

الهيئة الوطنية
للمؤهلات وصمان جودة التعليم والتدريب
National Authority for Qualifications &
Quality Assurance of Education & Training



Schools Review Unit Review Report

**Al-Hunaineya Primary Girls School
Riffa - Southern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date of Review: 24–26 September 2012

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The Schools Review Unit

The Schools Review Unit (SRU) is part of the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (NAQQAET) that was officially set up in 2008 as an independent body governed and supervised by the Council of Ministers. 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 seven 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-Hunaineya Primary Girls												
School's type	Government												
Year of establishment	2003												
Age range of students	6-10 Years												
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)	Primary				Middle				High				
	1 - 4				-				-				
Number of students	Boys	-	Girls	233				Total	233				
Students' social background	Most students belong to middle background families.												
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Classes	3	2	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Town /Village	Riffa												
Governorate	Southern												
Number of administrative staff	6 administrators and 15 technical												
Number of teaching staff	26												
Curriculum	Ministry of Education												
Main language(s) of instruction	Arabic												
Principal's tenure	4 Years												
External assessment and examinations	National examinations, NAQQAET												
Accreditation (if applicable)	-												
Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification	Outstanding	Gifted & Talented				Physical Disabilities				Learning Difficulties			
	56	49				1: Physical 2: Optical				17			
Major recent changes in the school	<p>In 2011-12, the following actions took place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • activation of e-learning programmes • appointment of Learning Resources Centre specialist. • addition of a new class for Grade 1 and, transfer of Grade 5 students to other schools. 												

Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	3: Satisfactory			
The school's capacity to improve	3: Satisfactory			
	Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	3	-	-	3
Students' personal development	3	-	-	3
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	3	-	-	3
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: 3 Satisfactory

The school's overall effectiveness remains unchanged at satisfactory as in the previous review in March 2009. All aspects are judged satisfactory. There is too much variation in the mechanisms for implementing the strategic planning objectives for the school to be judged good. Students' academic achievement, teaching and learning strategies and the provision of support and guidance for different categories of students are adequate, but all with room for improvement. Insufficient opportunities are provided for students to develop their self-confidence. The efforts of the school's staff are well reflected in the students' good behaviour, responsible conduct and maintenance of the school's properties. Senior leadership inspires staff through the engagement of experienced teachers with deployment that matches their professional skills and available resources. Students and parents are well satisfied with the school.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory. It is no better due to inconsistent follow-up mechanisms of the school's strategic planning objectives. Filling shortages in human resources has effectively been prioritised. This is reflected in the school's improving performance. The school exerts clear efforts in terms of the use of its environment and available resources as well as giving support for students in solving their personal problems. This results in students' commitment to values, respect for each other and enhancement of their positive behaviour. Nevertheless, shortage of senior teachers still exists and insufficient opportunities given to students whose mother tongue is not Arabic, particularly during lessons, have greatly impacted on limiting teaching and learning processes and are reflected in the fluctuation of students' achievement.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Grade 3 students attained below average levels in Arabic and mathematics in the national examinations over the last three years 2009 to 2011, except for 2010 in Arabic where results were within the average range. Academic achievement is satisfactory in lessons.

First cycle students attained high pass rates in 2011-12 ranging between 86% - 100% while second cycle students pass rates were lower, at 74%-100% in the core subjects. This high attainment is combined with very high levels of proficiency in most core subjects, particularly in the first cycle, and is reflected in the students' achievement in good lessons. However, more than half of the lessons observed were satisfactory. This is a direct result of variation in teaching and learning strategies that leads to fluctuation in students' acquisition of basic skills, such as speaking, reading and writing in Arabic and English, adding and subtraction of numbers and reading numbers in mathematics in the majority of lessons in both cycles especially in the second cycle. Computer skills are satisfactory in both cycles.

Students' results from 2010 to 2012 show stability in the pass rates in all core subjects in both cycles. Students' achievement at transfer from Grade 1 to Grade 3, and from Grade 3 to Grade 4 is steady. Most students make clear progress in good lessons in both cycles as a result of the provision of various and effective learning activities. However, their progress in the remaining lessons is inconsistent as their individual differences have not been taken into account in activities and in their written work assignments.

