



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

# **Schools Review Unit Review Report**

**Balqees Primary Girls School  
Demistan - Middle Governorate  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 13-15 December 2009**

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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 body set up under Royal Decree No. 32 of 2008 amended by Royal Decree No. 6 of 2009. It was established to raise standards in education and training.

The SRU is responsible for:

- Evaluating and reporting on the quality of provision in schools
- Establishing success measures
- Spreading best practice
- Making recommendations for school improvement

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

Review grades are awarded on a four point scale:

<b>Grade description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Outstanding (1)	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are at least good in all or nearly all respects and is/are exemplary or exceptional in many.
Good (2)	This is the norm which is expected and describes provision or outcomes that is/are better than the basic level. Practice will be at least sound and there may be some particularly successful approaches or outcomes.
Satisfactory (3)	This describes a basic level of adequacy, there are no major areas of weakness which substantially affect what students, or significant groups of students, achieve. Some features may be good.
Inadequate (4)	This describes situations where there are major weaknesses which affect the outcomes for students.

## **Introduction**

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### **Scope of the Review**

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

### **Information about the school**

Gender of students: Girls

Number of students: 657

Age range: 6-12 years

### **Characteristics of the school**

Balqaes Primary Girls School, founded in 1978 in Demistan, is one of the Central Governorate schools. The age range in the school is from 6 to 12 years, and there are 657 students. Most students come from middle-income families. Students are distributed across 24 classes: four for each grade. The school categorises 132 of its students as gifted and talented, 187 as outstanding and 65 as having learning difficulties. The Principal is in her first year in post and the assistant principal is in her eighth. There are 11 administrative staff and 40 teaching staff. There are no senior teachers for the science, mathematics or English departments. The school has joined King Hamad's Schools of the Future project this year.

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## Overall effectiveness

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

#### **Grade: 2 (Good)**

The overall effectiveness of Balqees Primary Girls School is good. It gains good approval from students and their parents.

The students' academic achievement is good. Students achieve good levels in their academic achievement, responding to the teaching methods used in most lessons. There is a correlation between the good pass rates and proficiency levels in most subjects, which also match students' attainment in most of the good lessons. Students also make good progress in lessons and class activities; individual differences are taken into account and students make appropriate progress according to their abilities.

Students' personal development is good. Students participated enthusiastically in about half of the observed lessons; the teaching methods here were exciting and placed students at the centre of the educational process. Students' self-confidence and ability to work independently and take responsibility is appropriately reinforced. Students are not, however, given enough opportunities to develop their analytical thinking skills. Most students behave in an aware and responsible manner; their conduct inside and outside lessons is generally good and they take care of school property.

The effectiveness of the teaching and learning processes is good. Most teachers are well acquainted with the study materials; their knowledge was clearly applied in half of the observed lessons, where varied teaching strategies such as learning through play and role play were used effectively to develop students' motivation and enthusiasm to learn. In some lessons, students are given suitable opportunities for cooperative work. Teachers use varied assessment methods to gauge the extent to which students meet lesson objectives; these methods help to meet the educational needs of students, especially in good lessons. Most homework assigned to students is set at the same level for all.

The quality of curriculum presentation and enrichment is good. Indoor and outdoor activities and events enhance students' experiences, foster their interests and have a positive effect on their personal development. The school develops a strong sense of citizenship in students, who sing the national anthem enthusiastically and take part in various national events. It also uses the school and classroom environment well to enrich the curriculum by celebrating students' written work and pictures both inside and outside lessons. Students

gain good basic skills in curriculum subjects. Linking between subjects, however, is carried out in a limited manner in the first cycle.

The quality of guidance and support for students is good. Students' educational needs are diagnosed and met effectively in the good lessons and through remedial programmes. The school also provides advice and guidance, in the form of lectures and awareness-raising sessions, to help solve students' problems; such actions have reduced poor behaviour. The school uses various channels of communication to keep parents updated about their daughters' academic progress, which parents appreciate. Students feel safe and secure in the school, which carries out appropriate risk assessments.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is good. The school has a shared vision and mission that can be seen in most of the school's practices and have had a good impact on the academic achievement and personal development of many students. It also has a strategic plan focused on improvement and development; some of the plan's objectives, however, do not contain clear performance indicators. The school assesses most aspects of its work. Despite the shortage of senior teachers in some of the core subjects, the school has continued to operate effectively; senior managers have used staff resources effectively, developed good teamwork and fostered motivation and enthusiasm in their staff. This has reflected positively on the school's overall performance.

## Does the school have the capacity to improve?

### **Grade: 2 (Good)**

The school's capacity to improve is good. Its leadership is conscious of its strengths and areas for development. It evaluates most aspects of the school's work. It believes both in improvement and in the principle of shared decision-making and in sharing that view with its ambitious teaching and administrative staff. The school administration also works well with its available resources, inspiring and encouraging both the teaching and administrative staff. This motivation is reflected in teaching performance, with half of the observed lessons being good. The school's strategic plan focuses appropriately on improvement, and is modified according to emerging priorities. Students have made progress in their academic achievement over the past three years. The school, however, faces some challenges related to the shortage of senior teachers for Mathematics, Science and English.

## **The school's main strengths and areas for development**

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### **Main Strengths**

- Leadership and management
- Academic achievement
- Students' behaviour
- Diagnosing and meeting students' personal and educational needs
- Teaching and learning strategies
- Health and safety
- Extra-curricular activities
- School environment
- Basic skills

### **Areas for development**

- Analytical thinking skills
- Differentiation in activities and homework
- Performance indicators in strategic plan
- Cooperative work

## **What the school needs to do to improve**

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

- Spread good practices in teaching and learning
- Develop teaching and learning strategies, taking into consideration:
  - Analytical thinking skills
  - Cooperative work
  - Differentiation in activities and homework.
- Set measurable performance indicators in the strategic plan.

## Overall judgements

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Aspect	Grade: Description
<b>The school's overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2: Good</b>
The school's capacity to improve	2: Good
Students' academic achievement	2: Good
Students' progress in their personal development	2: Good
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	2: Good
The quality of the curriculum delivery	2: Good
The quality of guidance and support for students	2: Good
The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management	2: Good