



هيئة ضمان جودة التعليم و التدريب  
Quality Assurance Authority for Education & Training

# **Schools Review Unit Review Report**

**Al-Yarmook Primary Boys School  
Sitra - Central Governorate  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date of Review: 7-9 May 2012**

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## The Schools Review Unit

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The Schools Review Unit (SRU) is part of the Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training (QAAET), an independent national authority, attached to the Cabinet and set up under Royal Decree No. 32 of 2008, amended by the Royal Decree No. 6 of 2009. It is established to raise standards in education and training.

The SRU is responsible for:

- evaluating and reporting on the quality of provision in all schools and kindergartens
- establishing success measures
- spreading best practice
- Making recommendations for school/kindergarten improvements.

Review involves monitoring standards and evaluating the quality of provision against a clear set of indicators. The reviews are independent, objective and transparent. They provide important information for schools and kindergartens about their strengths and areas for improvement to assist in focusing efforts and resources as part of the cycle of school improvement in order to raise standards.

Review grades are awarded a four-point scale:

<b>Grade description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Outstanding (1)	Outcomes or provision are at least good in all areas and outstanding in the majority.
Good (2)	Outcomes or provision are at least satisfactory in all areas and good in the majority.
Satisfactory (3)	A basic level of adequacy. There are no major weaknesses, or the majority of areas are satisfactory. Some areas may be good.
Inadequate (4)	There are major weaknesses or the majority of areas are inadequate.

## Introduction

This review was conducted over three days, by a team of seven reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed lessons and other activities, examined students' written and other work, analysed data concerning the school's performance and other documents, and talked with staff, students and parents. This report summarises their findings and recommendations.

### Characteristics of the school

<b>School's name</b>		Al-Yarmook Primary Boys School											
<b>School's type</b>		Government											
<b>Year of establishment</b>		1984											
<b>Age range of students</b>		6 - 12 years											
<b>Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)</b>		<b>Primary</b>				<b>Middle</b>				<b>High</b>			
		Grades: 1,2,3 (Cycle 1) Grades: 4,5,6 (Cycle 2)				-				-			
<b>Number of students</b>		<b>Boys</b>	392			<b>Girls</b>	-			<b>Total</b>	392		
<b>Students' social background</b>		Most students belong to families of limited income											
<b>Classes per grade</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>Classes</b>	2	2	2	2	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Town /Village</b>		Sitra											
<b>Governorate</b>		Central											
<b>Number of administrative staff</b>		6											
<b>Number of teaching staff</b>		34											
<b>Curriculum</b>		Ministry of Education											
<b>Main language(s) of instruction</b>		Arabic											
<b>Principal's tenure</b>		A year											
<b>External assessment and examinations</b>		National examinations of QAAET											
<b>Accreditation (if applicable)</b>		-											
<b>Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification</b>		<b>Outstanding</b>				<b>Gifted &amp; Talented</b>			<b>Physical Disabilities</b>			<b>Learning Difficulties</b>	
		160				86			3			24	

<b>Major recent changes in the school</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appointment of a new principal in 2011-12</li><li>• Appointment of senior teachers for mathematics, science, and five newly appointed teachers in different subjects</li><li>• Appointment of a technology specialist</li><li>• Providing the school with 16 laptops, and equipped all Cycle 1 classrooms with interactive boards</li><li>• The school is included in the Sharing Improvement Partner programme in 2010-11.</li></ul>
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## Table of review judgements awarded

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

### Key:

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

## Review judgements

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### Overall effectiveness

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

#### **Grade: 3 Satisfactory**

Overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory and improving, though in line with the judgement in the previous review in 2009. Though students' academic achievement and teaching and learning are satisfactory, all others aspects are good. Various teaching strategies have differing impact on the students' performance. Different age-groups of students are offered various types of support and guidance that enable them to achieve improving standards in most core subjects and acquire basic skills in Arabic. However, their acquisition of English is below age-related expectations and national examinations results are below average. Most students are self-confident, well behaved and responsible. They participate enthusiastically in school activities and lessons. The school's administration exerts substantial efforts to achieve goals that focus on correct priorities. Students and their parents are quite satisfied with the school's provision.

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

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

The school capacity to improve has improved from being judged satisfactory in the previous review to good in this one. This is mainly due to the implementation and impact of the school's strategic plan, which is based on the results of a comprehensive self-evaluation. This has enabled leadership to diagnose its current situation, specify points of strength and those that need improvement, and assess the actions implemented. Action planning, the impact of professional development programmes on learning and the secure school environment have enabled students to achieve better academic standards than previously. Students' personal development has been enhanced and is well set to continue. Improving the classrooms and school environment through displays of charts enriches the curriculum and the good use of the school's facilities has promoted the students' interests and experiences.

