



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

Schools Review Unit

Review Report

Ahmad Al Omran Secondary Boys School
Hoorah - Capital Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date of Review: 9-11 April 2012

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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 national authority, attached to the Cabinet and set up under Royal Decree No. 32 of 2008, amended by the Royal Decree No. 6 of 2009. 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:

Grade description	Interpretation
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

School's name		Ahmad Al Omran Secondary Boys School													
School's type		Government													
Year of establishment		1990													
Age range of students		15-18 years													
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High					
		-				-				10-12					
Number of students		Boys	775	Girls	-				Total	775					
Students' social background		Most students belong to middle-income families													
Classes per grade		Grade		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		Classes		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	10
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second Level: Grade 11 chemistry and biology: 2 classes, physics and mathematics: 2 classes, literature track: 1 class and commercial sciences: 5 classes. • Third level: Grade 12 chemistry and biology: 1 class, physics and mathematics: 2 classes, literature track: 1 class and commercial sciences: 7 classes. 													
Town /Village		Hooraa													
Governorate		Capital													
Number of administrative staff		22													
Number of teaching staff		100													
Curriculum		Ministry of Education (MoE)													
Main language(s) of instruction		Arabic													
Principal's tenure		Three years													
External assessment and examinations		MoE examinations													
Accreditation (if applicable)		-													

Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification	Outstanding	Gifted & Talented	Physical Disabilities	Learning Difficulties
Major recent changes in the school	62	49	4	39
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school joined the school performance improvement project in 2011-12. • Significant decrease in number of students in the past three years because many transferred to schools closer to their place of residence. 			

Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	3: Satisfactory			
The school's capacity to improve	3: Satisfactory			
	Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	-	-	3	3
Students' personal development	-	-	3	3
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	-	-	3	3
The quality of the curriculum implementation	-	-	3	3
The quality of support and guidance for students	-	-	3	3
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	-	-	3	3

Key:

- 1: Outstanding
- 2: Good
- 3: Satisfactory
- 4: Inadequate

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school's performance is satisfactory, despite improvements in teaching and learning since its previous review in April 2009. It is satisfactory in all aspects of provision, with some good features, which include students' conduct in class and their respect for one another, and their teachers. Teachers are motivated through their participation in decision-making and are encouraged to organise shared training workshops. However, the impact of such activities on the teachers' performance and support for students in lessons is not sufficient in terms of raising achievement and improving personal skills further. The school has made efforts to analyse the curriculum to meet students' needs, provide extra-curricular activities and use the school environment to enrich experiences, all of which are reflected in the satisfactory levels of approval expressed by students and their parents.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory, as was the judgement in the previous review. This capacity is evident in the commitment shown by senior staff to their roles and responsibilities. Strategic planning has clear indicators and specific priorities related to the departments' action plans. School self-evaluation is focused on professional development programmes and class visits to observe teachers. However the outcomes and findings from these activities do not impact enough on improving students' achievement or their personal development. In the scientific track, students do well, but this is not the case in other tracks. Outstanding students receive effective support and most students behave well. The school faces some staffing challenges in needing senior teachers for English, Arabic and science, new computers and an upgrading of the internet connection.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Over the past three semesters, the students' pass rates in English in the MoE examinations were above the other Bahraini schools' average, but below average in mathematics, science and Arabic in 2010-11. However, the students' overall performance declined in the current year 2011-12. Students achieve satisfactory levels in most lessons, but achievement is no better than this, as a result of the varied effectiveness of the teaching methods used.

Most of the scientific track students acquire appropriate skills in chemistry, biology and mathematics in Grades 11 and 12. However, the acquisition of skills varies too much in Grade 10 and in the commercial track. Students acquire appropriate skills in reading and speaking in Arabic and English, especially in the literary track, and show understanding of well-chosen English texts. However, their grammar and writing skills in both languages are not as good as their speaking and reading skills. Commercial track students have skills which are too varied, for example when calculating delayed revenues. Skills involved in designing a website were better than their arithmetic skills in the insurance course and those in project design in the life skills course.

