



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

Schools Review Unit Review Report

**Abu Saiba' Primary Boys School
Northern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date Reviewed: 31 May - 2 June 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 seven 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: Boys

Number of students: 657

Age range: 6-12 years

Characteristics of the school

Abu Saiba' Primary Boys School is one of the Northern Governorate schools and was founded in 1958. The age range in the school is from 6 to 12 years, and there are 657 students. Most students come from limited-income families. Students are distributed across 25 classes: 12 for the first cycle and 12 for the second, with four classes for each grade; there is also an integrated class that has a SEN specialist and an assistant. The school classifies 118 of its students as outstanding, 318 as talented and 109 as having special educational needs. There are 55 teaching staff and 15 administrative and technical staff. The Principal is in his second month at the school. The school has no senior teachers of Mathematics and English and no assistant principal; it also lacks a learning difficulties specialist and a gifted and talent specialist. 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 Saiba' Primary Boys School is satisfactory. The school has good aspects, in students' personal development, guidance and support for students and leadership and management. Students and their parents are very satisfied with the school.

The students' academic achievement is satisfactory. Students achieve high pass rates in school examinations. Their levels of achievement vary in lessons: levels are higher than the expected in most English lessons in both cycles but lower in Mathematics and Science. Students' pass rates in most core subjects of the second cycle have remained steady over the past three years. Students make suitable progress in good lessons, where effective teaching and learning strategies are used. Students of the integrated class make outstanding progress because they are well supported from the special educational needs specialist and his assistant. Other groups of students make inconsistent progress according to their levels; the effectiveness of the programmes provided for them varies.

Students' personal development is good. Most students attend school regularly and punctually. Most participate in school life effectively and enthusiastically, joining school programmes and taking part in boy scouts and sports activities that clearly help to reinforce their interests and boost their self-confidence. Most students participate enthusiastically in lessons; they show a desire to express themselves, encouraged by their teachers. In about half of the lessons observed, students' higher thinking skills were developed, although students' ability to give explanations and analysis varied. Most students feel safe at school. They generally show awareness and responsibility in their behaviour: the school makes considerable efforts to promote positive behaviour and direct students' energies. The school monitors students' attendance, punctuality and conduct exceptionally well, using an 'electronic advisor' programme.

The effectiveness of teaching and learning processes is satisfactory. Most teachers know the study materials; this knowledge was effectively reflected in the good lessons observed, which accounted for one-third of the lessons and were mainly in English and class-teaching. In these lessons, and in some satisfactory lessons, teachers used attractive introductory activities and effective teaching and learning strategies, such as role playing and learning through play, which helped students' interaction and increased their enthusiasm for learning. In other lessons, however, especially the inadequate ones, an instructional teaching style prevailed, which had a negative effect on students' enthusiasm and participation. In

most lessons, students are given suitable opportunities to work together and learn from each other, although students' roles in these activities are not always accurately specified. Their abilities were challenged in about half of the observed lessons but these lessons were not always planned well and varied in their effectiveness. Students are given homework but the consideration of their individual differences in homework assignments is inconsistent. In good lessons, but not in the less effective lessons, a range of assessment methods was used to measure the extent to which students achieved their learning goals.

The quality of curriculum enrichment and delivery is satisfactory. Students' understanding of their rights and duties is developed appropriately. Students sign a behavioural contract that covers their most important rights and duties and is agreed on with students; it was displayed on a board in each classroom. Their sense of citizenship is developed through several activities, including a special week devoted to the topic. The school provides a variety of extra-curricular activities to enrich the curriculum and develop students' different interests; it makes effective use of the morning broadcast in lessons and programmes, as well as holding various competitions that help students' personal development. The development of basic skills in English is good and it is satisfactory in Arabic and Information Technology (IT); however, students' basic skills are of a lower level in Mathematics. The school's environment, corridors and some classrooms are used effectively to enrich the curriculum but the second cycle building and some laboratories are used less effectively.