Outstanding and talented students make progress that generally matches their abilities, as a direct result of challenging their abilities in some lessons. However, inconsistent progress is made outside classes due to the lack of enrichment activities. Students with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress in the learning difficulties programme, while low achievers make less progress. This is attributed to inconsistent support and guidance activities offered to these students both outside and during lessons, as well as diagnostic tests results not being used well.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The majority of students participate enthusiastically in school life. They are members of the school's committees such as the theatre and the agriculture committees, morning assembly activities and they participate in cleaning the school's premises during break-times. Outstanding students take part in external competitions, for example, tennis and football as well as 'My School is My Homeland' project. However, opportunities to take on leadership roles and assume responsibilities are not as good in lessons because of less effective teaching strategies that lead to students' lack of enthusiasm, demotivation, weak self-confidence self-learning, as well as missed opportunities for them to learn from each other.

Most students show high levels of respect for the school's rules which are reflected in their commitment to regular attendance and respect for each other. This helps to create a harmonious atmosphere during lessons and break-times. Moreover, students behave well and this is reflected in their keeping the school's property in good condition, maintaining cleanliness, and feeling safe and secure.

The majority of students show a clear sense of citizenship that is reflected in the morning assembly activities, such as the repetition of the national oath, participation in national festivals and school events, for example, 'Alhaya Baya' and 'Henna Decoration'. In addition, students show strong understanding of Bahrain's heritage and Islamic values.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The majority of teachers have good subject knowledge which is reflected in the delivery of lessons according to suitable lesson plans, sequencing of ideas and use of appropriate warm-up activities. These strategies help to attract students towards their learning and motivate them. Many lessons are well managed and various teaching strategies, for example, learning through play, role-play, dialogue and discussions are used well in the first cycle lessons such as in mathematics, English and some satisfactory lessons in science in Grade 4. However, the majority of teachers mainly use just question-answer techniques in too many of their lessons. Teaching strategies are overly teacher-centred and most lessons are not completed on time.

Because of this, learning objectives are not consistently achieved and consequently this leads to inconsistent achievement by students.

Teachers use the available educational resources such as interactive whiteboards, learning cards as well as pictures, which contribute to the inclusion of the majority of students in the teaching and learning processes and their acquisition of basic skills, knowledge and concepts. The majority of students participate in lessons, and the outstanding students' abilities are challenged through reasoning as well as the formation of complex words and sentences in the first cycle particularly in good lessons. Teachers also encourage and motivate students by praising and distributing gifts, which results in increasing their motivation towards learning and enhancing their personal development. Nevertheless, insufficient opportunities are given to promote students' higher-order thinking skills in the majority of lessons, particularly in the second cycle. Moreover, support given to low achievers, especially who do not have Arabic as their mother tongue, is insufficient in most lessons as they are provided with few opportunities that match their abilities. This has an adverse effect in meeting their learning needs.

The majority of teachers use undifferentiated oral and written assessment approaches that result in checking and subsequently meeting the learning needs of various categories of students inconsistently. Planned homework is given to complete the students' assignments and develop skills and knowledge. However, students' individual differences are not taken into account in most assignments. While these are regularly marked, feedback is inaccurate which does not help students improve their academic achievement.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The majority of students have adequate skills for the next phase of education. Links across subjects are made but are inconsistent in the first cycle and less effective in the second. Review occurs for some subjects such as science and mathematics, which enhance the delivery of these subjects.

The school effectively develops students' sense of citizenship by encouraging participation in morning assembly programmes, school committees, such as the 'Belonging and Citizenship Committee', national events like 'My Heritage is My Identity' and in field trips to 'Ahmed Al Fateh Citadel' and Bahrain National Museum. These enhance students' understanding of their rights and duties. The school enriches the experiences of students

through further participation in events such as the prayer project and school activities like theatre and drawing activities. Adequate extra-curricular activities for students with learning difficulties are provided, however, the participation of outstanding and talented students is mainly limited to their participation in external competitions such as drawing, Holy Quran and Prophets' Traditions. The same applies to low achievers as other extra-curricular activities do not meet their learning needs sufficiently.

