



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

Schools Review Unit

Review Report

Al Ala'a Al Hadhrami Primary Boys School
Al Salmaniah - Capital Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date of Review: 27 - 29 February 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 five 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		Al Ala'a Al Hadhrami Primary Boys School											
School's type		Government											
Year of establishment		1963											
Age range of students		6-11 years											
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High			
		1-5				-				-			
Number of students		Boys	332	Girls	-				Total	332			
Students' social background		The majority of students come from middle-income families											
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Classes	2	2	2	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Town /Village		Al Salmaniah											
Governorate		Capital											
Number of administrative staff		11											
Number of teaching staff		38											
Curriculum		Ministry of Education											
Main language(s) of instruction		Arabic											
Principal's tenure		One year											
External assessment and examinations		Quality Assurance Authority for Education & Training national examinations											
Accreditation (if applicable)		-											
Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classifications		Outstanding			Gifted & Talented			Physical Disabilities			Learning Difficulties		
		132			27			5			5		

Major recent changes in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appointment of senior teachers for most primary subjects in the academic year 2011• The school joined the school improvement project in the academic year 2010.
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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
Students' personal development	4	–	–	4
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	4	–	–	4
The quality of the curriculum implementation	4	–	–	4
The quality of support and guidance for students	4	–	–	4
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	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 changed from satisfactory in the previous review in March 2009 to inadequate in this review. This is attributed to the inadequacy of the self-assessment process, lack of alignment between the school plan and development priorities and poor organisation. The teachers are not inspired or motivated and some teachers neglect their responsibility and the tasks they are delegated, with a consequent negative impact on students' academic achievement and personal development. The efforts to improve students' behaviour tend to be individual efforts by staff that are not supported by mechanisms that would ensure its continuity. However, students and their parents appear to be content and satisfied with the school.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The school's capacity to improve is inadequate as the work priorities are not clear or considered due to the poor self-evaluation processes which has resulted in developing a strategic plan that does not effectively address the areas needing development. The school's implementation of the recommendations in the previous review, which focused on improving students' behaviour, self-assessment, strategic planning and teaching and learning, has not driven the school's overall efforts. Moreover, the lack of organisation of the school work and the poor management of its financial and human resources negatively affect provision. The external improvement team provides helpful projects; however, the administrative and technical problems in the school prevent it from achieving the desired improvement, thus restricting the school's capacity to improve.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The students of the third grade attained slightly above the national average in 2009 national examinations, in Arabic and mathematics and well above the average in 2010. However, their rates are below the national average in 2011. The high results do not reflect students' actual achievement levels in most lessons due to the teaching methods that are used, which do not meet the students' various educational needs, especially in English for the second cycle. An exception to that are the Science lessons in the second cycle, which are good.

The students' pass rates in tests in 2010-11 in the two cycles are not commensurate with their proficiency rates in all primary subjects, especially Arabic for the third grade. The students' pass rates over the past three years are overall stable, with a clear weakness in their written work in most subjects due to the lack of consideration of students' individual differences.

The students' acquisition of writing, reading and comprehension skills in Arabic are varied in the first cycle. A limited group of students acquire satisfactory reading skills in English in both cycles. Generally, basic skills in English and Arabic are inadequately developed in the second cycle. The students' acquisition of arithmetic skills in mathematics such as solving expressions is varied in both cycles. However, the majority of the second cycle students acquire good skills in science due to the interesting methods that are used in the science lessons.

Only a limited number of outstanding and low-achieving students make progress in line with their abilities in lessons. This small proportion is a result of the enrichment programmes in both cycles and the remedial programmes especially in the second cycle which are less than effective. Added to this, talented students do not achieve significantly because most of what is provided is limited to sports and musical activities. However, the autistic students achieve well and make good progress that is commensurate with their abilities due to the effective support received from the special education and autism teachers.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The students' conduct and relationships are inadequate as many fights arise due to lack of supervision and proper guidance. This kind of behaviour is reduced when students are

given activities that invest their energy properly, such as in entertainment games provided during break. Generally, this reflects students' limited awareness and sense of responsibility. Nevertheless, most students feel psychologically safe because of the individual efforts exerted by some teachers.

Most students participate in the extra-curricular activities and committees such as 'Music' and the 'Young Nurse'. A limited number take leading roles, such as the order committee and participate in events such as the 'Fun Time' festival. Students' enthusiasm varies during the morning broadcast and break periods and wanes in lessons. This is because most of the teaching and learning methods do not given enough opportunities for students to take responsibility, which has a negative impact on the development of their self-confidence and ability to work together and on their own.

Students show an adequate understanding of the Bahraini heritage by way of participating in the citizenship committee activities and the National Day events. Students also show some conformity to Islamic values, which reflects on their participation in the 'good seeds committee' and the 'peace project'.

Students generally attend regularly and on time. The school deals with cases of lateness and absence effectively.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The teachers are familiar with their study material, but this is not reflected in the teaching strategies in most lessons especially where attempts are made to use group work and discussion as recommended in the previous review report. The implementation of these strategies is not effective and students do not achieve as they should due to the poor attention given to teaching basic skills, especially in the second cycle. The exception is in science where skills are good. The teachers do use educational resources such as shapes, cards, the Smart board, illustrations and maps, but the students are not interested or motivated to participate in lessons because resources are not used in interesting ways, except in the science lessons. The students often take on the lesson's goals, but following up with achieving these goals as the lesson time elapses is ineffective.

