

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



# **Schools Review Unit Review Report**

**Al-Wisam International School  
Al-Shakhura – Northern Governorate  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date of Review: 1-3 October 2012**

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## The Schools Review Unit

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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:

<b>Grade description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
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 eight 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-Wisam International														
School's type	Private														
Year of establishment	2003														
Age range of students	6-18 years														
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)	Primary				Middle				High						
	1-6				7-9				10-12						
Number of students	Boys	168			Girls	112			Total	280					
Students' social background	Good														
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
	Classes	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
Town /Village	Al-Shakhura														
Governorate	Northern Governorate														
Number of administrative staff	11														
Number of teaching staff	34														
Curriculum	UK National Curriculum														
Main language(s) of instruction	English														
Principal's tenure	9 Years														
External assessment and examinations	Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), Advanced Subsidiary Level (AS) and Advanced Level (A)														
Accreditation (if applicable)	University of Cambridge International Examinations														
Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification	Outstanding				Gifted & Talented				Physical Disabilities				Learning Difficulties		
					45				8				6		
Major recent changes in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the school moved to a new building in September 2011</li> <li>approved AS/A level programme and offered AS/A level curriculum in 2011/2012.</li> </ul>														

## Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	4: Inadequate			
The school's capacity to improve	4: Inadequate			
	Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	4	4	4	4
Students' personal development	3	3	3	3
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	4	4	4	4
The quality of the curriculum implementation	4	4	4	4
The quality of support and guidance for students	3	3	3	3
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	4	4	4	4

### Key:

- 1: Outstanding
- 2: Good
- 3: Satisfactory
- 4: Inadequate

## Review judgements

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### Overall effectiveness

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

#### **Grade: 4 Inadequate**

The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate because key aspects of its work need improvement. Students' standards and progress are generally below expectations and satisfactory in only primary Arabic and science. Teaching and learning lack effective planning and assessment to meet students' different needs, and too limited range of strategies and resources are used to promote learning. The curriculum is insufficiently reviewed, modified and enriched to ensure relevance to students. However, students are well-behaved and respect each other. Effective induction is given to new students and parents are regularly informed on children's progress. Whilst the school has improved the facilities and its advisory board provides experienced advice, leadership and management are inadequate overall. Students and parents are generally satisfied with the school.

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

#### **Grade: 4 Inadequate**

Recent school improvement has concentrated on the move to the new campus and introduction of AS/A-level. Although the new school site has improved the quality of accommodation, some of the facilities are ineffectively used. The school has significant deficiencies in major areas of its work. School self-evaluation is not embedded within the school and is not closely linked to strategic planning in order to prioritise the key areas that need development. Teacher appraisal is also insufficiently linked with professional development programmes to impact on improvements in teaching across the school. Strategic planning is limited to general school plans and lacks mechanisms to monitor progress, review priorities and ensure continuous improvement in all aspects of the school's performance.

## Students' achievement

### □ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

#### Grade: 4 Inadequate

Students, across the school, achieved high pass rates in the internal examinations in 2011-12 in all core subjects, ranging between 71 and 100 per cent. The IGCSE attainment of the small cohort of students well below world averages. In lessons and written work, students' standards throughout the school, particularly in skill acquisition and understanding, are below expected levels. In the majority of lessons in almost all core subjects, the progress expected of students in relation to their starting points and their abilities is inadequate.

In Arabic, primary students achieve satisfactory standards and progress. The majority can read and comprehend texts appropriately, they speak with a range of vocabulary and their writing skills meet expected levels. However, students' speaking and writing skills in higher grades, particularly high school, are insufficiently developed.

In English, the majority of students throughout the school have good oral and reading skills. They express themselves well and fluently read texts with adequate comprehension. However, students' writing skills and use of grammar do not reflect the expected progress. In mathematics, the majority of students' standards are below age-related expectations and students across the school lack some basic mathematical skills. In the primary school, students can count forward and backward and do arithmetic operations, but few students in Grade 6 can accurately give the first three terms of a sequence. In middle school, a minority of students correctly write numbers in standard index form. In high school, only a few students competently factorize algebraic expression and solve linear equations independently.

