Evaluation Report of the Quality of School Practices During Exceptional Circumstances

The New Horizon School - Janusan Branch (Private School)
Date of Evaluation: 22 - 26 May 2022

During the evaluation, the reviewers observed different educational situations, scrutinised students' works, analysed school's data and other documents. Reviewers also surveyed and met with staff, students and parents. This report summarises the findings and recommendations of the evaluation process.

The Directorate of Private Schools and Kindergarten Reviews (DPS), which is part of the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA) conducted an evaluation of the quality of the school's practices during exceptional circumstances according to the designated Framework.

Evaluation Summary

Section One: Quality of Students' Welfare	Section Two: Developing Students' Learning	Section Three: Quality of School Change Management	Classification of the School Overall Performance
Sufficient Response	Sufficient Response	Sufficient Response	Sufficient Response

Evaluation Scale:	Sufficient Response	Partially Sufficient Response	Insufficient Response

Overall Evaluation Outcomes

Key positive areas

ﭏ The shared vision and collaboration of school leaders and staff in assessing the school's situation and improving provisions with an appropriate response to the required health and safety procedures.

ﭏ The implementation of suitable teaching and learning strategies in the majority of lessons along with regular assessments and follow-up procedures that maintain continuity of students' learning and ensure their progress.

ﭏ The range of extracurricular activities catering for students' different needs and interests.

Recommendations

ﭏ Provide more rigorous academic support in Arabic and Hindi based on students' varied standards and skills.

ﭏ Ensure the impact of professional development programmes on the performance of teachers in some lessons with regards to effective use of learning time and support provided to low achieving students.

ﭏ Further motivate and provide participation opportunities to students attending hybrid lessons remotely to ensure their effective engagement.

Key Findings on Evaluation Sections

This section of the report highlights the 'positive areas' and 'areas for improvements' in each section as a result of the evaluation process. These were thoroughly discussed with the school's leadership and reinforced with examples during the evaluation process. These areas focus on indicators explained in the 'Handbook for Evaluating the Quality of School Practices During Exceptional Circumstances' published on the BQA website.

Section One: Quality of Students' Welfare 'Sufficient Response'

Evaluation Justification

ﺟ The school has a clear 'Assessment and Evaluation' policy to diagnose students' standards and assess their progress through regular formative and summative assessments. High achieving students are provided enrichment opportunities such as participating in 'Olympiad' competition and 'Star Kid' programme, while low achieving students are supported through the after school 'Golden Hours' remedial sessions. 'Individualised Educational Plans' are set and implemented by teachers and counsellors for 'Little Heroes' who are slow learners. Students' progress in these activities is adequately monitored and followed up. However, the support provided for students in Arabic and Hindi, particularly for non-native speakers, is not sufficient to cater for their varied academic standards and skills.

ﺟ A range of extracurricular activities is provided to students based on their different interests and needs through various subject clubs, music, craft and sports activities. They assume leadership roles through 'Student Council' committee, conducting school events and ensuring safety during students' dismissal. Gifted and talented students participate in external competitions and activities such 'Sastra Pratibha', 'Model United Nations' (MUN) and 'Injaz'. Students' attitude towards local and global issues is fostered in lessons and through activities such as 'Smile Drive', 'Plastic Recycle' and conducting thematic assemblies such as 'World Turtle Day'. The school offers sufficient opportunities for majority of students to participate in lessons, whether it is verbal or written. However, in hybrid lessons, some students attending remotely are provided less opportunities to participate in oral discussions, affecting their engagement in the learning process.

ﺟ The school provides adequate physical, social and psychological care to students through its adherence to health and safety procedures and providing counselling when required. Yoga sessions and workshops on topics such as 'Mindfulness' and 'Children's Rights' are conducted, which have positively impacted students' behaviour. Students are provided with technical support when needed and are educated on cyber safety through awareness sessions. Additionally, free books and financial aids are provided to needy students. Majority of students show punctuality and commitment in attending lessons and submitting tasks, while a few students who join remotely are not committed to attending some lessons.

Areas for Improvement

ﺟ Academic support in Arabic and Hindi based on students' varied standards and skills.

⟩ The participation opportunities and engagement of some students attending hybrid lessons remotely.

