcomes, and in these cases the review team provides information to explain these and justify judgements. Such exceptions are reflections of the complexity frequently involved in arriving at a logical, consistent, evidence-based judgement on all review aspects, and subsequently on the overall effectiveness judgement of the school.

An example might be when the judgement of students' academic achievement is not consistent with the judgement of teaching, learning and assessment, then an explanation along the following lines might be offered:

'Students at a certain school might have good outcomes mainly due to the support provided by their parents which results in their high academic standards and attainment, while the review team finds that teaching, learning and assessment are at no better than a satisfactory level. Therefore, the school's overall effectiveness is judged as 'satisfactory'.

Judgements about the leadership, management and governance are usually in line with judgements on academic achievement, teaching, learning and assessment, except in rare cases. For example:

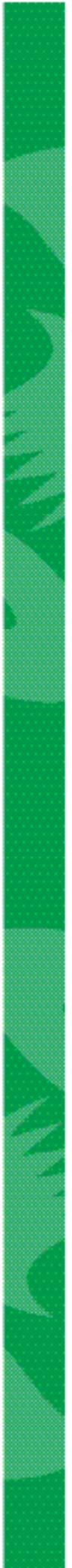
'The new leadership, supported by an energetic effective administrative team, has made a strong start but there has been insufficient time for this to affect the overall schoolwork and show in improving teaching, learning and assessment and in raising academic achievement.'

In such case, the review team members may make a professional judgement on leadership, management and governance as 'good' while judging both the academic achievement and teaching, learning and assessment as satisfactory. Thus, the overall effectiveness of the school is judged satisfactory.

Capacity to improve interpretation

Judging the school's capacity to improve considers the school's history, including recent performance, and the accuracy and effectiveness of self-evaluation processes and comprehensiveness of strategic planning. The availability of appropriate human resources is also considered, including administrative, technical and teaching staff and their abilities to face challenges. These factors are essential in enabling the school to improve its performance according to schoolwork priorities, enhancing and raising students' academic achievement and personal development to higher levels, or sustaining their existing high levels of performance.

Judgement of the capacity to improve is usually closely related to the judgement of leadership, management and governance except in rare cases. This is because of its strong link with strategic planning, self-evaluation, and recent improvements created by the school leadership, especially regarding students' academic achievement, their personal development and enhancing teaching, learning and assessment processes.



Review Guidance

Introduction

The review process helps develop and improve schools' performances, since it is measured through clear criteria. Additionally, it contributes to the identification of the strengths and areas for improvement within the school. This is underpinned by a professional discussion with the school about its work and its self-evaluation. The Review Report provides the school with the judgements and recommendations arising from the review aspects, overall effectiveness and capacity to improve. The task of improvement is the responsibility of the school and those who give it constant support.

The approach to reviews

Regular and continuous self-evaluation is essential for the school's performance, development and improvement, which is emphasised through the approach adopted in the review process. Schools are asked to evaluate and note down the results of the process in the BQA Self-Evaluation Form (SEF). Schools evaluate their performance according to the same measurement and criteria used by the reviewers to evaluate the school's overall effectiveness, capacity to improve, quality of main outcomes and processes, and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance in quality assuring both outcomes and processes. This is done against the criteria of the Review Framework which uses twenty-first century skills as the basis for the review. Accurate self-evaluation will enable the school to identify strengths and areas of improvement in all aspects of its work.

Reviewers use the evidence the school offers in its SEF, alongside other documents the school provides, to form hypotheses about the school. These are included in a Pre-Review Brief (PRB). Reviewers test the hypotheses by directly observing students and teachers at work, scrutinising students' work, analysing data in the school documents, and conducting interviews with administrative and teaching staff and students. Parents are surveyed and interviewed regarding their views concerning the school's performance. This all contributes to identifying the quality of the school's performance.

The review approach is based on collaboration between the school and the review team. Through the SEF the school provides the main source of information for the review team, thereby contributing to preparation of the PRB and the review plan to be discussed with the school's leadership. The team leader will also collaborate with the school to arrange the interviews between reviewers and the administrative and teaching staff, who can shed light on the main issues and hypotheses in the PRB. The school will be able to suggest where particular practices, strong or needing improvement, can be seen in the school.

Reviewers will form judgements about the school's provision based on the evidence they collect during the review process. Regular feedback to the school's leadership is an essential part of the review process, so that the school staff are fully aware of how the judgements are reached.