The majority of teachers have poor lesson management, which negatively influences the students' progress. Moreover, most lessons in the second cycle do not end on time,

preventing the achievement of the learning goals. In the first cycle, lessons run in a better manner. The lessons do not provide enough opportunities to challenge students' abilities or develop their higher level thinking skills appropriate to their abilities. This has a negative impact on the development of students' cognitive skills. The students in the first cycle and low achievers are provided with enough support, while other student groups are not receiving a similar level of support, so their educational needs are not met. This is despite the encouragement and incentives students receive, such as symbolic gifts and applause that are provided, especially in the introductory activities.

Students are given class activities and homework that generally takes insufficient account of their individual differences, especially in the second cycle, although there are exceptions for a few activities and in science. The homework is not followed up with students by most teachers and the feedback is insufficient in helping students learn from their mistakes.

The teachers use written assessment methods in a limited number of situations in the first cycle. However, mostly these are limited to group verbal questions where responses cannot be used to adequately address the areas in which students need to improve, consequently affecting their progress adversely, especially in the second cycle.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The way the curriculum is provided enables most students of the first cycle to acquire skills in reading and writing in Arabic and skills in Arithmetic to a lesser degree. However, it does not give second cycle students adequate basic skills, especially in Arabic, English and Mathematics. Links between subjects and generic skills are not planned, except in a few lessons in the first cycle and in Science lessons in the second cycle.

The school develops students' understanding of their rights, responsibilities and sense of belonging through a range of activities. It provides most students with opportunities to take part in the extra-curricular activities, such as the morning broadcast and sports competitions, which are satisfactory. 'The Young Journalist' and the 'Music Club' contribute to developing some of the students' talents. The school environment is used to reinforce the curriculum, which includes the learning resources, the Science laboratory and the e-learning classroom. However, the learning environment remains unattractive and not motivating to learning due to the poor availability of resources and displays that relate to the curriculum. The celebration of students' work both inside and outside the classrooms is insufficient.

The school's curriculum plans are analysed, for example in Science and Mathematics, but the findings are not used effectively to adjust the curriculum to the students' different educational needs.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Although aspects of the care provided are satisfactory, overall guidance and support are less than adequate. The induction of new students is satisfactory, which contributes to their feeling stable. The students' introduction into the next stage of education is limited to educational meetings for students' parents when their children are preparing to move to the fourth grade.

The school identifies and meets students' personal needs satisfactorily, such as providing them with the winter support package. The support provided by the special education specialist for the autistic students is adequate, and low achieving students receive sufficient support from their teachers. However, the rest of the students do not receive similar levels of support. In the second cycle, for example, it is limited to the intensive classes and for the outstanding and talented students in developing their sport and artistic talents through participation in contests.

Students receive guidance when they are facing problems. However, this is often individual efforts by staff, which do not go far enough in securing systematic support across the school.

Parents are kept informed of the progress of their children through monthly reports and meetings. The school provides safety drills on evacuation, and awareness lectures on health in cooperation with the school nurse. However, the supervision of students during the break and leaving times is inadequate, which is a cause of concern.

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 has a vision and mission that focus on achievement, but these are not practically translated in most of the educational practices. Therefore their impact is not evident in the students' achievement or on overall performance of the school.

The school has a strategic plan that extends until 2015. However, the plan does not include performance indicators and is not based on a comprehensive, accurate evaluation of the work priorities. Furthermore, the school lacks clear monitoring mechanisms, so constraining the improvement of the school's work, especially in terms of students' academic achievement and their personal development. It does assess some of the practices in limited ways, such as visiting classes to observe teaching and learning. However, these observations are not used to improve teachers' performance in ways that impact on the effectiveness of the teaching and learning.

The school administration does try to inspire and motivate staff to develop and improve. However, task delegation is not carried out properly and followed-up effectively, which results in job dissatisfaction for most teachers.

The school provides some vocational development programmes in cooperation with the external improvement team, such as the 'class management', 'cooperative learning strategies' and the 'introductory activities' programmes. However, the absence of planning based on accurate priorities for improvement, monitoring the impact of the development programmes and the poor administrative organisation results in limiting the improvement of the teachers' performance.

The school educational facilities such as the Science laboratory, e-learning classroom and learning resources are used by some of the first cycle teachers and the Science Department. These have a positive impact on learning and reinforcing most students' experiences in these lessons.

The school communicates with parents effectively via phone, educational meetings and text messages, which gains the approval of students and their parents. In addition, it contacts the local community and cooperates with the school principals to discuss issues related to the implementation of the improvement projects. However, these discussions do not translate into having a clear impact on the school's overall performance.

The school's main strengths

- The support programme for the class of autistic students
- Students' good acquisition of scientific skills in the second cycle
- The individual efforts by staff to control students' behaviour
- Students' attendance and punctuality.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- receive immediate external support to help the school make progress
- develop the strategic plan according to an accurate self-assessment, based on the school's priorities, with defined and accurate performance indicators which can be used regularly to monitor progress
- develop effective teaching and learning strategies to assure students' acquisition of basic skills, generate enthusiasm and motivation for learning and raise their academic and personal achievement
- reinforce students' positive behaviour more widely across the school.