



الهيئة الوطنية  
للمؤهلات وضمان جودة التعليم والتدريب  
National Authority for Qualifications &  
Quality Assurance of Education & Training

# **Schools Review Unit**

## **Review Report**

**Alahd Alzaher Secondary Girls School**  
**Hamad Town - Northern Governorate**  
**Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date of Review: 5 - 7 November 2012**

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## The Schools Review Unit

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The Schools Review Unit (SRU) is part of the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (NAQQAET) that was officially set up in 2008 as an independent body governed and supervised by the Council of Ministers. 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 nine 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>		Alahd Alzaher Secondary Girls School											
<b>School's type</b>		Government											
<b>Year of establishment</b>		2001											
<b>Age range of students</b>		15 - 17 years											
<b>Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)</b>		<b>Primary</b>				<b>Middle</b>				<b>High</b>			
		-				-				10 - 12			
<b>Number of students</b>		<b>Boys</b>	-	<b>Girls</b>	965				<b>Total</b>	965			
<b>Students' social background</b>		Most students belong to limited income families.											
<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>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	8	13
	The school has three levels of grades spread over 31 classrooms as follows: 10 classrooms in the first level applying unifying system tracks, and 8 classes at the second level (3 in the scientific path, 5 in the literary path) and 12 classrooms at the third level (7 in the literary, and 6 in the scientific path).												
<b>Town /Village</b>		Hamad Town											
<b>Governorate</b>		Northern											
<b>Number of administrative staff</b>		29 administrative and 10 technicians											
<b>Number of teaching staff</b>		101											
<b>Curriculum</b>		Ministry of Education (MoE)											
<b>Main language(s) of instruction</b>		Arabic											
<b>Principal's tenure</b>		Two months											
<b>External assessment and examinations</b>		MoE examinations											
<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>		
		126			63			9			13		

**Major recent changes in the school**

- The school was divided into two schools: Alahd Alzaher, and Al-Tadhamon School, in 2011-12
- Appointed a new school principal in 2011-12
- Appointed a third assistant principal
- Appointed a senior teacher of Arabic, 11 new teachers: (1 for Arabic, 3 for science, 2 for English, 3 for social studies, and 2 for commercial subjects)
- Extended the school day in the second semester of last academic year.

## Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	3: Satisfactory			
The school's capacity to improve	2: Good			
	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**

Although the school's performance has remained satisfactory since its previous review in November 2009, due to its appropriate outcomes in students' academic achievement and the effectiveness of teaching and learning, it has achieved good performance in other aspects. This is due to the leadership's efforts to create an educational environment that is based on group work, delegation of powers, development of support and guidance to students, and the effective deployment of the school's resources. This is mainly reflected in the students' personal development, especially their self-confidence and the mutual respect they show. Developments in curriculum implementation and enrichment, and the varied programmes offered to the students have led to increasing their participation and meeting their needs and interests. Parents and students are well satisfied with the school.

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

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

The school's capacity to improve is raised from being judged satisfactory at the previous review to good in this one. This is mainly due to the efforts of the leadership and administration in their accurate self-evaluation and the good strategic planning, that is based on previous recommendations and developing overall performance according to clear priorities. The progress made is particularly reflected in the students' personal development and the curriculum enrichment programmes. The school has managed to create a conducive learning environment, deploy its resources appropriately and vary the programmes offered. Students feel safe and secure. Efforts are being made to develop teachers' performance and their use of effective teaching and learning strategies, including applying educational projects, such as 'Teaching Academies', which are enabling the school to further its educational achievements.

## Students' achievement

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

#### Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Most students attain high levels in most subjects of the MoE examinations, especially in the scientific stream. Their actual achievement levels are reflected in the outstanding and good lessons, which formed about half of the lessons observed during the review. The pass rates are in line with the proficiency rates in the scientific stream, especially in biology and chemistry in Grade 11, and in Arabic in the literary stream, while the rates generally vary in English, especially in English 217 which significantly decrease.

Most students make good progress in Arabic, such as analysing literary texts and using grammar, especially in the literary stream. Grade 11 students in the scientific stream acquire the concepts and the basic skills in mathematics and science at similar levels, such as in Grade 12 where students use geometrical skills and calculate the areas of triangles areas confidently in Grade 10 and where they compare accurately the results of chemical reactions. Nevertheless, these skills are not consistently acquired by those students in Grades 10 and 12 who are in the other streams, where the skills of speaking and writing are less developed. In Grades 11 and 12 in the literary stream, this is particularly the case due to the general weakness in acquiring the basic skills and the inappropriateness of many of the teaching methods that do not meet the students' different educational needs well.