The review stages and procedures

The review process includes quality assurance procedures throughout its different stages. The review process has three key stages as follows:

Stage 1: Pre-review visit procedures

- The school sends the completed SEF within the deadline assigned to the concerned directorate, with the following documents:
 - the school's strategic plan and calendar/timetable of events and activities
 - school's development and improvement plans
 - lessons schedule, teachers' weekly schedule with clear period timings
 - students' attainment results
 - any key documents that clarify the analyses of the school's performance, either produced internally or from an independent body
 - assessment policy
 - parents' booklet - if available - or any similar documents

- The Lead Reviewer writes the Pre-Review Brief (PRB) covering the school's relevant issues based on the SEF, the PQ analysis and any other available school documents. The following will be outlined in the PRB:
 - apparent strengths and areas for improvement, particularly in relation to the criteria in the Review Framework
 - hypotheses about the performance of the school and factors likely to be influencing this
 - any remarks on the evidence
 - areas where the judgements in the SEF conflict with the evidence cited
 - internal inconsistencies between aspects of processes and outcomes, for example students' achievements against the quality of teaching, personal development against empowerment and meeting needs.

- The concerned Directorate notifies the school of the dates of the review and the name of the Lead Reviewer.

- The Lead Reviewer discusses the (PRB), the Review Plan and resulting requirements with the school's leadership in the scheduled meeting, then with the review team in the pre-review meeting.

Stage 2: During the review visit procedures

The on-site review will normally last for three days, in which reviewers will:

- observe lessons
 - scrutinise students' work and monitor their standards and progress
 - scrutinise samples of students' marked tests and examinations
 - analyse any available data and statistics about the performance of students
 - observe school activities
 - study any additional documents that are related to the review aspects
 - hold interviews and discussions with administrative and teaching staff, students and parents, and representatives from the Board of Directors/Trustees in private schools
 - inspect students' safety and security measures according to the 'Child Protection Protocol'
 - inspect the premises and the school's resources
 - provide daily feedback by the Lead Reviewer to the school leadership
 - provide final feedback of the provisional judgements to the school leadership.
- Reviewers are committed to the highest professional standards according to the following code of conduct:
 - evaluate objectively and impartially
 - report honestly, ensuring that judgements are fair and reliable
 - carry out their work with integrity
 - treat all those they meet with courtesy, and do all they can to minimise the stress on school staff involved in the Review
 - maintain purposeful and productive dialogue with those whose work is being evaluated, and communicate judgements clearly and frankly without revealing any names
 - respect the confidentiality of information, particularly about individuals and the nature of their work.

Stage 3: Post review visit procedures

- The school has the right to complain against the Review Team's conduct or appeal the review's provisional judgements in accordance with BQA policies and procedures.
- The Directorate concerned endorses the Review Team's judgements.
- The Lead Reviewer drafts the review report and the Directorate concerned sends a copy to the reviewed school for them to check it.
- The school scrutinises the draft report for factual accuracy and responds to it within five working days.
- The Directorate concerned sends the final report to the school and the report is published after approval by the BQA Board and the endorsement of the Cabinet.
- The Directorate concerned keeps a record of all evidence concerning each school review for a period of not less than one year.

Reviewing 'Outstanding' schools

A one-day special review is applicable to schools which were judged 'Outstanding' in their last review. At the end of the day, the review team presents feedback to the school, advising whether the school is sustaining its outstanding performance and continuously developing and improving or if it needs to undergo a full three days - or more - review to reach an accurate judgement about its overall effectiveness. The review will be scheduled according to the BQA's policies and procedures.

Monitoring process

Schools judged as 'Inadequate' are subject to the monitoring procedure in line with BQA's policies and procedures. Consequently, the school must produce an action plan identifying the steps that it will urgently take to achieve the necessary results. The planned actions must be tightly aligned with the report recommendations.

Non-Compliance with the review procedures

In the event of a school not complying with any of the review or monitoring requirements it will be given the least overall judgement as per BQA policies and procedures.

Explanations of key procedures

The following is a detailed explanation of key procedures which are essential in the different stages of the review:

Review quality assurance

Schools will be invited to give their views on the review, and the extent of reviewers' adherence to the code of conduct, to the quality assurance manager during his/her visit to the school. Schools will be asked to complete a questionnaire to further develop reviews, returning it to the Directorate concerned.

Child protection and security in adherence to the 'Child Protection Protocol'

The review team will gather information about the school from different sources, and may receive information or claims that could relate to harassment or threatening practices that compromise the safety and security of the students. Should the review team hear such claims from the PQs, the interview with parents or the students, the issue will be taken confidentially and very seriously with the following procedures taken:

- ensuring that the school has taken the appropriate measures regarding this issue
- the relevant authority will be notified.

