



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

Schools Review Unit Review Report

**Al Jaafery Religious Institute
Juffair - Capital Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date Reviewed: 29 November - 1 December 2010

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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 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

Scope of the Review

This Review was conducted over three days, by a team of eight Reviewers. During the Review, Reviewers observed lessons and other activities, examined students' written and other 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: Boys

Number of students: 1244

Age range: 6-15 years

Characteristics of the school

Al Jaaferiy Religious Institute is located in the Juffair region of the Capital Governorate. Founded in 2002, it receives students from all regions of Bahrain. The age range in the school is from 6 to 15 years, and the total number of students is 1244. Students are distributed across 40 classes: five classes for each of the first and second cycles and 10 classes for the intermediate level. Most students come from middle-income families. The school categorises 647 of its students as talented, 53 as outstanding and 65 as having special educational needs; four students are physically disabled. The principal is in his second year at the school. There are 11 administrative staff and 88 teaching staff. The school currently has vacancies for a learning resources centre specialist, an electronic learning classroom technician, a lab supervisor, a computer specialist, a data technician and a nurse. The school has a shortage of some facilities such as stores and toilets for the students.

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 3 (Satisfactory)

The overall effectiveness of Al Jaaferiy Religious Institute is satisfactory. In the aspect of students' personal development the school is good. Students and their parents are very satisfied with the school.

The students' academic achievement is satisfactory. Most students achieve high pass rates in most core subjects, except mathematics in the third cycle and English in the second cycle; however, they achieve high proficiency rates in the core subjects only in the first cycle in school examinations. These rates largely reflect students' performance in most lessons, where the quality of teaching is variable. In the first cycle, students acquire good Arabic listening and speaking skills and good addition and subtraction skills in mathematics. In science and religious sciences, students gain satisfactory basic skills in the three cycles. Students' reading and writing skills in English are unsatisfactory. Overall results in most of the core subjects have varied over the past three years and have fallen behind in English. Most students make satisfactory progress according to their levels in lessons and written work, except in most English lessons in the second and third cycles, where they make insufficient progress. In the excellent and good lessons observed in the first cycle, religious sciences and the learning disabilities programme, some students made clear progress. Some talented and outstanding students achieve top positions in some international competitions.

Students' personal development is good. A high proportion of students, 98 per cent, attend the school regularly. Students are organised and get in line quickly for morning assembly, reflecting their awareness and responsibility to their duties. Most students participate in the given activities, watch each other's performance with enthusiasm and compete against each other confidently. Students do well in public speaking and poetry competitions, which helps to develop their abilities and encourages them further. Students develop self-confidence by participating in the Student Council and taking part in behavioural programmes such as a self-discipline programme that has helped to foster good characteristics and positive values among students. Students take leadership roles in the scout team and also when they are part of cooperative learning activities in some classes. Students show a little less enthusiasm in lessons of the second and third cycles; some teaching strategies used in these lessons do not meet their interests and do not develop their ability to analyse situations. Students work together well and have good relations with each other and with their teachers, which helps them to feel safe and secure in the school.

The effectiveness of the teaching and learning processes is satisfactory. Teachers transfer knowledge and concepts to students in a satisfactory way. In the excellent and good lessons observed, some teachers used a variety of teaching and learning strategies such as cooperative learning and 'the student as teacher' role, as well as providing students with interesting activities such as discussion and dialogue. Some teachers are enthusiastic and confident users of teaching aids such as data presentations and television. Some show good class management and the ability to motivate outstanding and talented students sufficiently; in such lessons, students acquire the skills, concepts and knowledge they need. Students are provided with opportunities to learn from each other, especially in the first cycle. In the satisfactory and inadequate lessons, traditional teaching methods prevailed, which were not exciting or motivating. In these lessons, students' individual differences were not considered and their abilities were not challenged, especially in the second and third cycles; this reflected negatively on students' development of higher thinking skills. Assessment methods are limited to measuring students' knowledge and memorization. The quality of homework set varies in its level of presentation and consideration of students' individual differences, especially in religious sciences.

The quality of curriculum delivery is satisfactory. The school enriches students' understanding of their rights and duties by fostering a sense of citizenship in morning assembly activities, participating in national events such as the festival 'We Are All Brothers' with the religious institute, and by organising field trips such as visits to the Qur'an House and The House of Parental Care. Various school committees organise appropriate activities. Students have been encouraged to create artwork about Bahraini heritage. The school participates in many competitions and three of its students gained high placings in a historical research competition among the Gulf states, which reinforced their self-confidence. The school's programmes and activities satisfactorily contribute to students' acquisition of basic skills in core subjects and religious sciences, except in reading and writing skills of English. Subjects are linked satisfactorily in the first cycle. The school uses its environment appropriately to increase students' awareness and their respect and appreciation of the school environment, by featuring educational aids and displays of awareness guidelines. It does not give sufficient attention, however, to celebrating students' work.