The curriculum is promoted through murals and displays across the school's corridors as well as popular heritage corners that also celebrate students' work in the majority of first cycle classrooms. Educational aids motivate students towards their learning and improve behaviour.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

New students enjoy the induction week programme which helps them settle quickly. The school plays an important role in inducting students for next stage of education by acquainting Grade 3 students with the nature of the next stage of education.

The school identifies and meets the students' personal needs well. It also meets the students' learning needs that have been identified by the analysis of diagnostic and formative tests results. However, such results are not used enough in designing learning programmes for students. The efforts of the learning difficulties specialist in providing individual and remedial lessons for students are reflected in the students' progress, but programmes for high achievers and talented students are insufficient to meet their needs.

Parents are updated on their children's progress via meetings and correspondence. The school faces difficulties, but is successful in communicating with those whose mother tongue is not Arabic.

The school supports students who have particular problems through lectures on good behaviour and by giving guidance on cooperation. Students' time during breaks is well invested by the organisation of activities, such as face-colouring and the mobile library project. The school regularly addresses safety and security issues by assessing risks and taking action. The canteen is clean and fire extinguishers have valid dates. The young rescuer roles contribute to providing a healthy and secure environment.

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 has a shared vision that focuses on achievement, establishing values, promoting citizenship and keeping abreast of the latest educational developments. This vision is reflected across the school community through members' participation in developing the 2012-15 strategic plan. However, the vision is only reflected in the school's overall performance to a satisfactory level due to the inconsistent mechanisms for implementing actions to achieve objectives. Despite the school's efforts in the self-evaluation process, for example, the assessment of broad aspects relating to students, teachers and parents, the impact of actions taken is too limited in improvements to the performance of academic departments and the students' achievement. There is too much fluctuation in the quality of the teaching and learning processes.

The school motivates and inspires its teaching and administrative staff by enhancing cooperation, respect and teamwork. The school staff express their satisfaction with the school leaders' support, encouragement and motivation for their educational initiatives, for example, 'Alnooraniya Rule Project' for students whose mother tongue is not Arabic. The school leaders also delegate authority to serve the school activities such as appointing some subject teachers to act as coordinators or senior teachers. .

To keep abreast of on-going change and development, the school leaders provide opportunities for teachers' professional competency programmes based on the regular evaluation of their training needs through conducting training workshops and exchange visits with cooperating schools. Despite the instability of the school's teaching staff and shortage in the middle management staff in the first cycle, the school exerts efforts that are reflected in the teaching and learning processes to a satisfactory standard.

Despite the restricted size of its buildings, the school maintains its buildings and provides the necessary educational resources, such as the Learning Resources Centre. This is well used by the first cycle teachers, in addition to the use of e-learning classroom and science laboratory.

The school seeks the views of staff and parents, and responds to their suggestions. Nevertheless, the school faces difficulties with shortages in members of the Parents' Council

and the ineffectiveness of the Students' Council. The School Improvement Programme has already started at the school, however, its impact has not been observed yet.

The school cooperates with certain local community institutions already and is keen to develop good links with them.

The school's main strengths

- Students' respect for each other, coupled with their adequate sense of security and safety, and the absence of bullying
- The support provided to students when they have problems
- Students' understanding of the Bahrain's heritage and culture including the Islamic values.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- develop more effective mechanisms for the implementation of the strategic planning objectives, with performance indicators that focus on raising students' achievement and improving teaching and learning
- raise students' academic achievement and develop their basic skills in all core subjects
- provide opportunities for students to develop their self-confidence and take on more responsibilities
- ensure impact from teachers' professional competency programmes in improving teaching and learning strategies to include:
 - employing various assessments and use of these results to plan lessons and homework that match the students' learning needs more closely
 - offering students better teaching support
 - challenging students' abilities and developing their higher-order thinking skills.
- fill the shortages in staffing, namely senior teachers for class teaching.