



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

# **Schools Review Unit**

## **Review Report**

**Al Ahad Al Zaher Secondary Girls School**  
**Hamad Town - North Governorate**  
**Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 22-24 November 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 nine 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: 1,551

Age range: 16-18 years

### **Characteristics of the school**

Al Ahad Al Zaher Secondary Girls School is one of the North Governorate schools in Hamad Town. The school was established in 2002. The age range in the school is from 16 to 18 years and there are 1,551 students. Most students come from multi-cultural, middle-income families of modest education. Students are distributed over 50 classes: 13 for students of the first level, 19 for the second, and 18 for the third. The school's students are categorised as follows: 0.49% of the students have learning disorders, about 12.7% are outstanding, about 6.6% are talented and 12 students have physical disabilities. There are 186 teachers, of whom 13 are substitutes, and 17 administrative and technical staff. The headmistress and the two assistant headmistresses were appointed four years ago. The school is part of King Hamad's Schools of the Future project.

## Overall effectiveness

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

### **Grade: 3 (Satisfactory)**

The effectiveness of Al Ahad Al Zaher Secondary Girls School is satisfactory overall, with some strong aspects in leadership and management and support and guidance. Students and their parents are satisfied with the school.

The students' academic achievement is satisfactory. Pass rates and proficiency vary in the core subjects compared with those for other subjects, based on the final results from last year. Those rates, however, match the proficiency levels in the classroom. In written work, students achieve the expected levels in Arabic and Science but are less successful in Mathematics and English. Students generally make appropriate progress in lessons and have achieved satisfactory pass rates for the past three years. In those lessons where teaching takes individual or group differences into account, most students achieve levels corresponding to their abilities.

Students' personal development is satisfactory. Most students attend regularly and are punctual. Some students participate enthusiastically in school life through various activities, committees, and in a few lessons. Students are, however, given little opportunity to develop their analytical thinking abilities and self-confidence. Most students show a sense of awareness and responsible behaviour in lessons and around the school but there is some poor conduct outside lessons, which affects the relationships among students. Generally though, students feel safe and secure in the school. The school makes appropriate efforts to assess risks and encourage good conduct, which assists in students' personal development.

The effectiveness of the teaching and learning process is satisfactory. Some teachers know the study materials well and reflect this knowledge in their effective teaching strategies and their ability to provide students with skills, understanding and knowledge. Some teachers run their lessons effectively; they allocate time well and share lesson aims with their students. In weaker lessons, however, students are not supported sufficiently and their abilities are insufficiently challenged. Students are given some homework and activities but the work tends to be the same for all students and it is not regularly followed up and corrected on time. Some teachers employ varied evaluation methods in their lessons and benefit from the results in other lessons; most teachers, however, rely on verbal evaluation, which does not help in diagnosing and meeting the educational needs of students.

The presentation and enrichment of the curriculum are satisfactory. The curriculum presentation relies heavily on the use of textbooks and students gain basic subject skills at varying levels, which can be clearly seen in the weak skills in English compared to those of Arabic, Information Technology and Mathematics. The school develops students' understanding of their rights and duties appropriately, as well as developing their spirit of citizenship. It provides some satisfactory activities, field trips and extra-curricular activities to enrich the curriculum and help to broaden the experiences and interests of some students. The school makes its environment, classrooms and facilities attractive where possible, as well as celebrating students' work in some areas.

Support and guidance for students are good. The school, through the office of the academic advisor, runs a good induction programme for newly enrolled students and their parents, which helps students settle into the school more easily. The school also inducts students well for their next stage of learning or employment, especially the third stage. The students, however, do not all acquire the skills needed for that stage, such as speaking English adequately in class. The school also pays attention to diagnosing and meeting the personal and educational needs of students, although educational needs are not met as successfully as personal needs. The school offers advice, guidance and support to solve problems that students might face. This has had a good effect on the general conduct of most students and increased their motivation for learning. The school communicates well with parents about their daughters' progress.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is good. The school's leaders and most senior teachers have a clear vision that focuses on achievement. The school also prepares an annual general development plan based on identifying aspects of strength and weakness. This plan has contributed to the organisation of most aspects of the school's work, and to making progress and developing through continuous evaluation and follow-up. Recent changes to the method of managing performance in the school have been successful and contributed to appropriate changes to practices. The whole school – leaders, administrators and teaching staff – works as one team. This motivates teachers to work wholeheartedly and gives them the chance to raise their professional competency. Some teaching, however, especially of English, has not improved. The school seeks the opinions of students and their parents and responds to them in a satisfactory manner. The school recognises the challenges it faces to making further improvement, such as the large number of students, the shortage of senior teachers, and the shortage of educational facilities.

**□ Does the school have the capacity to improve?**

**Grade: 3 (Satisfactory)**

The school has a satisfactory capacity to achieve improvement and development. The schools leaders and managers work efficiently and enthusiastically, and are motivated to bring about change and development. The school works to an annual general development plan based on pinpointing strengths and weaknesses according to SWOT analysis. The plan contains appropriate indicators for measuring performance. All departments of the school carry out evaluations to ensure their own plan is being followed and to monitor its effectiveness. The plan also helps in monitoring teachers' performance and analysing students' results. The work of the school's leaders and managers and the attention they have given to the learning and teaching process and support and guidance programmes has had a significant impact on the relative rise in pass rates in most subjects, and on the gradual improvement in students' general conduct over the years. The school's own assessment of its position, as set out in its self-evaluation form, broadly matches the results of this review. The school recognises the challenges it faces to making further improvement, such as the large number of students, the shortage of senior teachers, and the shortage of educational facilities.

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

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### **Main Strengths**

- School development plan
- Students achieve suitable levels of progress, especially in Arabic language and Science
- Students contribution to school life
- Development of citizenship and understanding of rights and duties
- Increasing student's experience through extra-curricular activities
- Providing advice, guidance and support when required.

### **Areas for development**

- Developing students' analytical thinking.
- Challenging students' abilities
- Developing basic skills, especially in English language and mathematics.
- Using assessment in diagnosing and meeting the educational needs of students
- Employing the school environment to enrich curriculum.
- Relationships among students.



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

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

- Intensify the efforts to work with students to limit misconduct
- Develop teaching and learning strategies, taking into consideration the following:
  - Challenging students' abilities
  - Developing students' analytical thinking
  - Developing greater basic skills especially in English language and mathematics
  - Using assessment to further meet the educational needs of students.
- Make up for the shortage in administrative and teaching staff.

## Overall judgements

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Aspect	Grade: Description
<b>The school's overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3: Satisfactory</b>
The school's capacity to improve	3: Satisfactory
Students' academic achievement	3: Satisfactory
Students' progress in their personal development	3: Satisfactory
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	3: Satisfactory
The quality of the curriculum delivery	3: Satisfactory
The quality of guidance and support for students	2: Good
The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management	2: Good