



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

Schools Review Unit

Review Report

Al Khalil Bin Ahmed Intermediate Boys School
Karzakan - Northern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date of Review: 19 - 21 March 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 eight 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-Khalil Bin Ahmed Intermediate Boys School															
School's type		Government															
Year of establishment		1982															
Age range of students		13 - 15 years															
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High							
		-				7-9				-							
Number of students		Boys	731	Girls	-				Total	731							
Students' social background		Most students are from of low-income, middle-class families															
Classes per grade		Grade		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
		Classes		-	-	-	-	-	-	7	7	7	-	-	-		
Town /Village		Karzakan															
Governorate		Northern															
Number of administrative staff		9															
Number of teaching staff		52															
Curriculum		Ministry of Education (MoE)															
Main language(s) of instruction		Arabic															
Principal's tenure		One year															
External assessment and examinations		MoE's examinations, and QAAET's national examinations															
Accreditation (if applicable)		-															
Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification		Outstanding				Gifted & Talented				Physical Disabilities				Learning Difficulties			
		58				8				3				38			

Major recent changes in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promotion of the assistant principal to school principal in February 2011• Acceptance of 111 new students since the previous review• Assignment of the tasks of the second assistant principal to the senior science teacher• Appointment of a senior mathematics teacher, and transfer of most of the mathematics teachers to other schools.
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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	3: Satisfactory			
	Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	-	4	-	4
Students' personal development	-	3	-	3
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	-	4	-	4
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: 4 Inadequate

The school's overall performance changed from being judged 'satisfactory' in the review of May 2009 to 'inadequate' in this one. The school has failed to place improving teaching and learning strategies on top of its priorities. The lack of support offered to the different groups of students, especially low achieving students, has had a negative impact and therefore a high percentage of lessons are inadequate, especially in English and mathematics. This has reduced the attainment of students. The rest of the review aspects are satisfactory and the school's efforts are well marked in managing and improving students' behaviour. These efforts have positively changed the school environment and effective delegation of authority has addressed the shortage in human resources. The students and their parents are generally pleased with the school despite its shortcomings.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school's capacity to improve has changed from being judged 'good' in the previous review to 'satisfactory'. Major shifts in personnel have caused this and for the school not to have addressed improving achievement and teaching enough. The most significant improvements have been focused on managing student behaviour through implementing several behavioural projects and developing the school environment through initiatives such as taking care of green areas. These are considered important achievements, since the school has encountered significant challenges. These include the increase in the number of students, the shortage in human resources and the major transfer from the school of many mathematics teachers. The school management is aware of its strengths and weaknesses, all of which makes the school's capability to improve now satisfactory.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The students attained considerably below average in national examinations in most core subjects in 2011, but in the 2010 students' levels almost matched the national average in science, mathematics and English, but not in Arabic.

The students achieved inconsistent pass rates in core subjects in the MoE examinations in 2011, which ranged between 55% and 95%. The Arabic and science pass rates were higher for Grade 9 students, while they were lower in Grades 7 and 8 in all the other subjects, especially in mathematics. The low proficiency rates contradict the pass rates in core subjects; this contradiction particularly stands out in English and science in the Grade 9.

Although most students have achieved good levels in a limited number of lessons as a result of effective teaching that provides them with proper opportunities to learn, other lessons are not as effective, especially in English and mathematics. This causes their achievement to drop.

Most students acquire skills of reading and expressive writing in Arabic, as well as, basic scientific skills, especially in Grades 7 and 9. However, students' reading skills and use of expression in English writing, and their mathematical skills are inadequate, due to the lack of support and the ineffectiveness of teaching which fails to differentiate activities in lessons.

The students have shown progress in the pass rates of most subjects except in mathematics during the past three years, 2008-11. They also show satisfactory progress in most of the Arabic and science lessons, as a result of the variety of activities and the effectiveness of the support offered to them. Conversely, the students' progress in most of the English and mathematics lessons, especially in the Grade 8, and in their written work is inadequate, due to the lack of consideration of students' individual differences.

Outstanding students make satisfactory progress because the teachers mainly focus on them during lessons, while most of the low achieving students show very little progress due to the lack of educational support they receive. Likewise, students with learning difficulties also show little progress. It is significant that there is no learning difficulties specialist teacher.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Variations in students' enthusiasm towards learning limit their participation in lessons. Students participate in extra-curricular activities, especially in the morning assembly. Personal development occurs mostly in activities such as performance and acting and in lessons where students initiate answering questions whilst working in groups.

Most students show self-confidence. This is reflected in their ability to engage in dialogue and express their opinions. 'Chair of the Brave' activities in Arabic lessons and leadership roles such as the 'Young Teacher' and 'Group Leader' projects are good examples. Other students' learning expectations are not reduced, since they too are held responsible for their own learning.

Students respect the opinions and feelings of their classmates and teachers, which results from programmes such as 'I Am Well-Raised' and 'The Golden Class'. They also work together appropriately whenever they get the chance, especially in extra-curricular activities, such as preparing the library's break publication and in some good lessons. They show an understanding of Bahraini heritage and culture, including Islamic values, which is portrayed through their participation in cultural, and religious events such as the 'Prophet's Birth'.

The majority of students attend punctually and most feel safe at school, because the school management and teachers treat them with respect. However, some students feel threatened due to harsh methods by few teachers when dealing with behavioural problems.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Most teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge, but this is only used effectively in a few lessons. Implementation of teaching and learning strategies that offer effective support and varied activities and resources is too limited. Inadequate lessons counted for over a quarter of the lessons observed, mainly in English and mathematics. This was due to a number of reasons. Weaknesses in time and class management, the poor application of question and answer strategies, teachers being at the core of the process, insufficient support for students especially the low-achieving ones, offering curricular activities that do not meet the

educational needs of different groups of students and the limited use of the educational resources are the main causes. These have a negative effect on the students' progress and them gaining essential concepts, skills and knowledge.