## **Students' achievement**

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

#### **Grade: 3 Satisfactory**

Grades 3 and 6 students attained below and well below average standards in the national examinations in the core subjects from 2009 to 2011. Standards in mathematics are slightly better than those in other subjects. Although there is some improvement in the results of the 2011 examinations, this is only marginally reflected in lessons, where progress is satisfactory. Students attained high pass rates in the first semester examinations in 2011-12 in most core subjects, which are in line with the proficiency rates in Cycle 1, while these results varied in Grades 4 and 5. These high success rates are reflected in the students' good knowledge and understanding which is demonstrated in good lessons, as a result of the good teaching and learning techniques and strategies chosen. However students' standards fluctuate in other lessons due to the varied support offered by teachers.

Most students acquire the basic skills expected in Arabic in lessons in Cycle 2, such as grammar rules, reading, communication and also in IT. Nevertheless, their standards in writing in Arabic and English, and in mathematical and scientific skills are too varied. English skills, especially in Cycle 1 have decreased recently, as only a few acquire age-appropriate reading and writing skills. In contradiction, over the last three years, academic results from 2009 to 2011 show high success rates in the core subjects across the school. Whilst reflecting the expected levels of progress in Arabic lessons, achievement is not of the same standards in English, especially in Cycle 1, mainly due to ineffective teaching methods. Generally, students of different levels achieve standards that adequately match their abilities, as a result of the appropriate support and guidance they receive during class activities and homework. Outstanding students, low achievers in Cycle 1 and students with learning difficulties are sufficiently well looked after, especially during Arabic and class teaching lessons. These lessons have a good impact on the academic achievement of these groups of students. Low achieving students in Cycle 2 achieve less well.

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

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

Most students enthusiastically participate in the school's activities, such as the students' council, the cleanliness, discipline, and sport committees, and in lessons. This in turn, has promoted their self-confidence and enables them to freely express their opinions. Most students are able to take responsible roles during the morning assembly programmes and

the journalism committee, which help them to work independently. School records prove that most students are punctual, regular and highly committed to attending classes on time. They behave very well and are fully aware of their rights and responsibilities during lessons and activities. Most of them care for the school's property and keep it in a good condition as they are committed to 'Code of Conduct Programme', which motivates and instils values which help build their characters.

The students respect each other as well as their teachers and are sensitive to the feelings of others. This enhances their sense of belonging to the school and makes them feel safe and secure. The school's leadership develops good manners and values by honouring students who participate in school activities. It also focuses on Bahrain's heritage and culture through allocating special corners for displaying related issues, such as a model of 'AlKhamees Mosque'. Most students show good understanding of Bahraini heritage and traditions, and Islamic values.

## **The quality of provision**

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

#### **Grade: 3 Satisfactory**

Teachers' subject knowledge and their enthusiasm are reflected in their lesson planning, which becomes quite varied during the teaching of lessons. Most teachers apply diverse warm-up activities that lead to developing the context of the lessons effectively and enable students to achieve lessons' objectives. Effective teaching strategies such as debate, dialogue, teamwork and learning through play motivate the majority of students and encourage them to make progress in their academic achievement, especially evident in good lessons. Teachers use the school's educational resources, such as interactive boards, data shows and models well. However the impact of these educational aids on attracting students' attention and encouraging them to participate is inconsistent.

Although students' acquisition of concepts, knowledge and skills is good in core subjects at Cycle 1 and in IT and Arabic at Cycle 2, it fluctuates in mathematics and science. Standards in English are low. Although teachers manage lessons and students' behaviour appropriately, time management is an issue. Honouring students with stars, using the 'Stars Board Project', and giving verbal praise influences the students' performance positively, especially the low achievers. Teachers provide appropriate opportunities for developing higher order thinking skills in lessons by using open-ended questions, problem solving techniques, and discovery methods, which adequately develop the students' skills of analysis and deduction. Teachers employ collaborative learning techniques by offering

students chances to work in groups and challenge their abilities during activities. This has good impact on developing their self-confidence and expanding their cognitive and mental abilities.

Most teachers support students' learning by assigning adequate amounts of homework, taking into account their different abilities. Correction of notebooks and oral and written feedback is inconsistent in mathematics and science and at lower levels in English. This has a negative impact on students' learning. Although teachers use various evaluation techniques such as tests, direct observation, verbal and written formative assessments both individually and collectively, these are not effective enough in some lessons. The disparity in making use of the results from these evaluations in diagnosing the students' educational needs has not helped raise students' academic achievement.

