



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

Schools Review Unit

Review Report

Al Khansa Primary Girls School
Isa Town - Central Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date Reviewed: 8 - 10 March 2010

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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 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 students.

Introduction

Scope of the Review

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 work, analysed the school's performance data and other documents, and talked with staff, students and parents. This report summarises their findings and recommendations.

Information about the school

Gender of students: Girls

Number of students: 699

Age range: 6-12 years

Characteristics of the school

Al Khansa Primary Girls School is one of the North Governorate schools, in Isa Town. It was established in 1979. It has 699 students, aged between 6 and 12 years old. Most students come from middle-income families. Students are distributed across 22 classes: 12 classes for the first cycle and 10 for the second. The school categorises 65 students as talented and creative, 24 as outstanding, and 77 as having special educational needs. The school's Principal is in her sixth year at the school. There are 12 administrative staff and 58 teachers. The school is part of the fourth stage 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 Khansa Primary School for Girls is good. Students and their parents are very satisfied with the school.

Students' academic achievement is good. Students achieve high pass and proficiency rates in most subjects of the first cycle, as well as in Arabic in the second cycle. Their real levels of understanding and knowledge are also high in most lessons, where effective and varied teaching strategies and techniques are used. Students show less proficiency in the rest of the second cycle subjects, especially in English; teaching methods in these lessons observed were sometimes ineffective. In outstanding and good lessons, and in many class activities, students make progress appropriate to their abilities; their individual differences are considered by varying the level of questioning. Outstanding students and those with special educational needs also make progress, helped by the special programmes the school provides.

Students' personal development is good. Most of them enthusiastically participate in indoor and outdoor extra-curricular activities, such as competitions and the students' council. In the outstanding and good lessons, where they are at the centre of the educational process, students develop self-confidence and the ability to work independently and take on responsibility. Students are not, however, given enough opportunities to develop analytical thinking skills, especially in satisfactory and inadequate lessons. Most students have a good level of awareness, which is reflected in their regular attendance at school, their conduct inside and outside lessons and the care they take of school property. A family atmosphere prevails in the school, which helps to generate a feeling of safety and security for students.

The quality of teaching and learning processes is good. Most teachers know their subjects well. This knowledge was reflected well in more than half of the observed lessons, where teachers used varied strategies such as questioning and role-play. The use of such strategies enthused students and motivated them to participate effectively in lessons and achieve well. In some lessons, students were given plenty of good opportunities for cooperative work but roles were not effectively allocated in other lessons. Teachers use varied assessment methods to measure how well lesson objectives are achieved; this helps to meet students' educational needs,

especially in the outstanding and good lessons. Students are given homework, but most of it is set at the same standard for all students. The amount of homework given varies from subject to subject.

The quality of curriculum presentation and enrichment is good. The school provides plenty of extra-curricular activities in which students enthusiastically and actively participate, such as the students' council and the 'Roses Group'. Students' experience and horizons are broadened by their participation. The school makes good use of the school environment so it can be a part of the educational process by setting up interesting displays and using some educational corners. Students' understanding of their rights and duties is developed well and their feeling of citizenship is promoted by displaying the Kingdom's flag in classrooms and school buildings and being taken on field trips; this sense of citizenship was reflected in the students' enthusiastic singing of the national anthem. Students acquire a good level of basic skills in Arabic, Mathematics and IT, which are taught very effectively. Students do not gain the same level of skills in reading, writing and speaking English. Linking between subjects is carried out well in most lessons of the first cycle.

The effectiveness of guidance and support for students is good. The educational needs of students are diagnosed and effectively met, especially in the outstanding and good lessons, through the programmes provided by the special educational needs specialist and the higher abilities specialist. The school also provides advice and guidance to solve students' problems through educational and guidance lectures, which have helped to limit undesirable behaviour. Parents welcome the varied communication channels the school uses to keep them informed about their daughters' academic progress. The school provides a safe environment for staff and pupils. It carries out risk assessments and posts guidance on health and safety; these actions help students to feel safe and secure.

The quality of leadership and management is good. The school has a shared vision that is reflected in most of its practices and has a good effect on the academic achievement and personal development of the students in most lessons. The school is also aware of its strength and the areas that need development. The school evaluates most aspects of its work. It has a strategic plan that focuses on improvement and development and works with action plans to achieve its strategic objectives. The plans do not have the necessary performance indicators, however. The school works to identify and meet the training needs of teachers; its work in this area has had a positive effect on teachers' performance, although not to such an extent in the English department. The school makes good use of educational facilities such as the learning resources centre and the science laboratory. It also makes good efforts to gather the opinions of

parents and responds to them according to its resources; one such action is the opening of the gate near the first cycle classrooms.

□ Does the school have the capacity to improve?

Grade: 2 (Good)

The school has a good capacity to improve and develop. Its strategic plan is focused appropriately on improvement and development. The plan is based on self-evaluation of most aspects of the school's work and an analysis of performance results. The school's leaders are aware of the school's strengths and the areas that need development. They believe in shared decision-making, supported by their ambitious administrative and teaching staff. The school uses its available resources well and inspires and encourages the administrative and teaching staff. This encouragement is reflected in the teaching performance in outstanding and good lessons. The school has brought about particular improvement in its environment, in the teachers' performance and in students' academic achievement over the past three years. The school's evaluation of its own position matches that of the review team in some aspects.

The school's main strengths and areas for development

Main Strengths

- Academic achievement
- Basic skills in Arabic and Mathematics
- Diagnosing and meeting personal and educational needs
- Teaching and learning strategies
- Safety and security measures
- The school environment
- Linking subjects in the first cycle.

Areas for development

- Basic skills in English
- Higher thinking skills
- Performance indicators and measuring tools for the strategic plan
- Cooperative work in the classroom
- Considering individual differences in homework assignments.

What the school needs to do to improve

In order to improve further, the school should:

- Spread its excellent and good practices of teaching and learning in order to develop:
 - higher thinking skills
 - cooperative working
 - differentiation in homework.

- Make more effort to ensure that students acquire better basic skills in English

- Include performance indicators and measuring tools in its strategic plan.

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 the curriculum delivery	2: Good
The quality of guidance and support for students	2: Good
The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management	2: Good