In science, the majority of students across the school achieve standards below expected level. However, acquisition of basic knowledge and skills in primary and middle school is better than in high school. In which, the majority of students know some scientific skills such as the functions of the nephron. However, across the school, students' practical and investigative skills are not well-developed.

The majority of students in mathematics and science rely on memory recall and lack confidence in solving problems due to limited understanding.

## **□ How good is the students' personal development?**

### **Grade: 3 Satisfactory**

Students' attendance is high, particularly in the primary section, and punctuality is good. Daily attendance is effectively monitored through systematic daily records. In the better lessons, in physical education classes, and when describing personal projects, students' participation is enthusiastic and they demonstrate self-confidence. However, this is inconsistent throughout the school, and in other lessons their motivation and enthusiasm are limited with too few contributions. Students' independent and collaborative skills are satisfactory; for example in lessons whilst working in groups and when making contributions as members of the student council. Nevertheless, insufficient opportunities are given for all students to develop these skills. They are developing responsibility, taking care of the school through designing educational charts and keeping their classrooms clean and tidy. Students are well-disciplined and behave well round the school. Considerate relationships prevail with students respecting teachers and school property. Students mostly feel safe and secure and they form good friendships, well-supported by the school rules and close supervision. Through celebrations of the National Day, visits to Bahrain National Museum and discussions about the values of Islam in social studies lessons, students develop their knowledge and understanding of Bahrain's culture and heritage in a satisfactory manner.

## **The quality of provision**

### **□ How effective are teaching and learning?**

#### **Grade: 4 Inadequate**

Teachers' satisfactory subject knowledge shows in clear explanations to students, although in most lessons there is an excessive emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge and factual recall with insufficient focus on developing skills and understanding. In most lessons, too few opportunities are provided for students to think critically, justify their views and develop reasoning. In better lessons, particularly in biology, effective use of educational videos develops interest and promotes active learning. Nevertheless, the opportunities for students to discuss, frame hypotheses and infer from observations are too limited across all subjects.



Whilst lessons are orderly, productivity of most lessons is too limited due to ineffective time and behaviour management. However, in the better primary lessons, particularly in Arabic, teachers have effective class management skills. Teachers generally provide insufficient support to all students and this leads to limited student engagement and motivation in the majority of lessons. However, in the better lessons, particularly in the primary school, students are appropriately engaged, motivated, encouraged and supported.

Low expectations and ineffective challenge in most lessons do not effectively target students of all abilities so that they make at least the expected progress. Teachers mostly provide tasks which are focused on memory recall and insufficiently develop problem-solving skills. In most lessons, limited teaching and learning strategies are used: whole-class teaching predominates with too little planning to cater for the needs of all students, including those with special educational needs, and provide insufficient learning opportunities. However, in the best lessons, expectations are high and effective challenge is offered to students. Across the school, effective use of resources is generally limited. In better lessons, however, in Arabic and in science, the interactive whiteboards are used effectively to deliver content and develop interest among students. In most lessons, homework is assigned mainly for consolidation of work done in the class, with too little extension work and this provides very limited opportunities to develop research skills. In most lessons, the results of assessments are not routinely used to diagnose and meet the different needs of all students, and the results are not used sufficiently to track each student's progress.

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

#### **Grade: 4 Inadequate**

The implementation of the curriculum is largely based on textbooks and follows the progression and continuity they specify. However, curriculum implementation gives greater attention to knowledge acquisition and recall. Limited attention is paid throughout the school to developing students' understanding as well as practical, investigative and creative skills. Ongoing curriculum review has limited impact in creating modifications or in planning for differentiation, and does not provide sufficient challenge or support for all children. Additionally, it fails to ensure sufficient access for students with identified special needs. The school's community encourages good behaviour and develops students understanding of their responsibilities and duties.