The students have made progress over the past three years. Over this longer period of performance, the school has achieved an advanced position compared to other secondary schools as it has had more courses with an average pass rate at 90% and above. Scientific track students make better progress than the commercial and literary track students in good lessons. This is especially so in mathematics and science and most evident in the good lessons. This is also true for English and Arabic, but to a lesser degree. The students' progress in their written work is too varied due to insufficient consideration of students' individual differences.

Most of the outstanding students make good progress, especially in the scientific track because of the effective teaching strategies that are used to meet their needs. Low achieving students make satisfactory progress in most lessons and achieve well in the remedial programmes and intensive lessons that are adjusted to meet their needs.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Most students participate enthusiastically in the good lessons, notably in science and mathematics. Wider opportunities enable them to take part effectively in school committees and the Students' Council. These offer various activities, however the levels of students' participation are uneven and this is reflected in their differing self-confidence and willingness to take on responsibility. The majority of students take part in several extra-curricular activities, and have achieved advanced positions in the handball league and the Quran contests.

The students work together effectively in group activities. Sometimes they take on leading roles, such as those of being 'student-teachers'. Outside classes, the students' team work is evident in many sporting activities.

Most students attend school regularly and punctually. They share good relations among each other and with their teachers especially in class, where they show respect, team work, and a sense of awareness and responsibility. This is reflected in their feeling safe at school and in the freedom to express their views. This was less evident outside class as using cell phones and smoking were observed. Other students skipped the support and intensive classes, which reflected their lack of responsibility.

Most students showed good understanding of the Bahraini legacy and culture by designing cultural boards and pictures of historical sights. They participate in Al-Jasra Handicrafts Centre, morning programmes and listen to Quran recitals.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Teachers are familiar with their material and this is reflected in the variety of examples students are given, especially in good lessons in Grades 11 and 12 in the scientific track. Science subjects are taught comparatively better than those in the commercial track, resulting in students' firmer acquisition of skills and concepts in science. Teaching is least effective in helping students' acquisition of writing skills in English.

In good lessons, teachers' management of discipline and their ability to encourage and motivate most students increase their enjoyment. Students are challenged according to their levels. This is attributed to the type of activities that are used, especially in mathematics and scientific courses. Additionally, the students' higher level thinking skills, such as analysis, deduction and problem solving are properly developed. However, less effective use of time in other lessons affects the flow of learning which impacts negatively on the achievement of the lesson goals. Opportunities to develop skills are not as effective especially in Arabic and English. These lessons often lack clear challenge and support, especially for low achieving students, which limit their progress.

Most teachers use teaching strategies that focus on placing the student at the core of the learning process. In the excellent and good lessons in the scientific and commercial tracks in Grades 11 and 12, teachers use strategies such as brainstorming, cooperative learning, discussion and open dialogue, which stimulate learning. They use educational resources such as cards, illustrations and the projector for viewing visual content. However, in other lessons teachers tend to place themselves at the centre of the process, which limits opportunities for students to participate properly.

The students are given homework that is sometimes indicated in the lesson plan. However, the homework set is mostly the same for the whole class. There is little adjustment for students' differing abilities. Teachers mark homework regularly and students are given feedback to help them improve. Teachers use various and on-going assessment methods such as observation, oral questions and written activities to measure comprehension and skill mastery. Assessment in too many lessons, however, is not as effective as it should be as it relies too heavily on measuring memory recall.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school promotes a sense of citizenship through the students' participation in poetry during the morning line up, competitions such as 'writing about Bahrain' and 'what being Bahraini means to students' and by students taking part in national festivals and community service. Students have field visits to the fish farming centre and the Arab Gulf University. These activities develop students' understanding of their rights and duties by promoting good values, such as honesty, and warn of bad habits such as smoking. Students have the chance to attend parliamentary sessions and lectures that are organised by the religion education department and they receive guidance as part of the curriculum. Opportunities to develop their talents by preparing electronic discs and participating in extra-curricular

cultural activities such as English public speaking, chemistry, and mathematics are good. The curriculum is reviewed but its implementation is not properly evaluated in meeting the students' needs and improving their personal development. As such it does not prepare them for the next stage of education and the labour market as well as it might.

