



Schools Review Unit

Review Report

Ahmad Al-Fateh Primary Intermediate Boys School
East Riffa - Southern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date of Review: 1-3 October 2012

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The Schools Review Unit

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:

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 seven 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-Fateh Primary Intermediate Boys School												
School's type		Government												
Year of establishment		1963												
Age range of students		11-15 years												
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High				
		5-6				7-9				-				
Number of students		Boys	953		Girls		-				Total		953	
Students' social background		Most students come from middle-level income families												
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	Classes	-	-	-	-	4	7	7	5	6	-	-	-	
Town /Village		East Riffa												
Governorate		Southern												
Number of administrative staff		8 administrative and 5 technicians												
Number of teaching staff		78												
Curriculum		Ministry of Education												
Main language(s) of instruction		Arabic												
Principal's tenure		One Year												
External assessment and examinations		National Authority of Qualifications and Quality Assurance for Education and Training and Ministry of Education examinations.												
Accreditation (if applicable)		-												
Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification		Outstanding				Gifted & Talented			Physical Disabilities			Learning Difficulties		
		71				28			14			33		
Major recent changes in the school		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appointment of a principal and two assistant principals in 2011-12• Appointment of 13 new teachers in the current academic year; seven in core subjects• Appointment of head of administrative and financial services in 2011-12.												

Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	4: Inadequate			
The school's capacity to improve	4: Inadequate			
	Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	4	4	-	4
Students' personal development	4	4	-	4
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	4	4	-	4
The quality of the curriculum implementation	4	4	-	4
The quality of support and guidance for students	4	4	-	4
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	4	4	-	4

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: 4 Inadequate

The school's overall performance has changed from being judged satisfactory in the previous review in April 2009 to inadequate in one. Students' achievement is inadequate in over one third of the lessons because of their low motivation towards learning and ineffective teaching methods. Teaching does not support students in ways that meet their different needs. This leads to their low acquisition of the basic skills. The extra-curricular programmes and activities are too limited. This poor provision contributes to students' inappropriate behaviour, observed during the review, and which negatively affects students' psychological safety. Additionally, levels of planning, evaluating and monitoring are poor. Nevertheless, the approval of students and their parents of the school's performance is satisfactory.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The school's capacity to improve has changed from being judged good previously to inadequate in the current review. This is attributed to the lack of stability in the senior staffing and to the challenges the school faces. These challenges are represented in the teachers' poor performance, the students' low levels in the basic skills in all subjects and limited motivation towards learning, and the shortages in the social guidance and learning disabilities departments. The school has a recent strategic plan, however, it does not focus on the improvement priorities and lacks coherence with the departments' action plans. The absence of an accurate and clear mechanism for self-assessment of the school plans and work reflects negatively on the students' academic achievements, personal development and behaviour.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Grade 9 students achieved low levels in the national examinations that were below and well below the average in 2011 and 2012. Grade 6 students achieved levels that were slightly below and well below the average in all core subjects over the past three years. These low results correspond to the students' low achievement in lessons.

Students achieved varied pass and proficiency rates in the school tests and Ministry of Education examinations. Students in Grades 5 and 6 achieved higher pass and proficiency rates which did not reflect their actual lower levels of achievement in lessons. The pass and proficiency rates clearly regressed in the results through the school to reach their lowest levels, comparatively, in Grade 9, which reflects the students' achievement in lessons. This is attributed to the students' low motivation to learning, the ineffective teaching methods which were inadequate in one third of the lessons observed during the review and in students' written work. Furthermore, the poor level of students' mastery of the basic skills in all subjects, such as writing and grammar in Arabic, writing and listening in English, and basic arithmetic in mathematics, such as multiplication and division contributes to inadequate achievement. The students' general proficiency in science is also poor. This is due to their lack of concentration on developing the necessary basic skills.