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

**Grade: 2 Good**

The school offers many extra-curricular activities, which are appropriate to students' educational needs such as the junior journalist, discipline, and sport committees. These enhance their various interests and experiences. The school has set quarterly plans to implement the curriculum, and evaluates Cycle 1 books. The majority of teachers make useful links among different subjects. Projects like 'Educational School Bags' and the 'Virtual Library' enrich the curriculum. Outstanding and gifted students are encouraged to participate in competitions like 'Sindbad', and contests in mathematics, such as memorizing multiplication tables. These help equip them with many necessary life-skills for the next stage of their education. The school develops the students' understanding of their rights and responsibilities well, through disseminating projects in classrooms and around the school such as 'Uncle Naseh', 'Right and Duties Boards', and 'I Play and Clean', which encourage students to take responsibility. The school also promotes students' sense of belonging to the community and the nation, through encouraging them to participate in national celebrations and the students' council election. The school's environment is conducive to learning, with its grassed yards, plants, and flowers. Classrooms are enriched with displays of students' works, attractive paintings and educational aids, such as geometric shapes and the multiplication tables that are drawn on the stairs.

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

### **Grade: 2 Good**

New students are inducted through a programme that helps them settle easily. It includes acquainting them with school's facilities, and briefing their parents about their children's performance. Preparing students for the next stage of education is carried out by organising a visit for Grade 6 students to 'Awal Intermediate School', and offering Grade 3 students some guidelines concerning Cycle 2 procedures. The school evaluates the students' personal development and meets their personal needs, for example, by offering 'Winter Aid' and locating a class of disabled students on the ground floor. Their educational needs are inconsistently met. Low achieving students at Cycle 1 are offered tutoring during activity lessons, while their peers at Cycle 2 have remedial classes during the break. Special educational needs students receive quality learning in the 'Adoption Learning Project'. The school offers advice to students when they face problems, and activates the 'Behaviour for Learning' project, which has a significant impact on reducing cases of misbehaviour. Leadership effectively communicates with parents to inform them of the progress of their children by various means, including periodic written reports. The security and safety committee has made good efforts to make the school's environment safe, healthy, and secure through evaluating risks, inspecting the cafeteria, training students on fire-drill and evacuation and maintaining the school's cleanliness and property.

## **Leadership, management and governance**

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

### **Grade: 2 Good**

The school has a vision and a mission that focuses on academic achievement. The school's stakeholders participated in drafting the vision and the mission that are clearly reflected in the educational practices and disproportionately in different teachers' performance. The school's leadership focuses on correct priorities, which are teachers' professional development to raise students' academic achievement, personal development, and improve the school environment. The school's strategic plan is based on accurate self-evaluation, which includes a variety of well organised procedures that cover different aspects at the school's work. These include evaluation of the school's environment and classrooms, visits to classes to assess performance and the seeking of stakeholders' opinions through

questionnaires and interviews. The senior staff also evaluate all its activities and programmes on an on-going basis, supported by the internal and external teams for improvement. They regularly analyse the performance results according to the standards of the 'Bahraini School of Excellence'.

An effective action plan has emerged out of the strategic plan that includes explicit and specific criteria for success, and significantly contributes to the improvement of the students' general behaviour and enhances their personal development, in addition to improving the school's environment. Classrooms are enriched with educational materials that enhance the curriculum and contribute to the development of the teaching and learning processes. The school's leadership motivates the staff, considers their proposals and initiatives, encourages teamwork and educational projects as 'Leadership for Outputs', and 'Behaviour for Learning'. Although still satisfactory, all of these efforts are positively reflected in the slight improvement in the overall performance of the school.

Teachers receive training through workshops such as 'Differentiation' and 'Criteria for an Outstanding Lesson'. The school's leadership also follows through to ensure impact from the teachers' performance development programmes, which contributes to raising their professional competency. It seeks students' and their parents' views and responds to their requests, for example the provision of recreational sport activities during breaktimes, and providing students with afternoon classes prior to their final examinations. The school has good links with the local community, for example its collaboration with the nearby health centre and Sitra Social Centre. Most of the school's facilities, such as the learning resource centre, the gymnasium, the e-learning classroom and the educational clubs are very effective, which have expanded the students' interests and developed their cognitive skills.

## The school's main strengths

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- The school's strategic planning mechanisms, its focus on priorities for improvement, motivation of its staff and its good links with the local community
- Students' sense of security, their self-confidence, good behaviour, awareness, ability to assume responsibility, and their enthusiasm to participate in the school activities
- Enrichment of the curriculum through deployment of the school's environment, and the diversity of the extra-curricular activities that meet various interests of the students
- Advice, guidance and support programme offered to students, especially students with learning difficulties.

## Recommendations

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

- raise the students' academic achievement in the core subjects, especially in English
- spread and share the good practices of teaching and learning, and develop them to include:
  - making use of the lessons' evaluation to meet the students' needs, especially low achievers
  - challenging students' abilities at all levels and develop their higher order thinking skills
  - enhancing the skills of collaborative learning among students
  - taking students' individual differences into account more and providing appropriate support for low achievers, especially in Cycle 2.