



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

School Review Unit

Review Report

Al-Safa Primary Girls School
A'ali - Central Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date Reviewed: 20 – 22 April 2009

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The School Review Unit

The School 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 drive up 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 four 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: 369 students

Age range: 6 – 12 years

Characteristics of the school

Al-Safa Primary Girls School is located in the Central Governorate. It was established in 1994 and is situated in Aali village. Most students at the school come from middle-class economic and conservative social backgrounds. The school has 369 students enrolled, and they are distributed amongst 12 classes (six in the first cycle, and six in the second cycle). 8% of the students have learning difficulties, whilst 3% of the students are qualified to get free meals. Most students have Arabic as their first language. The school lacks some important facilities such as a gymnasium, science and home economics lab, design and technology lab and an art room. The total number of staff includes 32 teachers. The school recently joined His Majesty King Hamad's "Schools of the Future" project.

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 2 (Good)

Al-Safa Primary Girls School's effectiveness is considered generally good. It has gained good satisfaction from parents and students.

Due to a good range of teaching strategies, the student's academic achievement is generally good. These teaching strategies address individual differences between students when it comes to explaining the material. This greatly enhanced the progress of the students' academic achievement in all academic categories, and increased their pass rates and levels of proficiency in basic subjects in exams. The students' reading, writing and numeracy skills are good, as they have sufficient opportunities to practice and develop these skills in lessons. The students' IT skills are advanced as demonstrated in some school projects and activities where the students had to use computers.

The students' personal development is good. Students are polite inside and outside the classroom. Students participate in the school's many different extracurricular activities, which have enhanced their self-confidence, developed their sense of responsibility, and ability to express their opinions. In addition, the students have opportunities to actively contribute and take leadership roles in the classroom, which is reflected in their enthusiasm however, to learn. The development of the students' higher order thinking skills is insufficient.

The teaching and learning process is good. This is due to the teachers' use of various teaching strategies, their subject knowledge and their enthusiasm during lessons. Most teachers created a fun and interesting atmosphere which triggered the students' enthusiasm to learn in addition to the use of most teachers for a variety of assessment methods. This is positively reflected in increasing the student's achievement levels and acquisition of basic skills in reading, writing, numeracy and IT.

The quality of the curriculum enrichment and presentation is good. The curriculum is enhanced through the use of a number of different extracurricular activities and a number of field trips and educational visits. However, low-achieving students miss out on extracurricular activities since they are busy in the remedial lessons. A motivating learning environment is created through educational enrichment of the classrooms and school

environment with educational guidance boards that develop a spirit of citizenship in students.

Students support and guidance are good. The specialists at the school evaluate the students' personal and educational requirements. In addition, suitable induction programmes are provided for students when they join the school to ensure that they settle in easily. The school's management has good mechanisms in place which help them monitor and assess health risks and other risks in school.

The leadership and management of the school are good, which is considered to be among the school's strengths. All leadership staff work as a team, to achieve the school's vision and mission. This is done through careful planning, self-evaluation and its knowledge of its strengths and areas in need of improvement and provision of the best services to students. The school has a general plan with clear plans based on an analysis of the school's reality and it is monitored on the execution of its aims. In addition, the school communicates with the parents and attempts to meet their suggestions, and provide opportunities to the students to take some decisions such as voting on reducing homework during the examination period.

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

Grade: 2 (Good)

The school has a good capacity to improve. The school has competent, experienced and diligent administrative and teaching staff. Staff are supported by a leadership that believes that consultation and ownership are a necessity for change and development. In addition to self-evaluation which underpins the management's clear knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. There is an improvement plan and programmes which focus on the right issues. Furthermore, the head teacher introduced a number of improvements to the school, mainly, improving the school's learning environment and encouraging teachers to use a variety of more modern teaching strategies such as information technology. This had a positive impact in winning the interest of students, which in turn, resulted in higher levels of academic achievement.

The school's main strengths and areas for development

Main strengths

- Leadership and management.
- The school plan and its monitoring and assessment.
- Self-Evaluation
- High pass rate in the Ministry's exams.
- Basic skills in reading, writing, numeracy and IT.
- Students' behaviour
- Variety of assessment methods
- Enrichment of school environment and development of citizenship.

Areas for development

- Higher order thinking skills.
- Spreading outstanding practices in the school
- Challenge of abilities.
- Providing opportunities for low achieving students to participate in the extracurricular activities.

What the school needs to do to improve

In order to improve further, the school should:

- Develop teaching and learning strategies, with due consideration to the following:
 - Spreading outstanding practices in the school.
 - Providing more opportunities to develop the students' higher order thinking skills.
 - Challenging abilities.

- Providing opportunities for low achieving students to participate in the extracurricular activities.

Overall judgements

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