



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

Schools Review Unit Review Report

**Abu Al-Alaa Al-Maari Primary Boys School
Muharraq – Muharraq Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date reviewed: 26 - 28 April 2010

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The Schools Review Unit

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:

Grade description	Interpretation
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

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 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: Boys

Number of students: 376

Age range: 6 -12 years

Characteristics of the school

Abu Al-Alaa Al-Maari Primary Boys School, founded in 1968, is one of the Muharraq Governorate's schools. The age range in the school is from 6 to 12 years, and there are 376 students. Most students belong to limited-income backgrounds. The school categorised 18 students as talented and gifted, 100 as outstanding and 32 as having learning difficulties. The students are distributed across 12 classes: six classes for each of the first and second educational cycles. There are 22 teaching staff, including four substitutes, and nine administrative and technical staff. The Principal is in his first academic year at the school. The school does not have enough classrooms and buildings for the number of students it has and lacks a science laboratory, design room and sports hall. Further, it has shortages in human resources, such as a data technician, specialists for learning difficulties and talented and outstanding students, and senior teachers for core subjects such as English and Arabic. The school is part of King Hamad's Schools of the Future project.

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 3 (Satisfactory)

The overall effectiveness of Abu Al-Alaa Al-Maari Primary Boys School is satisfactory. The school has good aspects in the quality of support and guidance given to students and in management and leadership. Parents and students are very satisfied with the school.

Students' level of academic achievement is satisfactory. Students achieve high success rates in most core subjects. such rates vary with the proficiency rates, particularly in English and Mathematics in the second cycle of education but are inconsistent with some students' levels in basic skills in satisfactory lessons. The success rates of most students in most core subjects have risen over the last three academic years and are in line with the progress students make in good lessons, where effective teaching techniques are used. Students with learning difficulties and low achievers reach an appropriate level of academic achievement through the provision of remedial programmes and activities in some lessons. Some talented and outstanding students do not make progress appropriate to their abilities; the activities they are offered do not always meet their learning needs.

Students' personal development is satisfactory. The majority of students are punctual to classes and attend school on time. Most of the second cycle students enthusiastically contribute to school life; they take part in internal and external activities that enhance and develop their interests and show obvious enthusiasm in most lessons. Some students are given opportunities to take leadership roles in the students' council and some extra-curricular activities. This has developed their self-confidence and their ability to work independently. In some lessons, however, few such opportunities are given. Students' analytical thinking skills are appropriately developed by a range of questioning and activities. Some students take part in competitions that develop their higher thinking skills, such as the 'Mathematics Olympics'. Most students enjoy good relations with their teachers and show mutual respect for each other and teachers. Students generally feel secure and safe in the school. The school has taken appropriate disciplinary action to deal with the inappropriate behaviour of one teacher and regularly follows this up with the authorities concerned.

The effectiveness of teaching and learning processes is satisfactory. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and use appropriate teaching strategies to present most lessons effectively, especially in the first cycle. The teaching strategies used in the second cycle are

traditional and rely on transferring facts and direct questioning. This reduces the opportunities for students' development of their higher thinking skills and does not challenge their abilities sufficiently. Although students are given collaborative work opportunities in lessons, most of them are not planned. Students are assigned homework but it is mostly at the same level regardless of students' different abilities. They are not given sufficient feedback to help them recognise their mistakes or to enhance their vocabulary. Teachers used varied assessment methods in most observed lessons, which helped ensure that lesson objectives were achieved and students' learning needs were met. The remaining lessons relied on direct verbal questioning.

The provision and enrichment of the curriculum are satisfactory. The school seeks to promote students' sense of responsibility and duties appropriately. It also seeks to develop students' sense of citizenship through their participation in various activities and events; this has a positive effect on their behaviour and sense of responsibility. A number of extra-curricular activities to broaden students' experience and interests are provided but only for the second cycle students. Students acquire adequate basic skills in Arabic, English and IT but their mathematics skills are less well developed. Subjects are linked well in most lessons of the first cycle. The school uses its environment appropriately to enhance the curriculum; its facilities are cared for well and students' work is celebrated by displays throughout the school. The school provides a motivating learning environment.

The quality of support and guidance given to students is good. The induction programmes for new students help them to settle easily into the school. Most students are also prepared well for their next phases of education through their acquisition of the skills they need for these phases. The school assesses the personal and educational needs of the students, organises appropriate programmes that meet their different needs and supports them inside and outside the classroom. The school satisfactorily communicates with the students' parents through different channels such as holding educational meetings and sending text messages. A health and safety committee helps ensure that students, administrative and teaching staff enjoy a healthy and safe environment.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is good. The school has a clear vision focused on achievement that has been clearly translated in good lessons and in some satisfactory lessons. The school also has an up-to-date strategic plan with clear objectives, which is based on an analysis of the school's strengths and areas for development. The school has carefully evaluated most aspects of its work, such as academic achievement and the learning resource centre. Managers seek to build strong relationships with the administrative and teaching staff to motivate them. They also develop the professional competency of staff by conducting class visits and continuously assessing them. This has had a positive effect on some lessons, especially in the first cycle. Although its physical and learning resources are limited, the school generally uses resources well to serve the educational process. The school makes good arrangements to cover its shortages in

administrative and technical staff by delegating and sharing out duties; these efforts have been positively reflected in raising students' personal and academic levels. The school seeks the opinions of students and their parents through their respective councils and responds to their proposals when it can.

□ Does the school have the capacity to improve?

Grade: 3 (Satisfactory)

The school has a satisfactory capacity to develop and improve. It sets a strategic plan focused on achievement. It also seeks to raise the school's general performance based on identified development priorities. The school conducts a self-evaluation process of most of aspects of its work, the benefits of which can be seen in students' academic attainment and their improved behaviour. Managers inspire and motivate staff, as well as seeking to develop the school's environment and provide a motivating learning environment. The school's efforts to bring about improvement in students' academic achievement, however, are hampered by its shortages in physical and human resources, the restricted size of its buildings that results in large numbers of students in classrooms, and the lack of some other facilities.

The school's main strengths and areas for development

Main Strengths

- Strategic planning
- Self-evaluation
- Students' awareness and taking on of responsibilities
- Communication with parents
- Basic skills in Arabic and IT
- Students' enthusiasm and self-confidence.

Areas for development

- Planning for differentiation
- Basic skills in Mathematics
- Higher thinking skills
- Making use of assessment results
- Collaborative work
- Extra-curricular activities.

What the school needs to do to improve

In order to improve further, the school should:

- Fill the shortages in educational facilities and human and physical resources to improve the school's general performance
- Develop teaching and learning strategies that focus on:
 - Giving students opportunities to develop their higher thinking skills
 - Challenging students' abilities
 - Developing skills in core subjects, particularly in mathematics
 - Catering for individual differences in planning lessons and homework activities
 - Using collaborative learning to a higher degree.
- Use assessment techniques effectively to diagnose and meet students' learning needs
- Provide more opportunities for students' involvement in external learning activities.

Overall judgements

Aspect	Grade: Description
The school's overall effectiveness	3: Satisfactory
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