The academic achievement of the Grade 9 students regressed in the past three years, except in English, where a little progress was made. The students' achievement in most lessons is inadequate not only due to their poor acquisition of the basic skills but also because teaching is not differentiated for different students in lessons and writing activities, nor is the need for differentiation considered.

Outstanding and talented students achieved adequate progress in a few lessons and activities and participate in competitions in which they achieve advanced positions. Specially integrated students make inadequate progress because the integration programmes provided are not good enough. Low achievers make inadequate progress due to the limited support and guidance opportunities they are provided with in lessons, programmes and activities.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Most students attend school regularly and punctually. However, this is not reflected in their motivation and enthusiasm for learning. Some students participate in extra-curricular activities, including competitions such as the 'Quran' and 'Sunnah', and scout and school committees. They are not given proper opportunities to participate in school life, especially at recess as they spend most of the time without having guidance towards investing their energies and abilities towards improving their personal and academic skills. This results in several behavioural problems such as fights, aggressive games and using improper words, in addition to not taking care of the school's environment. Most teachers deal with these problems improperly. This seriously adversely affects students' safety. These circumstances collectively contribute to limiting the students' awareness, lowering their motivation to learning and makes them feel psychologically unsafe. Moreover, their motivation and enthusiasm in lessons is low because most of the teaching and learning methods are ineffective. These methods do not give enough opportunities for students to work together and take responsibility, which has a negative impact on the development of their self-confidence and independence.

Most students show an adequate understanding of the Bahraini heritage and Islamic values by participating in some national events, occasions where positive values are promoted and field trips to cultural sites, such as the craftsmen centre in addition to participating in some activities which adequately promotes positive values.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Teachers have subject knowledge, but this is not adequately reflected in their teaching as in most lessons only the question-answer strategy is used and the teacher, rather than the students remains at the centre of the educational process. Students are given limited opportunities to contribute effectively in lessons by offering extended answers to questions or by participating in group activities. The lessons do not provide enough opportunities to challenge students' abilities or develop their higher level thinking skills, except in a few science lessons where questions do require some deduction and extraction of ideas from presented information. Generally, the low quality of teaching results in low motivation towards learning and has a negative impact on the students' acquisition of skills, concepts and knowledge. Some of the teachers use educational resources such as projectors and flash

cards in some lessons. However, the impact is only seen in a few lessons, particularly in English.

Lesson management is inadequate. Although most lessons have plans, these are not used properly to guide lessons effectively. Many lessons take too long in the introduction activity, which then limits the effectiveness of the planned activities, especially in relation to the suitability of the time for students to perform and to be assessed. This is reflected in the students' low academic achievement and in the inadequacy of them meeting the lesson goals. Some of the assessment activities in few lessons do consider individual differences among students, however these are mostly oral assessments and do not clearly reflect or record the degree of progress made by students. Other lessons end without assessment, which limits their effectiveness to provide support to different student groups.

Outstanding students are encouraged in some lessons verbally and by using reward cards. However, low achievers who are the majority, do not get enough support in most lessons, which prevents them from achieving progress commensurate with their abilities. Most students are given the same homework, which teachers follow up by correcting and providing feedback, but inconsistently across the school.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The school implements teaching curriculum plans, as most teachers focus on delivering the curriculum content during lessons. However, they do this without making use of other teaching resources or relevant links across subjects, which could help students use different experiences from various subjects to acquire generic skills. This negatively impacts on students' mastery of the basic skills needed for the next stage of their education.

Some departments analyse curriculum content, such as the Arabic curriculum for Grade 9. In addition, planning is performed to enrich parts of the curriculum with extra-curricular activities. However, this is not effective enough because of the limited use of activities which actually meet students' needs and improve their experiences and knowledge. Consequently, the implementation and enrichment of the curriculum is not effective in improving the students' academic achievement and personal development.

