



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

# **Schools Review Unit Review Report**

**Al Maarefa Secondary Girls School  
Central Governorate  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 26-28 April 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:

<b>Grade description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
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 student

## **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 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: Girls

Number of students: 999

Age range: 16-18 years

### **Characteristics of the school**

Al Maarefa Secondary Girls School is one of the Central Governorate schools and was founded in 2004. The age range in the school is from 16 to 18 years, and there are 999 students. Students are distributed across 32 classes: 14 classes for the first level, six for the second level and 12 for the third. Most students come from middle-income families. The school categorises 48 of its students as outstanding, 35 as talented and six as having special educational needs; two students are physically disabled. There are 125 teaching staff and 32 administrative and technical staff. The headmistress is in her second year at the school. The school is part of King Hamad's Schools of the Future project and the Professional and Technical Education Development Project (Apprenticeship).

## Overall effectiveness

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### □ How effective is the school in meeting the needs of students and their parents?

#### Grade: 2 (Good)

The overall effectiveness of Al Maarefa Secondary Girls School is good. It has outstanding aspects in students' personal development, support and guidance, and leadership and management. It also has an outstanding capacity to improve. Students are exceptionally satisfied with the school and their parents are also very satisfied.

Students' academic achievement is good. Students achieve high pass rates on most courses, which closely mirror their levels throughout lessons, in which a wide range of teaching and learning methods effectively help them to master the basic skills of Arabic, Mathematics and Information Technology (IT). Students' English skills are less well developed. Students have made good progress in examination results over the past three years in most subjects and general pass rates have risen significantly at secondary level. Students' performance in written work matches their levels in lessons. Most students of different categories achieve levels above those expected of them: they receive good support and their individual differences are properly considered, especially in the good and outstanding lessons. The remedial lessons and enriching programmes and activities provided for different categories of student are particularly effective.

Students' personal development is outstanding. Most students attend school regularly and get to lessons punctually. They contribute with great effectiveness and enthusiasm to school life, whether in lessons and extra-curricular activities or at morning assembly. Most students display great confidence in expressing their opinions and have the ability to work independently and take responsibility. They benefit from the many opportunities they are given to learn together, engage in group work, take on leading roles and play an effective part in the various school committees. Students are also given good opportunities to develop analytical thinking skills. Mutual respect and good relations exist between students and staff. The school applies a strong values system, reinforces positive conduct in students from different areas and backgrounds and listens to students' opinions; these actions have had an excellent effect on students' awareness, actions and conduct in and outside lessons. Students feel exceptionally secure in the school.

The effectiveness of teaching and learning processes is good. Most teachers know the study materials well and reflect this in effective teaching and learning methods and strategies,

especially in the good and excellent lessons. In these lessons, students are at the centre of the educational process and good educational resources and modern technology are used. Most teachers run their lessons in an effective and organised manner and enable students to acquire concepts, knowledge and skills in most subjects. Students are given many opportunities for challenging their abilities, working together and learning from each other cooperatively, which aids their academic progression and personal development. Students are assigned homework but it is often the same for all students and feedback is not always given. Most teachers use a range of assessment methods that help to diagnose and meet students' educational needs effectively, which is reflected in their academic achievement.

The quality of curriculum enrichment and delivery is good. The varied teaching and learning strategies, as well as remedial lessons, have contributed to most students gaining a good mastery of the basic skills of Arabic, Mathematics and IT; students' English skills are not as strong. The school develops students' understanding of their rights and duties and their sense of citizenship in an outstanding way, through effective programmes and school events. It also offers students a wide range of appropriate extra-curricular activities that enhance students' experiences and match their various interests. The school environment is employed well to enrich the curriculum; students play their part by producing fine art murals and the school arranges educational displays and celebrates students' work. The school provides a motivating environment for learning.

The quality of support and guidance for students is outstanding. The school inducts new students very effectively when they join the school, which helps them settle in easily. It also prepares students effectively for their the next stage of education or employment with lessons, in-house training and internships, especially the apprenticeship students and community service students. The school identifies and meets students' personal needs exceptionally well. It also meets their educational needs through remedial and intensive programmes and by providing them with good support in most lessons, all of which has a positive effect on their academic achievement. Students who face problems are given good advice that helps their personal development. The school communicates properly with parents to inform them about their daughters' progress. It also makes great efforts to ensure that staff and students work in a safe and healthy environment, which students appreciate.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding. The school has a clear vision and mission that focus on achievement, the influence of which can be clearly seen in teachers' practices. All staff were involved in drafting the vision and mission. The school also has a comprehensive strategic plan that includes clear performance indicators, focuses strongly on improvement and development and was prepared after a careful analysis of the school's situation. The implementation of this plan has brought about dramatic improvements in most aspects of the school's work: teachers' performance in lessons; the rising achievement rates at secondary level; and the achievement of great progress in students' personal development. The school performs accurate, effective and comprehensive

self-evaluation of all its events and activities to ensure the quality of its work, which has helped it to design and implement developmental projects. The middle and senior managers inspire the rest of the staff, motivate them well and make great efforts to raise their professional capacity; all this is reflected in the performance of many of them. The school uses its resources effectively, although the laboratories and the electronic classroom are used less well. The school listens to the views of students and their parents and responds appropriately.

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

**Grade: 1 (Outstanding)**

The school's capacity to develop and improve is outstanding. The school's leaders believe strongly in development. Their enthusiasm is reflected in all of the school's educational practices. The school environment is one of harmonious relationships, which encourages teachers to take the initiative in implementing its developmental programmes. The school has a comprehensive strategic plan that was built on a thorough diagnosis of its strengths and areas for development; the plan includes clear performance indicators and focuses strongly on improvement and development. The school is totally aware of its strengths and areas for development because of its accurate and comprehensive self-evaluation of all of its practices. All these factors have had a significant impact on students' academic achievement and their excellent personal development. The school has been extremely successful in applying the Apprenticeship Programme, which has been of significant benefit to students' personal development.

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

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### **Main Strengths**

- Strategic planning
- Self-evaluation
- Inspiration and motivation of staff
- Students' academic achievement
- Teaching and learning strategies
- Working together and learning from one another
- Using assessment and benefiting from its results
- Support and guidance programmes for students
- Students' understanding of their rights and duties
- Students' self-confidence and ability to take responsibility
- Students' contribution to school life
- Use of the school environment
- Extra-curricular activities.

### **Areas for development**

- Considering individual differences
- Challenging students' abilities
- Developing basic skills, especially in English
- Developing analytical thinking skills
- Homework.



## What the school needs to do to improve

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

- Ensure that the existing outstanding practices are spread across the school
- Develop teaching and learning strategies to include:
  - Considering individual differences and challenging students' abilities to a greater extent
  - Developing students' analytical thinking skills to a higher degree
  - Mechanisms for ensuring that homework considers students' different educational needs
  - Developing better basic skills in English.

## Overall judgements

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Aspect	Grade: Description
<b>The school's overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2: Good</b>
The school's capacity to improve	1: Outstanding
Students' academic achievement	2: Good
Students' progress in their personal development	1: Outstanding
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	2: Good
The quality of the curriculum delivery	2: Good
The quality of guidance and support for students	1: Outstanding
The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management	1: Outstanding