The quality of guidance and support for students is satisfactory. After sitting the school's placement tests, students are given an effective induction that helps most new students settle in easily. Students moving into the second and third cycles are introduced to their new teachers, the nature of each stage and the evaluation methods used in it; some students, however, do not have the reading and writing skills in English that are required to move to the next educational stage. The school has no clear vision regarding preparation of the third-intermediate level students to join the secondary phase. The school meets students' personal needs appropriately by providing financial aid and health care. It helps to meet some educational needs with programmes that have helped some of the students to understand their role and to achieve high competition placings over the past five years, especially in

poetry competitions. The school provides support for students based on the different categories they fall into after their placement tests but support for students with learning disabilities and lower achievers in the classroom is insufficient. Parents are informed about their children's progress regularly through various communication channels. The school provides a healthy and safe environment for staff and students.

The effectiveness and quality of leadership and management are satisfactory. Most staff participated in forming a vision for the school that focuses on achievement. The school's strategic plan includes clear performance indicators and is based on a diagnosis of the school's situation. The effects of the vision and plan can be seen clearly in excellent and good lessons and have had a good influence on students' personal development; their effect on the rest of the school's work is variable. The school uses the results of its self-evaluation to plan some of its events and activities but it does not sufficiently monitor the impact of planning on overall performance, especially the teachers' performance in the second and third cycles. The school's leadership inspires staff to work together, encourages social communication, and delegates some authority appropriately; this has a satisfactory effect on reinforcing staff confidence and increasing their enthusiasm and motivation. Staff take part in workshops and external and internal training courses to increase their professional competency; the effect of this training on the performance of administrative and educational staff is varied. The school uses the learning resources and electronic learning centre effectively but makes less effective use of the science lab. The school uses a variety of channels to seek the opinions and suggestions of students and their parents and responds appropriately to many of them; examples include working to a two-recess period system, introducing some lectures and changing the registration system for new students.

□ Does the school have the capacity to improve?

Grade: 3 (Satisfactory)

The school's capacity to develop and improve is satisfactory. Its strategic plan has helped to bring about clear improvements, to a satisfactory degree in most aspects of the school's work and to a good degree in terms of students' personal development and some teachers' performance in lessons. In turn, achievement levels have risen, especially in the first cycle. The school has made some significant improvements: keeping pace with recent developments and changes in quality assurance standards; using the learning resources centre and the electronic classroom effectively; and introducing placement tests for new students at the beginning of the school year to gauge their proficiency. These improvements have benefited students' levels in the first cycle. The school faces challenges to making further improvement: it does not know what action will be taken by the Ministry of Education regarding opening the secondary level for students of the third intermediate level; it has shortages in human resources; and the quality of teachers' performance is variable.

The school's main strengths and areas for development

Main Strengths

- Developing the strategic plan
- Inspiring and encouraging staff
- High proficiency rates in most basic subjects
- Students' self-confidence, taking responsibility, feeling safe and secure
- Class management by teachers
- The variety of teaching and learning strategies used in the first cycle and religious sciences specially in group learning
- Students' understanding of their rights and duties and their sense of citizenship
- Extracurricular activities, especially competitions.

Areas for development

- Ensuring that strategic planning improves overall performance
- Cooperative learning in the second and third cycles and the variety of teaching and learning strategies
- Developing students' basic skills, especially in English
- Developing higher thinking skills and challenging students' abilities
- Assessment methods
- Supporting students based on their levels with consideration of individual differences in lessons and homework
- Raising teachers' professional competency.

What the school needs to do to improve

In order to improve further, the school should:

- Monitor the impact of strategic planning on improving each aspect of the school's overall performance.
- Develop teaching and learning strategies to include:
 - Development of better basic skills, especially in English
 - The consideration of individual differences in lessons and homework
 - Challenging students' abilities
 - Using cooperative learning in the second and third cycles
 - Using different assessment methods and using the results to identify students' educational needs.
- Further develop programmes to raise teachers' professional competency and monitoring their impact on teachers' performance in lessons.
- Seek, in coordination with the Ministry of Education to meet students' and parents' demands concerning the next stage of education for intermediate-level students, to provide more toilets and to fill the staff vacancies.

Overall judgements

Aspect	Grade: Description
The school's overall effectiveness	3: Satisfactory
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	3: Satisfactory
The quality of guidance and support for students	3: Satisfactory
The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management	3: Satisfactory