



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

# **Schools Review Unit**

## **Review Report**

**Al Diraz Primary Girls School**  
**Al Diraz Town – Northern Governorate**  
**Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date reviewed: 2 – 4 March 2010**

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## The Schools Review Unit

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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**

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### **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 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: Girls

Number of students: 773

Age range: 6 -12 years

### **Characteristics of the school**

Al Diraz Primary Girls School, founded in 1967, is one of the Northern Governorate's schools. A new building was constructed in 2002. There are 773 students, including 200 students who joined the school this academic year when a neighbouring school closed. The age range in the school is from 6 to 12 years. Most students come from middle-to limited-income backgrounds. The students are distributed across 26 classes in two cycles: five classes in grades 1 and 4, and four classes in each of the other grades. The school categorised 140 students as outstanding, 194 as talented and 77 as having learning difficulties. The teaching staff numbers 64, including nine substitutes, and there are 11 administrative and technical staff. The school has no second assistant principal or computer technician. The Principal is in her first academic year in the school. The school is part of King Hamad's Schools of the Future project.

## Overall effectiveness

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

### **Grade: 3 (Satisfactory)**

The overall effectiveness of Al Diraz Primary Girls School is satisfactory. The school has some strengths, such as in students' personal development, the provision and enrichment of the curriculum and the effectiveness of support and guidance. Parents and students are very satisfied with the school.

The students' academic achievement is satisfactory. Students achieve high success rates in school examinations but their standards in lessons are not consistently good. Teaching and learning methods vary in quality, particularly in first cycle lessons. Some students achieve standards in line with their abilities and some outstanding students, low achievers and students with learning difficulties make appropriate progress with targeted support. Outstanding and talented students do not make consistent progress in lessons; their individual differences are not taken consistently into account. Lower ability students make varied levels of progress as they do not receive sufficient remedial lessons and there are no systematic mechanisms to check their progress.

Students' personal development is good. Most students are punctual and attend classes on time. They enthusiastically contribute to school life through extra-curricular activities, and they also take part effectively in most lessons. Their self-confidence is boosted by their teachers' encouragement. Students work together effectively and help each other to learn when they are given opportunities. This helps to develop their independent learning skills. Their higher thinking skills are satisfactorily developed overall and to a better degree in good lessons. Students feel safe and secure in the school and enjoy good relations with their fellow students and teachers. Students behave well in lessons and around the school; for example, they clean the school yards during breaks.

The effectiveness of teaching and learning processes is satisfactory. Teachers used varied and effective teaching and learning methods in the good and outstanding lessons – which made up almost half of the observed lessons – such as discussion and dialogue, role playing and learning through games. Although collaborative learning opportunities were given in almost two-thirds of the observed lessons, most of them were not planned. The satisfactory and inadequate lessons relied on a lecturing style and asking questions to a limited number of students. The teaching does not generally challenge students' abilities sufficiently, which holds back their progress, particularly that of outstanding students. The effectiveness of

assessment methods varied: in satisfactory and inadequate lessons assessment was not used effectively to plan learning and meet students' educational needs.

The provision and enrichment of the curriculum is good. The school's environment is used well to enrich the curriculum through educational murals and the use of various educational corners. The school develops students' understanding of their rights and responsibilities effectively; their sense of citizenship is particularly well developed through students' committees such as the 'Environment Protection Committee'. Extra-curricular activities, such as art events in which the school has achieved high placing, broaden the students' experiences and foster their interests. Talented students do not have sufficient time to take part in some of these activities, however, which makes them less effective. Students' basic skills in Arabic are developed well; they are given good support and guidance in this area. Students also acquire satisfactory numeracy and IT skills, despite the school having few IT resources. Students' basic skills in English are not adequately developed.

The quality of support and guidance given to students is good. The school helps new students to settle in the school by means of an adequate induction programme. It also prepares grade 6 students to go into cycle 3 appropriately. However, the preparation of students from grade 3 to grade 4 is not sufficient. The personal needs of students are met to a great extent and their educational needs are identified through diagnostic testing in order to provide support and guidance to different groups of students. The school takes exceptional care of students with special needs. It communicates well with parents through various communication channels to update them on their daughters' progress. The school takes sufficient steps to ensure that staff and students are working in a safe and healthy environment. It has not taken sufficient care with maintenance works, however, and frequent power shutdowns interfere with students' study. The school carries out effective evacuation processes and has successfully dealt with a real fire incident.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is satisfactory. The school has a vision and mission statement focused on achievement and shared with all staff. This vision is effectively reflected in some of the practices in outstanding and good lessons. The school is implementing a strategic plan but the plan is made less effective by the absence of accurate performance indicators and regular monitoring mechanisms. The school conducts self-evaluation processes but does not use the results sufficiently to bring about improvements; this is reflected in students' levels of achievement in inadequate lessons and in some satisfactory lessons. The school has limited facilities and resources but uses them effectively to develop the educational process.

## □ Does the school have the capacity to improve?

### **Grade: 3 (Satisfactory)**

The school has a satisfactory capacity to develop and improve. It has made recent improvements to the school's environment, such as setting up the educational corners, and put more emphasis on safety and security issues as well as maintenance work. Although the school evaluates several aspects of its work it does not make adequate use of the results. The strategic plan has been successful in some areas and its impact is clearly reflected in the students' standards in outstanding and good lessons. The school is in the process of setting a strategic plan to develop the school's performance. The school's managers have been able to inspire the administrative and teaching staff and most of them have responded well to the changes introduced.

The school faces several challenges. First, its failure to carry out comprehensive maintenance works of the new building constructed in 2002 has resulted in frequent power shutdowns and taken up a great proportion of the school's budget to carry out remedial works. Another challenge is dealing with the transfer of 200 students along with their teachers to the school in this academic year because of the closure of a neighbouring school. The school also lacks stability in its leadership: three Principals have taken office during the last four academic years.

## **The school's main strengths and areas for development**

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### **Main Strengths**

- School examination results
- Students' personal development
- Promoting the students' sense of citizenship
- Support and guidance for students with special needs
- Progress of some outstanding students and students with learning difficulties.

### **Areas for development**

- Use of self-evaluation results
- Teaching and learning strategies
- Taking individual differences into account
- Using assessment results
- Acquisition of basic skills, particularly in English language
- Developing higher thinking skills
- Challenge students' abilities
- Developing follow-up mechanisms for different categories of students.



## What the school needs to do to improve

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

- Make use of self-evaluation results to set a strategic plan with clear and accurate performance indicators
- Develop effective and varied teaching and learning strategies that focus on:
  - Making use of the current outstanding practices
  - Catering for students' individual differences
  - Using assessment results to plan learning
  - Developing students' higher thinking skills and challenging their abilities
  - Developing basic skills, particularly in English language.
- Develop more accurate mechanisms to monitor the progress achieved by different categories of students
- Carry out comprehensive maintenance works in the school
- Fill staff vacancies, such as the second assistant principal, and retain the current school leadership to continue the development and improvement processes.

## Overall judgements

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Aspect	Grade: Description
<b>The school's overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3: Satisfactory</b>
The school's capacity to improve	3: Satisfactory
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	2: Good
The quality of guidance and support for students	2: Good
The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management	3: Satisfactory