Over three consecutive semesters, students achieve steady progress in most subjects compared to other schools. The scientific stream students achieve good results compared to the levels of the unified and the literary streams. They also achieve well in the outstanding and good lessons, especially in science and Arabic, unlike other lessons where they demonstrated less progress, especially in English where their competency in written work is too varied.

Students with learning difficulties and low achievers make good progress in the remedial lessons in Arabic and mathematics, while the outstanding and talented students achieve well due to the effectiveness of the creativity centers, and the programmes offered to them, such as the 'Bahrain Injaz', which match their abilities. Students' progress during lessons is inconsistent, due to the inconsistency in the effectiveness of the teaching strategies, and curricular activities in which the students' different abilities have not been considered enough.



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

### Grade: 2 Good

The majority of students demonstrate high self-confidence in most lessons, which is evident in the way they run conversations, work independently and undertake leadership roles, for example when leading work groups and during workshops. Such work includes sessions on 'Learning Difficulties', presenting e-lessons and giving lectures, titled for example 'Our Role in Protecting the Environment'.

Most students participate very effectively in school life through activities and committees, such as the 'Guides Committee', the 'Consultation Committee', and the student theatre, where they achieve high rankings for their distinguished performances. They are punctual to school and lessons, and keep the school clean and safe. This is due to their awareness and sense of responsibility, and their participation in programmes such as 'My Excellence is in my Discipline'.

The students have a sense of self-security as a result of the positive interaction with the staff, and among themselves. This is demonstrated by the respect they show during activities and in the educational weeks where Islamic values of tolerance and respect are the focus. They have a good understanding of the heritage and culture of Bahrain, through studying subjects related to national and popular culture. The students have turned a classroom into a museum of folklore, which includes garments and historical items.

## The quality of provision

### □ How effective are teaching and learning?

#### Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Teachers have good subject knowledge that shows in their lesson plans, self-confidence, enthusiasm while teaching and their ability to answer students' questions well. The outstanding and good lessons, in most basic subjects, demonstrate effective teaching methods and concentrate on achieving the learning objectives. This is done through introductory activities, applying a variety of teaching strategies, such as brainstorming, discussion, collaborative learning, and using different resources, such as the smart boards, data shows, and flashcards. Such teaching increases the students' participation, motivates them to learn, acquire skills, concepts and knowledge effectively. These qualities are more apparent in Arabic subjects in Grade 10, and in the scientific subjects in Grade 11. Teaching is not so good in other lessons, especially in teacher-centred lessons in English.

The learning objectives are shared with the students in most lessons consistently and students are supported by guidance and opportunities to participate. Group work often challenges students' abilities because they are offered varied activities and challenging questions that ask them, for example, to distinguish between pride and dignity, and state the significance of repetition in literary texts. Higher order thinking skills are also developed, such as analysis, deduction, logical explanation, and brainstorming. This was demonstrated in some core subject lessons in the scientific stream in Grade 11 and the Arabic subjects in Grade 10. Such teaching increases students' enthusiasm to learn, and improves their achievement in those lessons. Nevertheless, teaching and learning is not good overall mainly because of the inconsistent execution of curricular activities and the lack of effective support provided to the low-achieving students. This results in too much variation in the rates of progress these students make.

Formative evaluation techniques are effective during the good and outstanding lessons, such as written, verbal individual and group assessment activities. These match the students' abilities. However, their use is inconsistent in the rest of the lessons. Where the focus of questioning is only to the whole group, such questions do not consider students' different educational needs and fail to help students achieve the lessons' goals. This results in inconsistent achievement by different groups of students. Appropriate homework is given that often does consider students' individual differences, but the regularity of marking and the quality of feedback is not good enough to improve students' achievement sufficiently quickly.

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

**Grade: 2 Good**

Students participate in enriching the curriculum through presenting their projects and displaying informative murals and posters. They also use modern technology well to make their learning environment relevant to today's expectations.

