

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



Schools Review Unit Review Report

**Al-Mutanabbi Primary Boys School
Al Gudaibiya - Capital 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 six 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-Mutanabbi Primary Boys															
School's type		Government															
Year of establishment		1968															
Age range of students		6-11 years old															
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High							
		1 – 5				-				-							
Number of students		Boys	345	Girls	-				Total	345							
Students' social background		The majority of students are from middle income families															
Classes per grade		Grade		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
		Classes		2	2	3	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Town /Village		Al-Manama/ Al-Gudaibiya															
Governorate		Capital															
Number of administrative staff		6 administrative, 10 technical															
Number of teaching staff		40															
Curriculum		Ministry of Education															
Main language(s) of instruction		Arabic															
Principal's tenure		Two years															
External assessment and examinations		NAQQAET'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			
		212				85				3				61			

Major recent changes in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grade 5 now consists of three classes instead of two previously, with a decreasing number in Grades 1 and 2 at two classes in the current academic year 2012-13• An increase in the percentage of students whose mother tongue is not Arabic, approximately now at 30%• The transfer of 100 students to Al-Ma'amoon Primary Boys School two years ago.
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Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	2: Good			
The school's capacity to improve	1: Outstanding			
	Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	2	-	-	2
Students' personal development	1	-	-	1
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	2	-	-	2
The quality of the curriculum implementation	1	-	-	1
The quality of support and guidance for students	1	-	-	1
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	1	-	-	1

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: 2 Good

The school's overall effectiveness has changed from being judged outstanding in the previous review in May 2009 to good in this one. The school's remarkable efforts are appreciated by students and parents. It has secured students' excellent personal development and most of the previously outstanding aspects including leadership and management. Different groups of students are supported well, especially those whose mother-tongue is not Arabic. The school's academic plan is comprehensive, precise, and focuses on students' achievement and improving teaching and learning which are judge good. A wide variety of extra-curricular activities motivates students. High pass and proficiency rates reflect students' good knowledge and mastery of basic skills, especially in English and Arabic. However, their competency in using higher order thinking skills to challenge their abilities in Cycle 2 is not as good due to the type and inconsistency of teaching used.

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

Grade: 1 Outstanding

The school's capacity to improve matches that judged during the previous review. The school's outstanding leadership has ensured the achievement of its vision through broad participation and a precise comprehensive school self-evaluation. It has succeeded in achieving most of its objectives in its strategic plan through focusing on the continuous development of the administrative and teaching staff. Good academic support and high quality personal support for different groups of students has successfully promoted their learning. The school has maintained its outstanding performance in most fields. It has made the school environment conducive to learning and greatly improved the students' personal development, promoted their positive attitudes and strengthened the way they get along, despite being from different backgrounds. The school has a solid structure that places it well for further improvement.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 2 Good

Grade 3 students attained levels that are below the national average in Arabic and mathematics respectively in the national examinations in 2009, while they did better in 2010 when they attained levels that were slightly higher in mathematics and Arabic. However, these levels decreased in 2011 and 2012 when results were broadly average or slightly below. The students' actual levels of achievement in most lessons are better than the attainment shown in the national examination results.

The students attained high pass rates in the school examinations in 2011-12, ranging between 84% and 100% in most core subjects. These rates were in line with high proficiency levels, especially in English in Cycle 2. These reflect most students' good achievement especially in the outstanding and good lessons, which formed more than half of the core subject lessons observed. Writing is good with outstanding accomplishments in most of the Cycle 1 lessons (Grades 1 to 3) and in English and Arabic in Cycle 2, as a result of effective teaching and careful consideration of students' individual differences.

The majority of students master basic skills such as reading aloud, oral expression and the application of Arabic grammatical rules in Cycles 1 and 2. The school's adoption of the Formal Arabic Speaking Program plays an important role in upgrading the students' proficiency, especially students whose native language is not Arabic. Cycle 2 students speak English well. However, their acquisition of scientific skills such as experimenting and classification, and their arithmetic skills, is slightly lower.

