



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

Schools Review Unit

Review Report

Al Sehla Primary Girls School
Bu Quwa - Northern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date Reviewed: 26-28 October 2009

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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 as 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 student

Introduction

Scope of the Review

This Review was conducted over three days, by a team of five 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: 615

Age range: 6 -12 years

Characteristics of the school

Al Sehla Primary Girls School is one of the Northern Governorate's schools. It was established in 1986. It caters for students aged between 6 and 12 years old. Most of the 615 students come from higher-income families. The students are distributed across 19 classes: three classes for each grade of the first and second cycles except for grade 5, which has four classes. The school categorises 9% of its students as having learning difficulties, 50% as outstanding, 14% as gifted and talented and seven students have disabilities. There are 42 teachers in the school and 17 administrative staff. The Principal is running the school for the fourth year. The school is part of 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)

The overall effectiveness of Al Sehla Primary Girls School is good; the support and guidance offered to students is satisfactory. Parents and students are very satisfied with the school.

The students' academic achievement is good. Most students achieve high pass rates in school examinations, which is consistent with their actual attainment during lessons, particularly in class teaching in the first cycle and Arabic lessons in the second cycle; in these lessons, the teaching methods place the student at the centre of the learning process. Pass rates do fall back slightly as students move from the first to the second cycle, especially in Mathematics. Students achieve levels that match their abilities and make good progress. Teachers use diagnostic test results in most subjects, and examinations results, to help them meet students' educational needs in lessons and cater for students' individual differences. Low achievers do not get sufficient support in some lessons and remedial programmes, which hampers their chances to achieve levels appropriate to their abilities. Outstanding and gifted students get to participate in different internal and external competitions.

Students' personal development is good. All students are committed to attending school regularly and on time. Most of them behave with awareness and responsibility in the classroom and around the school, keep their classrooms tidy, maintain the school's property, and follow school regulations and rules. Relations between students and teachers are friendly and based on respect. Students feel safe and secure in school and are free from intimidatory behaviour. They contribute enthusiastically to school life and are given good opportunities in lessons and other activities that enhance their self-confidence and allow them to take on responsibility and work independently. They are given insufficient opportunities, however, to develop their analytical thinking.

The effectiveness of teaching and learning is good. Teachers use effective and diverse teaching strategies that are mainly student-centred. They let students work collaboratively and assign appropriate roles and responsibilities. Most teachers have enthusiasm and good knowledge of their subject that inspires students to learn, motivates them to take part in lessons and raises the standard of performance in the classroom. Most teachers use a variety of evaluation methods that help them diagnose students' educational needs and support them well, particularly in outstanding and good lessons. Although students' gain appropriate basic skills, understanding and knowledge, their abilities are not always challenged sufficiently. Homework tasks are assigned to students to enrich their work.

These tasks are not well planned, however, and do not take into account individual differences; students do not gain enough benefit from them.

The curriculum is presented and enriched well. In most lessons and enrichment programmes the curriculum is presented in a manner that helps students develop their basic skills, particularly their reading and writing skills in Arabic language and their information technology skills; their writing skills in English language and their numeracy skills in Mathematics are developed to a lesser degree. Better links are made between subjects in the second cycle than in the first. The school provides students with diverse classroom and extra-curricular activities that develop students' understanding of their rights, duties and responsibilities. This is reflected well in the widening of students' experience and their increased awareness of the importance of the environment. The school takes care to decorate the school and classroom environment attractively, making the school conducive to learning and encouraging students to respect and value their surroundings.

Support and guidance for students are satisfactory. The school organises good induction programmes for new students entering the school that help them to settle in easily. Students moving to their next educational stage, however, are prepared only through what is offered during lessons. The school diagnoses students' personal needs and fulfils them appropriately depending on its available resources. Students' educational needs are not diagnosed as thoroughly, however, and remedial and support programmes are not employed effectively; the progress of low achievers is affected by this. The school offers proper advice and support to students when needed, the results of which can be seen in improved student behaviour. The school communicates with parents well about their daughters' progress. The school carries out risk assessments related to security and safety but does not do them regularly.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is good. The school has a clear vision focusing on achievement, which is reflected in most of the school's practices. The school's strategic plan is based upon SWOT analysis, which identifies the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Senior leaders inspire teachers and motivate them to take part in development programmes and use technology in the classrooms. Good self-evaluation has helped the school to improve students' achievements and their personal development. The school responds well to some of the parents' and students' views.

Does the school have the capacity to improve?

Grade: 2 (Good)

The school has a good capacity to develop and improve. Over the past three years, senior managers have led the school towards change and improved performance by developing a

strategic plan based on SWOT analysis, giving priority to developmental projects, and monitoring effectively the implementation of plans and projects. This work is reflected in the quality of teaching methods used in the school; the use of technology in classrooms; the care shown for the school environment; the effective use of facilities and resources; and greater participation by all staff in the school's work. The school evaluates aspects of its work well and identifies areas of strength and weakness; this has contributed to improving the school's overall performance as well as students' academic achievement and personal progress. The school's achievements are the result of collective efforts by all staff members and some of the parents.

The school's main strengths and areas of development

Main Strengths

- Strategic planning and self-evaluation
- Standards in examinations
- Teaching and learning strategies
- Use of assessment
- Students' behaviour
- Extra-curricular activities
- Use of school environment
- Induction programmes for new students.
- Communication with parents

Areas for improvement

- Support and guidance to low achievers
- Analytical thinking skills
- Challenging students' abilities
- Linking between subjects
- Basic writing skills in English and numeracy skills

What the school needs to do to improve

In order to improve further, the school should:

- Develop teaching and learning strategies that:
 - Spread good practices in school
 - Challenge students' abilities to a greater extent
 - Include more opportunities for analytical thinking
 - Develop English writing skills and numeracy to a greater extent
 - Link across subjects in the first cycle

- Adopt effective programmes to provide support and guidance for low achievers, follow up their implementation, and evaluate them.

Overall judgements

Aspect	Grade: Description
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 curriculum delivery	2: good
The quality of guidance and support for students	3: satisfactory
The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management	2: good