The school has programmes and plans that clarify how the curriculum is to be implemented. These are reviewed and modified to meet the students' educational needs. Moreover, different activities are planned for low achieving students, in mathematics and English at all levels, and in Arabic for Grade 10. Enrichment programmes are in place for talented students and additional notes are helpfully provided for some subjects. The school endeavours to develop students' understanding of their rights and duties, enhancing the social aspects of learning and the positive attitudes, through carrying out activities, such as 'Information about my Country'.

Opportunities are provided for many students to participate in good extra-curricular activities in cultural, sport and entertainment. They achieve high positions in events organised by the Student Service Administration, and in international competitions, such as the 'Fadia Al Sabah Scientific Competition' and the 'Gulf Mathematical Olympics'.

Life skills help prepare students for university and the labour market through effective creative and enrichment programmes, such as business pioneers and Aseel, in addition to community service. Links are established across subjects and these help students apply their knowledge in an integral and comprehensive manner.

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

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

The school introduces new students to the school systems well, which helps them settle in quickly. It carries out 'Your Future is in Your Hands' programme and hosts universities' representatives, such as those from Bahrain Polytechnic University and Bahrain Teachers College. It also arranges visits to some companies and fairs, such as Job World Fair, and GITEX, to acquaint the students with university level and labour market requirements.

The school evaluates the students' needs by analysing test and examination results. It extends support for low achievers through remedial lessons in mathematics and English, and through revision, such as the 'Najah' programme. The outstanding and talented students are supported through the enrichment centres, such as Mathematics Brilliance Centre, and the 'Talented Tree'. They also participate in committees, and local and regional competitions, where they achieve advanced rankings, such as first place in the 'Prose Writing' competition, despite the weaknesses in teaching and learning English.

The students receive good care and counselling when they face problems. Parents value the various channels of communication with the school, and its commitment to keeping them informed of their daughters' personal and academic development, such as the educational meetings, and the open days.

The School Health and Safety Committee trains members on evacuation drills and organises healthy-practice programmes. A healthy and secure environment is ensured.

## **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 clear, collaboratively written vision and mission statements, which focus on achievement and citizenship. They are translated into educational objectives that are clearly reflected in the outstanding and good lessons. The school develops its strategic plan accordingly, based on analysing the school current situation and its priorities, which in turn have led to setting the action plans of the academic departments. These plans include clear performance indicators which reflect well on those aspects relating to the students' personal development, and the school environment.

The leadership inspires the staff using different techniques, which help motivate them, such as honouring them publicly, enhancing relationships among them, getting them involved in decision-making, and delegating powers trustingly, but according to competence, such as authorizing a coordinator for the English department. The middle leadership is in charge of running the major committees, which has led to improving many practices and is reflected positively on the general performance of the school.

The leadership team knows the school's points of strength and areas that require improvement. Leaders check the school's work carefully through class visits and by analysing the questionnaires related to teachers' performance. They arrange a number of workshops accordingly, in cooperation with the internal support team, such as those on Differentiation, Collaborative Learning and Classroom Management. However, monitoring their impact and securing improvement in some teachers' performance is not sufficiently evident, which is a key area for improvement.

The environment is conducive to learning and work. Most teachers use the school facilities, such as the science laboratory, the e-classroom, and the learning resource centre effectively and deploy its material resources well in order to meet students' needs.

The school seeks the students and their parents' opinions, through the Parents' Council, the consultation committee for the students and through questionnaires. It also responds where possible to suggestions, such as arranging an open day, improving the quality of food provided in the canteen, which corresponded with extending the school day. Such

responsiveness has helped raise their satisfaction. The school has good relationships through its communication with the local community. It participates in many events, especially those organised nationally and locally, such as the school's cooperation with the Northern Municipality.

## **The school's main strengths**

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- The students' awareness and self-confidence, as well as their respect for each other, and working collaboratively in a safe healthy environment
- The comprehensive self-assessment, the strategic planning according to the school priorities; and its impact on the students' personal development
- The optimal use of the school's environment and the teaching resources in enriching the curricula
- The variety of the programmes offered to the students, which helps meet their different needs.

## Recommendations

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

- focus on helping students acquire basic skills, especially in English
- improve teaching and learning by:
  - making more use of the good practices in the school, and make the teaching process more student-oriented
  - taking individual differences into consideration in lessons and homework.
  - using evaluation more effectively, and making use of it in lesson planning
  - providing more effective support and help for the low achieving students.
- monitor the impact of the professional development programmes so as to raise the quality of teaching.