The quality of guidance and support programmes for students is good. The school has taken firm measures to bring about significant improvements in students' behaviour and how their behaviour is managed; this has been of positive benefit to the school. The school arranges an appropriate induction for students joining the intermediate level but its programmes to prepare students for the second cycle are insufficient. Students' educational needs are met by providing suitable support in activities and programmes, particularly those for the lower-achieving students of the first cycle, which help them to make progress in line with their abilities. The support given to students in some lessons was less effective, which limited their progress in some of them. Parents are regularly informed about their children's academic progress and any problems facing their children. The school has suitable safety and security procedures; for example, it carries out evacuation drills and regulates students' departure from the school. The school's gate, which overlooks the public street, poses a danger to students' safety, however, despite the school's efforts and contact with the ministry about it.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is good because the whole team of management is effective in sustaining and bringing about improvements. The school has a vision and mission that focus on achievement, the influence of which can be seen in teachers' performance, especially in the good lessons. The school has a flexible four-year strategic plan that focuses on improvement and development and is based on an accurate diagnosis of the

school's situation. Effective self-evaluation is applied to all aspects of the school's work and the findings are used well to overcome identified issues that limit the school's progress; the school's overall performance has benefited noticeably from this activity. The school delegates responsibilities appropriately – for example, two teachers are covering the duties of the assistant principals – which has helped to bring about improvement and development despite the instability at senior management level. The school adopts an appropriate policy of shared decision-making through its different work teams. The professional competency of teaching and administrative staff is raised through in-house and external workshops; staff training needs are assessed and met systematically. There are no clear mechanisms, however, for measuring the effect of training and development. The school has strong lines of communication with students, their parents and the local community and seeks their views appropriately. It has, for example, set up a Students' Council, involved a former student in the morning assembly events and worked with local charities.

□ Does the school have the capacity to improve?

Grade: 2 (Good)

The school's capacity to improve is good. Despite the recent frequent changes at top management level at the school – four Principals in the current year – the school has managed, by implementing elements of its strategic plan, to bring about important improvements and maintain students' achievement levels. Its policy of shared decision-making and team work has significantly benefited the school's performance. Some significant changes include replacing supervisory administrative staff; delegating authority to competent individuals to perform the work of the assistant principals; signing a behavioural agreement with students; and teachers' positive response to new teaching and learning processes. The school's own evaluation of its strengths and areas for development is accurate. The new Principal, in his second month at the school, is working in harmony with the rest of the staff. The school still faces important challenges, such as developing the teaching and learning processes so that students achieve better academic levels and ensuring that good teaching practices are maintained and spread.

The school's main strengths and areas for development

Main Strengths

- Leadership and management
- School examination results
- Students' progress in the merged class
- Students' personal development
- The introductory activities and the learning through play strategy
- Guidance and support programmes
- Development of students' understanding of their rights and duties
- Basic skills in English.

Areas for development

- The current position of students' departure gate
- Basic skills in Mathematics
- Consideration of individual differences
- Higher thinking skills
- Challenging students' abilities
- The support provided in lessons
- Giving feedback to students
- Supporting different student groups
- Monitoring the effect of teachers' training.

What the school needs to do to improve

In order to improve further, the school should:

- Take swift action to change the position of the departure gate to ensure students' safety
- Develop more effective teaching and learning strategies to include:
 - Developing basic skills, especially in Mathematics
 - Considering individual differences
 - Developing higher thinking skills
 - Challenging students' abilities
 - Providing support in the classroom
 - Providing suitable feedback while assessing class activities.
- Develop programmes that support different student groups, especially lower-achieving and special educational needs students
- Develop effective mechanisms to measure the effect of training and ensure it is translated into effective teaching practices
- Work to maintain stability in senior management and fill the shortages in human resources to ensure continuity in development and improvement activities.

Overall judgements

Aspect	Grade: Description
The school's overall effectiveness	3: Satisfactory
The school's capacity to improve	2: Good
Students' academic achievement	3: Satisfactory
Students' progress in their personal development	2: Good
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