High pass rates in most core subjects are consistent. Moreover, the students' progress in written work in most lessons, especially in Arabic in Cycles 1 and 2 and in English in Cycle 2 is good. This is because good teaching occurred in the majority of these lessons, mainly due to the different activities provided that meet the different educational needs of most students.

Gifted students' remarkable progress is brought about through good lessons and extra-curricular activities that challenge their abilities. Some students earn top positions in external competitions, for example achieving first place in the Cultural contest. Students with learning and speech difficulties, as well as the lower achieving students, progress well in lessons and in remedial programmes, as a result of the effective support and guidance they receive.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 1 Outstanding

The vast majority of students are highly motivated towards learning. They effectively and enthusiastically contribute to school life according to their interests and talents. This is evident through their participation in school committees and activities, such as their participation in the morning broadcast, the Students' Council, in sport and cultural contests and the 'Children's Exhibition'. Their performances in the various weekly programmes, such as 'The Little Inventor', 'The Talented' and 'The Scouts' are outstanding. The discipline committees which offer them opportunities to take leadership roles and promote their self-confidence build their characters well.

Students have a high level of awareness and responsibility. They enjoy special relationships with each other and with their teachers within an environment that is filled with love and mutual respect. They are also punctual, attend school regularly, abide by the rules, have good manners and take care of school property. The school's diligent efforts to implant positive values and attitudes have led students of different backgrounds to get along in harmony and with a sense of personal security.

Students' understanding of Bahrain's culture and heritage and their commitment to Islamic values are evident through their spectacular participation in national events, and in cultural and religious contests in which they achieve top positions. This participation has a positive influence on their patriotism and religious awareness.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 2 Good

Most teachers have good mastery of their subject knowledge, which is reflected in their enthusiasm during explanation in their lessons, their ability to provide examples and their sequential presentations. This has promoted the students' learning.

Teachers use brain-storming activities in most lessons and employ effective teaching and learning strategies such as cooperative learning, learning through play and teaching cards, and interactive boards in ways that help increase the students' enthusiasm to participate and learn. Students' abilities and higher order thinking skills are challenged through the use of analysis, abstraction and probing questions during the start-up activities, in most Cycle 1

lessons, and in some mathematics lessons in both cycles. This has helped raise students' rates of progress, especially the outstanding ones. However, in some Cycle 2 lessons, such as in science where the students' abilities are not adequately challenged, this results in fewer gains of new skills and expertise.

Effective class management and good use of time in most lessons contribute to raising students' productivity and learning. However, in a few lessons, brain-storming and assessment activities take up a longer time than planned. The quick transition from one part to another in lessons also decreases the possibility of completing the objectives set. Teachers enable students to master basic skills, such as reading aloud, speaking in Arabic and applying grammatical rules in both cycles. While Cycle 2 students have excelled in the mastery of basic English, their acquisition of scientific and arithmetic skills and speaking in English in Cycle 1 is of a lower level. Different groups of students are supported well during lessons through activities that take students' different abilities into consideration. Encouragement, especially for those students whose native language is not Arabic, is effective in motivating them to participate and learn.

Effective assessment techniques are used in most lessons that include verbal, written, individual and group questions. These are all well implemented in order to meet the students' different educational needs. Students are assigned a number of homework and enriching activities that are planned, followed-up through regular marking and promoted through words of encouragement and feedback, especially in core subjects. All of this has helped develop most students' performance.

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

Grade: 1 Outstanding

The school precisely monitors and revises the implementation of the curriculum. Plans focus on making relevant connections between subjects. Content is enhanced by using special projects such as in formal Arabic. The school reinforces talented students' expertise by promoting the 'student's suitcase', which includes several special books and educational games. It also encourages them to join scientific and English language committees such as 'English and poetic talents'.

The environment is enriched in motivating ways by displaying students' work in halls and corridors. The school offers a wide variety of activities that support the curriculum well and meet the students' different educational needs effectively, such as their effective

participation in many clubs, such as the 'problems around us' programme, which promotes their critical thinking.

Students have the basic skills required for their next educational stage, with good computer skills, especially in Cycle 1. Links across subjects are also good, but this is less evident in some Cycle 2 lessons, despite being mentioned in curriculum plans.