The teachers refer to suitable work plans when running their lessons. They share objectives with most of their students and effectively introduce activities by offering varied opportunities that challenge students' abilities and develop their higher level thinking skills. Examples include analytical thinking in a few Arabic and science lessons. However most students in most lessons have more limited teaching with quick transitions from one activity to another with teachers failing to control the students' learning behaviours well enough. Students engage in side-talks which slows their progress.

Students are assigned homework, as required in some lesson plans. Students' different levels of ability are taken into consideration when setting homework in many lessons. However, the correction of homework is not carried out regularly and feedback is not provided consistently enough. This limits students' chances to recognise and learn from their mistakes.

The teachers use evaluation methods that mainly focus on the oral contributions of groups. Questions in most lessons are direct with some of them being in writing, which is helpful. However, benefiting from the results of these evaluations to meet the different needs of students is inadequate. The progress of students, especially low achieving students, is limited due to less than satisfactory teaching.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school develops students' understanding of rights and duties through providing counselling sessions, celebrating the National Day, as well as awareness-raising to promote patriotism. It helps students improve the school environment through the development of green spaces, publish poems that promote heritage and to support patriotism. Using the school environment to enrich the curriculum is varied across different subjects. Students' work, especially in Arabic and computer studies, is celebrated all over the school.

The school offers a range of appropriate content within the curriculum, such as classes in the science, computer and technology. It also has operational and time plans to deliver the curriculum. It analyses textbook content, such as in science books and provides notebooks to simplify the academic content in these. However, the way the curriculum is presented does

not adequately meet the educational needs of all groups of students. Opportunities to enrich the experiences for different ability groups are missed. Links between subjects are not established except in a few science and Arabic lessons.

The school offers opportunities for the majority of students to participate in extra-curricular activities, for example in sports, indoor contests, activity classes and the theatre and acting committee. These help develop their expertise and interests, however, the activity classes are not diverse enough, especially for the talented students.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school inducts new students by familiarising them with its facilities and introducing them to the school's expectations. This helps them settle well. It also conducts visits and prepares them well for the next educational stage by conducting lectures on the secondary stage of education.

Students' personal needs are evaluated and the school provides the necessary aids, such as stationary, breakfasts and the winter aids. Diagnostic tests are used with the results of mid-terms tests in order to identify students who require educational assistance so as to offer them intensive lessons. English and Arabic intensive lessons are delivered appropriately. Despite the fact that students with learning difficulties are considered sensitively during examinations, not enough attention is given to them in terms of help and support inside and outside classes, since there is no learning difficulties specialist to advise and provide.

The school employs effective mechanisms when communicating with the parents. The parents are contacted via SMS, correspondence and the open day. The school also offers advice and guidance to violating students, and addresses these difficulties properly through programmes such as 'reinforcing positive behaviour'.

Health and safety risks are assessed and tracked. Anything that threatens students' safety is dealt with. First aid kits are available and periodic evacuation drills help students feel safe and secure.

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's vision focuses on achievement and was formed in participatory manner. This is portrayed in most Arabic and science lessons. However, it is not adequately reflected in teachers' performance in a large numbers of the lessons in English and mathematics.

The school's self-evaluation of its effectiveness is not accurate enough to ensure expected progress in teaching and learning, and academic achievement. It has adopted a comprehensive strategic plan but it does not include any key performance indicators. With reference to the previous review recommendations, the school prepared an operational plan with clear performance indicators, which has affected the students' behaviour positively and improved the school environment. However, the operational plan did not include improving teaching and learning which has caused the lack of improvement in the students' academic achievement. The school is currently preparing a new strategic plan that follows the outstanding Bahraini school standards.

The senior and middle leadership motivate the members of the teaching and administrative staff, encouraging them to do more development and enhancement, and delegating some duties to them to decrease the shortage in human resources. Example of this includes assigning the duties of the assistant principal to the senior science teacher, and one of the Arabic teachers to perform the duties of a senior teacher. The competency of the staff is raised through implementing several professional development programmes. The impact of these programmes however, is not seen in lessons, especially in English and mathematics. The school benefits from the external support from its external improvement partner. However, follow-up has not ensured the implementation of these practices.

The use of facilities is varied. The Learning Resources Centre, the electronic classroom and the gymnasium are used well, while that is not the case for the science laboratory. The school seeks the opinions of students and parents and responds to them within available resources through both the Students' and the Parents' Councils. Examples include discussing the reasons of students' low achievement with parents and responding to requests regarding the school canteen and the sanitation of toilets. The school regularly communicates with local community institutions to enhance partnerships such as collaborating with local clubs and charities. It communicates with the nearby health centre, the community police and the Gifted Care Centre in order to enhance the students' different experiences.

The school's main strengths

- The school's effective efforts in managing the process of behavioural improvement for most students
- The positive changes in improving the school environment
- The punctual attendance and diligence of most students.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- improve the students' achievement, especially in English and mathematics
- adjust time and class management, in addition to developing teaching and learning methods, so as to ensure:
 - the use of assessment results to meet the students' learning needs
 - implementing curricular activities that take account of individual differences effectively
 - offering more effective support to all students, especially low achieving students
 - promoting the students' self-confidence through holding them responsible for their learning
- offer sufficient help and support to students with learning difficulties
- develop more precise mechanisms for school self-evaluation and implementation of professional development programmes in routine teaching
- address the shortage staffing, mainly a learning difficulties specialist, second assistant principal, second social counsellor, and a senior Arabic teacher.