A few leadership opportunities are given to classroom monitors and members of the student council, and civic awareness is developed through assembly activities. While natural curricular connections occur, for example between mathematics and physics, very limited planned links are made between subjects in order for students to experience a coherent

curriculum. Limited opportunities are provided for students to join extra-curricular activities; however the school has plans to introduce a range of activities this school year. Links with the local community are satisfactory; they offer enhancement to students' educational experiences and include participation and winning first place in the British Council 'Science Challenge', and a community beach clean-up.

### **□ How well are students guided and supported?**

#### **Grade: 3 Satisfactory**

Effective induction of new students, including familiarisation tours and meetings, helps them to settle into school quickly and easily at the start of the school year and at non-standard times. Despite diagnostic testing and recording of student attainment in internal assessments, very limited analysis is carried out. There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of students' academic progress in order to provide the appropriate challenge and support and meet their learning needs. Students' personal development is more effectively monitored, with appropriate interventions to support them. Students make direct contact with the social counsellor if they have a problem or need to seek guidance. However, there is limited structured access to advice related to career choices or further education, and students depend on subject teachers. Whilst accepting students with special educational needs, the school lacks sufficient resources to support these students successfully in lessons. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress and activities in school and they participate appreciatively in open days. A healthy and safe campus is a priority for the school and a specialist company undertakes risk assessments to ensure that students and staff are safe and secure.

### **Leadership, management and governance**

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

#### **Grade: 4 Inadequate**

The leadership team has appropriate knowledge of the impact of recent school expansion and areas for development, and seeks to improve the school's performance. The principal recognises the loyalty of teachers and they respond appreciatively to the Principal's flexibility in dealing with staff issues. Opportunities to attend local conferences and training, together with regular staff meetings, help to motivate and support staff.

Self-evaluation lacks rigour. It does not include adequate structured mechanisms to monitor all aspects of school performance. Although students' performance on tests is recorded and progress reports compiled, very limited analysis of these is carried out in order to guide improvement planning which focuses on raising student attainment. Strategic planning states broad goals and commitments to improve school performance. However, systematic and detailed action planning is limited, particularly in its attention to prioritised goal setting as a result of self-evaluation, clearly assigned responsibilities and success criteria, and procedures to closely monitor progress. Teacher appraisal appropriately involves middle and senior leaders. While this identifies individual teaching needs, teacher evaluation results are insufficiently linked with professional development to strengthen teaching throughout the school.

The move to a new school site has improved the accommodation and facilities. However, facilities and equipment are not yet sufficient to support good quality teaching across the school. In particular, science laboratories lack equipment, and appropriate provision in the library is limited. Additionally, insufficiently effective use is made of available resources, for example through fully scheduling the computer laboratory and locating physical education lessons more appropriately.

A variety of strategies are used to communicate with parents and seek their feedback, including suggestion forms and books for parent comments during open days. The school is generally responsive to parents' concerns, for example in increasing the number of buses to alleviate crowding. Nevertheless, the school lacks structures to ensure that parents have the opportunity to raise their concerns, with prompt responses and resolution. The student council enables communication between the school leadership and older students. Limited links with the local community provide some enrichment for students and include an agreement allowing them to paint billboards in the nearby areas. The advisory board clearly understands its role and provides experienced advice, particularly in relation to strategic planning. It holds the principal accountable for the school's performance through reports and meetings.

## **The school's main strengths**

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- Students' are well behaved and have positive relations with colleagues and teachers
- Students' induction in the school is effective and parents are regularly informed about their children's progress.

## Recommendations

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

- raise students' academic achievement and standards across the school
- improve teaching and learning by:
  - increasing the range of teaching and learning strategies and the effective use of available resources in order to motivate, support and meet the needs of all students
  - the effective use of assessment to inform planning and teaching.
- improve leadership and management through:
  - rigorous and structured self-evaluation to include analysis of students' performance
  - action planning which details priorities, success criteria and procedures to monitor progress towards targets
  - planning for professional development according to teachers' needs and monitoring the impact in the teaching and learning process.
- provide a range of extra-curricular activities to meet the needs of all students.