Students show great awareness towards their rights and duties. They have a sense of patriotism, gained mainly through their participation in national contests, field trips to Bahraini sites, the revival of international UNESCO events and in projects, such as 'My Happiness Lies in my Rights' and the 'DEAR' programmes for renouncing violence.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 1 Outstanding

Effective induction is achieved through diverse activities which lead to students' speedy settlement. Students in Grades 3 and 5 are well prepared for their next levels through lectures, counselling sessions and meetings.

Students' personal needs are carefully identified and met using the results of diagnostic tests accurately. Enriching and remedial programmes, tutoring lessons for low achieving students in Arabic, English, and mathematics, and excellent support has had a major positive impact on their progress. The school pays great attention to outstanding and talented students through engaging them in school committees and contests, such as 'Arabic Diction and Rhetoric', 'The Mental Challenge in Mathematics', and the art gallery entitled 'Child-like Touches', promote their academic and personal development well.

When students face problems, counselling sessions and awareness-raising lectures such as 'Steps towards Reducing Anger', ensure their commitment and return to good behaviour. The school evaluates dangers and offers excellent health and environmental awareness-raising programmes such as monitoring students' nutrition, assessing risk and practising evacuation drills. A healthy and safe environment is maintained.

The school effectively communicates with parents through a number of channels such as regular meetings, the open day 'A day in my life', whose effectiveness was praised by parents. Text messaging, phone calls and different flyers ensure parents are informed readily about their children's academic and behavioural progress.

Leadership, management and governance

- How effective are leadership, management and governance in promoting high achievement, strong personal development and school improvement?

Grade: 1 Outstanding

The school's leadership, in collaboration with all its members, aspires to achieve its common vision which is based on raising good citizens by using effective teaching strategies. This is evident in the students' significant progress and outstanding personal development.

Evaluation is well coordinated through implementing accurate, comprehensive and on-going assessments that are based on a number of sources, such as polls, internal and external examination results and the recommendations of the previous review. The school is also part of the 'Outstanding Bahraini School' project. This approach has helped determine the school's priorities quite precisely. The strategic plan has accurate performance indicators and is focused on improving teachers' performance, raising the students' academic levels and promoting their positive behaviour. The school's accurate awareness of the aspects that need improvement has helped maintain those aspects of excellence in its work and particularly some of its members' performance.

The school's senior leadership implements effective mechanisms to support and motivate its staff and their excellent sense of teamwork through involvement in discipline panels. The senior leadership, along with the Shared Improvement Program (SIP) members pay great attention to monitoring the teachers' performance. They fulfil their training needs, offering oriented apprenticeship programmes and evaluate the effect of the training inside the classrooms, especially in differentiated teaching. The development of higher order thinking skills is an aspect where almost all teachers are making progress.

The school effectively deploys its resources through operational schedules for staff and other facilities, for example the science laboratory and the electronic classroom. It supports teachers to implement developmental projects such as the Arabic learning project, the outstanding student's backpack and the special education programme. It has transformed one of the corridors into a sport and games room as a substitute for a gymnasium.

The school has internal advisory boards and committees, such as the Parents' Council and the Students' Council. It asks for their opinions on a periodic basis and responds to their suggestions whenever possible. The school has fruitful external links, which enrich the students' educational experiences, such as its collaboration with the community service police and with Bahrain University.

The external development team helps the school in promoting its previous progress. This has led to the school's consistently outstanding performance in most of its practices.

The school's main strengths

- Its use of the rigorous self-evaluation results, including the analysis of performance, in comprehensive strategic planning
- Students' excellent personal development, conduct and their participation in school life
- High quality academic curriculum implementation with personal guidance and support, especially for those students with identified learning needs and non-Arabic speakers
- Regular risk and health assessments and availability of outstanding health and safety awareness and environmental programmes.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- continue to offer professional development programmes and measure their impact in developing teaching and learning strategies, to ensure high achievement by students, including:
 - appropriate challenge of students' abilities to enable students to develop their higher order thinking skills
 - making better links among subjects so that students experience a more coherent curriculum in Cycle 2.
- Spread further the excellent practices that already exist at school, especially those relating to students whose native language is not Arabic and share these with other schools.