The school has developed students' spirit of citizenship and understanding of their rights and responsibilities through having them participate in national events such the National Day and the morning line-up activities, field visits, such as visiting the parliament, and the student council. These contribute to developing these aspects for most students. The

environment is used to enrich educational concepts by various means, such as the 'grammar boards' available outside the classrooms. However, celebrating students' work inside classes is not promoted to a similar level.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The school introduces new students through lectures and familiarisation, which contributes to them settling. Grade 9 students are prepared for the next educational stage through lectures about the secondary stage, but without focusing on the importance of students' acquisition of basic skills. Grade 6 students do not receive adequate preparation for their next stage.

The students' personal needs, such as having stationery, coupons, and financial aid are met. Additionally, the school follows up with students about their discipline and monitors misbehaviour. However, limited guidance and awareness programmes and resorting only to individual sessions prevents the students' personal development. The school provides some support for the integration class students by taking part in events, such as 'No to the Word Retarded'. Outstanding and talented students participate in some competitions and activities such as the short story competition. However, low achievers and those with learning disabilities do not receive adequate support due to the lack of a specialist teacher for learning difficulties and lack of guidance activities.

The school communicates with students' parents adequately through the open day and the use of forms to monitor students' personal and academic aspects. The school regularly assesses risks related to the school building. However, inappropriate disciplinary actions by staff, the lack of supervision during recess, limited space and crowdedness at departure time pose a risk to students' safety.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The school's vision, whilst focused on improvement, is not reflected in the students' academic achievement and personal development. The school's self-evaluation and analysis

does not clearly focus on studying the reasons behind the students' poor results and does not make enough use of its findings in setting solutions and teaching programmes.

The strategic plan contains several main areas for development, such as improving academic achievement and developing teachers' professional competency. However, the teachers and school community members did not take part in developing the plan. It does not directly address the issue of low student motivation, despite this issue being mentioned in the school analysis as one of the areas that need improvement. Furthermore, the plan lacks clear performance indicators and regular follow up mechanism. It is not linked with the departments' action plans which do include some recommendations from the previous review, such as considering students' individual differences. Thus the impact of planning on the improvement of performance is limited. The technical committee follows up with the procedures taken in some areas without directly concentrating on supporting students' achievement. Furthermore, the school applies evaluation questionnaires for some work areas without making use of their findings.

The higher administration encourages its teaching and administrative staff through positive relationships. Training workshops such as 'The Effective Teacher' and 'Differentiated Teaching' are held with limited impact on practice. In addition, the assessments from class visits are not used in developing the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. The school has joined the improvement programme which has not yet had a clear impact due to its recentness.

The school uses most of its limited resources adequately, but the learning resources centre provides few programmes and activities. The school has sought the opinions of students and their parents about the services provided by the school. The school responds to some suggestions such as in aspects of maintaining some of its facilities. This reflected on the satisfactory approval of the school by parents and students. The school collaborates with some of the local institutions in events held, such as the child protection centre. However, the communication with the local community and its use to enrich the students' educational experiences and develop their personal traits positively and effectively are inadequate.

The school's main strengths

- Students' punctuality and attendance at school
- The fostering of the Bahraini culture and promoting citizenship
- Seeking the opinions of students and their parents and responding to some of them and by so doing gaining their approval for the school.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- develop students' awareness and promote positive behaviour by taking effective action at all levels, including raising the general safety of students across the school
- develop teaching and learning by using effective strategies to raise students' academic levels and increase their motivation to learning, with a focus on:
 - raising students' levels of achievement in basic skills in all subjects
 - using assessment and its findings in diagnosing and meeting the students' personal and educational needs in lessons and homework.
- supporting different student groups through in-school programmes that meet their personal and learning needs
- develop a strategic plan that includes priorities at the school according to an accurate, comprehensive and self-assessment of all areas, and identify obvious performance indicators and monitor progress against them regularly
- support the school by meeting the shortage in human resources, represented in the social guidance department and learning difficulties specialist, and providing the financial resources necessary for an additional school gate to ensure students' safety when they are leaving school.