The schools review Directorates are not responsible for dealing with these cases, but will highlight them and check whether the school is taking effective measures and that the relevant authority is notified.

Complaints

The Directorates expect reviews to be completed smoothly and efficiently, but in some exceptional cases the school may not be satisfied with an aspect of the review process. In this case, the school Principal should discuss this with the Lead Reviewer and the quality assurance manager immediately. If the matter is not resolved in the school, there are procedures for the school to follow with the Directorate concerned, and the Principal can file a formal complaint as per the BQA policies, procedures and timeframes.

Complaints can only relate to reviewers' behaviour, their compliance with the professional code of conduct, and the quality of communication and interaction during the review. Complaints cannot be filed about review judgements. In turn, according to BQA's policies and procedures, the review team is entitled to file a complaint in the event of any violation by the school.

Appeals

In the event of a school not being satisfied with the judgements of the review it has the right to submit a written appeal to the Director of the Directorate concerned. The formal letter should be accompanied with the official Appeal Form, with verified evidence enclosed. This should be carried out in accordance with the BQA policies, procedures and timeframe.

Lessons observations

Lesson observations are scheduled in order to follow up the PRB hypotheses. Reviewers will normally spend at least 60% of their time in school observing lessons. Focus will be on core subjects such as Arabic, mathematics, science, English and specialised subjects according to the educational tracks, as in technical education, and based on the language used in teaching. Reviewers will sample lessons which should be representative of the school, therefore not all teachers are necessarily seen while teaching. Reviewers will usually observe a whole lesson, except in some cases when only part of the lesson will be observed in which they will stay for at least 20 minutes.

Reviewers will review lessons' plans during observations, try to minimise disruption to lessons, and will not intervene in a lesson in any way. However, reviewers will seize the opportunity to talk sensitively with students about their work to identify their standards.

The Lead Reviewer will not report on observations of individual lessons or teachers to the Principal or other senior managers, except in exceptional circumstances such as when issues of safety are involved.

Discussions

Reviewers will aim through discussions to reach a clear view about different aspects of the review, including finding answers to the questions in the PRB that are related to the review criteria and aspects. All educational practices will be monitored, and their impact on students' achievement and personal development determined.

Discussions are likely to occupy a good proportion of the review time. Reviewers will conduct pre-arranged interviews with students to gain their views on the competence of the school in supporting their academic and personal progress, as well as having random meetings during breaks, extracurricular activities and Students' Council. Meetings will be held with parents, administrative and teaching staff and perhaps others if needed. The Lead Reviewer will ask to meet with representative(s) (of the Board of Directors in private schools).

Discussions will focus on:

- how self-evaluation judgements in the SEF were made
- how certain processes in the school are managed, such as self-evaluation and induction and settlement of new students
- what has been done about particular concerns
- school priorities and how they are identified
- recent developments and how they were implemented, and plans for the future
- perceptions of strengths and areas for improvement
- how the views of staff, students and parents are handled.

Examination of students' work

Reviewers will see students' work as they visit lessons. Reviewers will be also scrutinising and analysing the samples of students' work which the school will be asked to gather, such as the written work of students of different abilities in core and specialised subjects in different grades, as well as students' products, handiwork and achievements.

Issuing judgements

Judgements are reached collectively by the review team during the daily and continuous team meetings. These review team meetings are essential to complete the review requirements and agree on issues arising during the review. Discussions in these meetings are vital to reach collective judgements when evaluating the review criteria, aspects, overall effectiveness and capacity to improve.

The final judgements are not made by averaging or aggregating the grades for each criterion, nor is the 'overall effectiveness' judgement arrived at by averaging the grades for the individual criteria. These are professional judgements, made on the basis of weighing all the evidence, particularly those relevant to lessons observations, and taking into account documents and supporting information given by the school in the SEF and during the review, and considering the particular circumstances of the school.

Feedback

Effective reviews are not possible unless the Lead Reviewer engages in professional dialogue with the school's leadership. Throughout the review the Lead Reviewer will share with the school the review team's observations and emerging issues in a way that allows the school to discuss and respond. The review team will be open to receiving additional evidence in accordance with the review procedures and timeframe.

The feedback will be delivered as follows:

- the Lead Reviewer will discuss the positives and areas for improvement with the school's leadership in brief at the end of each day, and in detail the next morning
- the review team will feedback its overall findings and results to the school's leadership by the end of the last day.

This oral feedback is not considered a final report. The main judgements offered at the oral feedback are provisional and may change. If they do change as a result of the quality assuring procedures, the Principal will be informed by the Lead Reviewer before the written report is issued.