⟩ A few students' commitment in attending some hybrid lessons remotely

Section Two: Developing Students' Learning 'Sufficient Response'

Evaluation Justification

⟩ In majority of lessons, teachers use suitable teaching and learning strategies such as discussion, brainstorming and experimentation that appropriately develop students' understanding and skills. Learning resources such as videos, presentations and digital platforms including 'Zoom' are used appropriately to enhance students' experiences and ensure continuity of learning. However, the teaching methods in some lessons have less impact on students' learning, particularly in Arabic and Hindi which do not cater for students with low standards and skills.

⟩ Teachers implement regular verbal and written assessment in the majority of lessons to measure students' progress in achieving learning objectives such as comparing integers in mathematics and identifying common and proper nouns in English. Digital tools such as 'Kahoot' and 'Google Forms' are effectively used to assess students attending remotely, while mini whiteboards and worksheets are used by students on campus. Students receive adequate feedback and support in the majority of lessons and written work. However, in some less effective lessons and in students written work, the use of assessment results to provide constructive feedback and support to students is inconsistent, particularly to low achieving students.

⟩ Teachers plan and manage the majority of lessons adequately, and appropriately deliver them with clear instructions and seamless transition. Meaningful links are made to real life like 'Industries in Bahrain' in Arabic. In most lessons, students attending on campus are adequately encouraged and motivated to participate, however, some students attending remotely are less engaged in the learning tasks, hence, their participation is less effective due to inconsistent encouragement and use of learning time.

⟩ In the majority of lessons, students are encouraged to think critically and justify their answers like giving reasons for why 'flying birds don't cast their shadows on earth' in science. Sufficient opportunities are provided for students to learn independently, conduct research and prepare presentations on various topics like 'Lines of Symmetry in Two-Dimensional Shapes and Images' in mathematics and 'Coordinating Conjunctions in Creative Writing' in English. Students' adequate technological skills are reflected in the digital contents produced including educational documentaries on various topics like 'Bahrain Farms', 'Archaeological Sites and 'Historical Places'.

Areas for Improvement

⟩ Use of assessment in the less effective lessons and students' written work by providing constructive feedback to support students, particularly low achieving ones.

∫ Better use of learning time in some lessons, to ensure sufficient motivation and opportunities to participate for students attending hybrid lessons remotely.

Section Three: Quality of School Change Management 'Sufficient Response'

Evaluation Justification

∫ The school leaders' shared vision and collaboration with staff are reflected in assessing the school's situation, identifying work priorities and improving provisions. Subsequently, improvement plans and appropriate health and safety procedures are implemented to ensure the continuity of teaching and learning in response to the exceptional circumstances. The curriculum is reviewed, amended and its implementation is regularly monitored through introducing an interdisciplinary approach to subjects to ensure content and skills meet the needs of the different groups of students.

∫ The school reorganises its human resources by forming new teams such as the 'Health and Safety' team to implement safety procedures and the 'E-Learning Training' team (ELT) to provide technological training to teachers. Staff welfare is considered through regular surveys, offering monetary incentives, yoga sessions and 'Stress Management' courses. The professional competence of teachers is sufficiently raised and followed up through workshops on topics like 'Knowledge Construction', 'Critical Thinking' and 'Student-Centered Lessons', which is reflected in the adequate delivery of majority of lessons. However, the impact of professional development on the performance of teachers in some lessons is inconsistent with regards to the effective use of learning time and support provided to low achieving students.

∫ Material and educational resources are reviewed and adequately organised to meet the requirements of exceptional circumstances. This includes the provision of digital platforms and resources such as 'Tabbiemath' and 'Google Classroom'. The school ensures cyber safety by using secure 'Zoom' platform and rigorous monitoring procedures.

∫ The school establishes various channels of communication with its stakeholders such as newsletters, surveys and the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). In addition, the school maintains sufficient connections with the local community such as organizing workshops on 'First Aid and CPR' in collaboration with 'Middle East Hospital'. Connections to the global learning communities are also maintained through students interaction with their counterparts in Malaysia, Peru, and Indonesia in the 'International Costume Festival' while presenting Bahrain's traditional costumes, and inviting scientists from 'Indian Space Research Organisation' with regards to the 'Space Exploration' programme, which enriches students' experiences and knowledge.

Areas for Improvement

∫ The impact of professional development programmes on the performance of teachers in some lessons with regards to effective use of learning time and support provided to low achieving students.