The school looks after its environment by planting trees and uses it to enrich the curriculum by displaying students' work. Lessons are often linked to students' life experiences but without planning connections between subjects to enable students to study a logical and comprehensive curriculum.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The induction of new students and their on-going guidance is satisfactory. Induction is good and carried out by visiting intermediate schools to explain the academic track system and discipline expectations, which contribute to the students' stability and their understanding of school rules. Academic and vocational guidance introduces students to courses at university and the requirements of the labour market. Field visits to universities and institutions for the scientific and commercial students contribute to preparing them for the next stage of education.

Students' personal development is assessed by monitoring their conduct and trying to find solutions for any identified problems. The school helps students with individual issues by providing them with guidance appropriate for their age. Students' academic progress in remedial and enrichment programmes is supported, but variations and the lack of adequate organisation limit contributions to meeting the students' needs. Resources such as social services and study classes are used to help students with special educational needs. Ramp access, moving the intensive classes to the ground floor and forming special examination committees, in addition to communicating with the social institutions such as the institute for the blind, have resulted in meeting students' educational needs properly.

Parents are well informed of their sons' academic levels. The school has implemented safety measures and promoted health programmes such as monitoring the canteen and the students' transportation. However, evacuation drills and maintenance of the building are not conducted regularly enough.

Leadership, management and governance

- How effective are leadership, management and governance in promoting high achievement, strong personal development and school improvement?**

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school has a vision that focuses on improvement and achievement, which was jointly developed and is variedly translated into reality in the educational practices in classes. The school has a strategic plan in which priorities have been determined based on identifying the areas of strength and those needing improvement. The plan includes goals and procedures that have been implemented in the departments' academic action plans, which especially reflect on the successful achievement of students in the scientific track.

Senior and middle leadership assess the teaching quality based on consistent procedures that are timed and carried out in cooperation with the internal improvement team. This is contributing to improving teaching methods and increasing most of the students' motivation to learn. However, using the findings of the assessments and monitoring the impact on practice are not carried out accurately enough, which holds back the school's overall performance.

The school inspires the staff through encouraging participation in decision-making, delegating tasks and encouraging school departments to organise training workshops and implement professional development programmes based on the teachers' training needs. Such workshops deal with topics such as learning and differentiation strategies, learning by exploration and class management. These are held in cooperation with the external improvement team and have contributed to the improvement of the majority of the teachers' performance. However, increasing the impact of such programmes and workshops in the practice of teaching and learning is not enough, thus limiting the improvement of some teachers and the achievement of students.

The school's financial resources and educational facilities are used to enrich the students' experiences. The learning resources centre, chemistry and biology laboratories and e-learning classroom are well used, but the computer room whose rather old equipment and poor internet network link, have limited effectiveness. The school communicates with parents directly or through open days and text messages. Additionally, the parents' views and suggestions are explored and some responded to, which gain the approval of the students and their parents. The school also communicates with the local community and cooperates with other schools, such as Um Ayman Primary Girls School on maintenance

issues. The school contacted the head of the school improvement programme, which has resulted in positive contributions to raising students' academic achievement and improving teaching.

The school's main strengths

- The progress the school has achieved over the past three years and the increased number of courses in which the MoE examination pass rates are high
- Teachers' familiarity with the study material, which is reflected in the effectiveness of the strategies used, especially in the scientific track in Grades 11 and 12
- The students' conduct, their team work and the mutual respect among students and with their teachers, in addition to them feeling safe at school.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- raise students' academic achievement and develop their skills in core subjects such as Arabic grammar and writing in Arabic and English
- develop teaching and learning strategies so as to include:
 - the use of assessment in lessons and its findings to meet students' needs, especially low achieving students
 - meeting students' different needs and challenging their abilities
 - better use of time and using the educational resources.
- develop self-evaluation mechanisms and the use of its findings to improve the overall performance of the school
- provide senior teachers for the teaching and leading of Arabic, English and science
- upgrade computers and the Internet network so as to ensure the meeting of the requirements of curriculum enrichment and remedial activities.