



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

Schools Review Unit

Review Report

Ammar Bin Yaser Primary Boys School
Isa Town - Central Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date of Review: 15-17 October 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 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		Ammar Bin Yaser Primary Boys School											
School's type		Government											
Year of establishment		1997											
Age range of students		6-10 years											
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High			
		1-4				-				-			
Number of students		Boys	349	Girls	-				Total	349			
Students' social background		Most students come from middle-low income families											
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Classes	3	3	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Town /Village		Isa Town											
Governorate		Central											
Number of administrative staff		8 administrative and 8 technicians											
Number of teaching staff		41											
Curriculum		Ministry of Education (MoE)											
Main language(s) of instruction		Arabic											
Principal's tenure		One year											
External assessment and examinations		NAQQAET's examinations											
Accreditation (if applicable)		-											
Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification		Outstanding			Gifted & Talented			Physical Disabilities			Learning Difficulties		
		132			47			-			70		

Major recent changes in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school had three senior management changed during the past three years• Changes in the year 2012-13:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- adding a class for the integration students- appointing a senior Arabic teacher who also works with another school- appointing two new social workers.
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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
Students' personal development	4	-	-	4
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	4	-	-	4
The quality of the curriculum implementation	4	-	-	4
The quality of support and guidance for students	4	-	-	4
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	4	-	-	4

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: 4 Inadequate

The school's overall performance has changed from satisfactory in the previous review in November 2009 to inadequate in this one. This is attributed to the absence of a clear mechanism to organise the school's work and the lack of monitoring and accountability when performing tasks. The school's strategic plan lacks clear priorities as a result of the inaccurate and ineffective self-evaluation. Additionally, most students show inappropriate conduct inside and outside of class. The support and activities provided for the different student groups are not enough, and the teaching and learning strategies are ineffective. Class management and assessment are poor in more than one third of the lessons. This negatively impacts on the students' academic achievement and personal development. However, students and their parents view the school's performance as satisfactory.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The school's capacity to improve has changed from being judged good in the previous review to inadequate currently. This is attributed to the poor self-evaluation and lack of relevance in planning. The school has a strategic plan but it does not clearly determine the necessary priorities. Areas needing improvement such as regulating student conduct, monitoring and overseeing the teaching and learning processes and the provision of quality improvements needed at the school are not identified. The instability of the school's senior leadership negatively affects the school's overall performance. Although the middle leadership offers some stability, especially in class management, this has not had a positive impact on the students' academic and personal development because of ineffective teaching and the limited range of programmes for improving students' overall performance.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Grade 3 students achieve levels that are very close to the national average in the national examinations in Arabic and were slightly above in mathematics in 2010. However, the students' levels are below the national average in 2011 and 2012 in Arabic and mathematics, which is reflected in the students' poor performance in lessons especially in Arabic.

Students attained high pass rates in the school examinations in most core subjects, except for Arabic in Grade 2 in 2011 and 2012, with results ranging from 77.1% to 96.5%. These rates are commensurate with the proficiency rates in most of the core subjects in the first cycle. However, they varied more in the second cycle, Grade 4, and were lowest in Arabic. The students' high pass rates are evident in their work in the limited number of good lessons, but these are not reflected in their actual levels of achievement in the rest of the lessons. This is attributed to poor class management, weak support and a lack of consideration of the students' individual differences.

The students' skill levels in mathematics are poor, especially in subtraction. And their skills in Arabic and English across the school are inadequate, especially in reading and writing. Students' mastery of computer skills is somewhat better.

Students' pass rates are unstable in most of the basic subjects in the first cycle over the three consecutive years 2010 to 2012. Students had poor levels in Grade 2 while a very limited number of students made progress in most lessons and in their written work especially in the Arabic. In English lessons throughout, science lessons in Grade 4 and mathematics in Grade 2, progress is slow, this is due to the very limited opportunities that present challenge in the learning activities and which consequently reduce majority of the students' acquisition of the basic skills.

Students with learning difficulties achieve adequate progress that is in line with their abilities through the special education programme and because of the specific support they receive. However, low achieving students achieve inadequate progress because of the limited educational support in lessons and poor access to remedial programmes. Students in the integration class make similarly slow progress. Outstanding students do not make satisfactory progress or achieve in accordance with their abilities because of the limited challenges they receive in relation to their abilities.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Although most students participate in activities and programmes such as the 'Computer', 'Music' and the 'School Police' committees, their participation in lessons is limited because of the very few opportunities to actively participate and take leadership roles. This negatively reflects on their self-confidence, their acceptance of responsibility and their ability to learn and work together. Exceptions are in those lessons which use the student-leader role in cooperative learning strategies. These are not used adequately enough.

Students' conduct is inappropriate. Their lack of discipline in lessons and the mess that they create as a result of the poor class management is evident. Efforts to limit aggressive behaviour at recess have not been successful because of the absence of activities and supervision. Inappropriate behaviour contributes to younger students in particular feeling unsafe. Most students attend school regularly, which reflects their awareness of the importance of commitment to school. The school has tried to motivate latecomers through the 'Morning Knight' project, but this has not improved their commitment to punctual attendance.

Most students show their loyalty to their country, the Bahraini culture and Islamic values as a result of participating in 'My Country is My Identity' committee and the 'Ethics Knight' project; however, the impact on achieving the desired positive behaviour is not good enough.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

While most teachers show good knowledge of their subjects and study material, this is not adequately reflected in the teaching strategies used in most lessons. Question-answer, discussion and conversation are used, but these strategies are not effective due to lack of focus on improving basic skills. In addition, other weak points appeared such as spelling and language mistakes made by the Arabic teachers in Cycle 2 and the use of colloquial Arabic in the Cycle 1. These have diminished learning opportunities among most students and prevent them from acquiring the knowledge, concepts and skills they need, especially in Arabic and English. However, various teaching methods are used in a limited number of

satisfactory and good lessons, such as learning through play and role-play in some mathematics lessons in Cycle 1 and by exploration in science lessons in Cycle 2. The mentioned strategies contribute more successfully to the majority of students' and their acquisition of lessons' skills. Educational resources such as smart boards specifically in Cycle 1, models in science and some educational corners are used adequately. They increased students' participation and motivation. Moreover, activities that take students' level into consideration are not enough, which affects the students' knowledge.

Teachers focus on developing low level thinking skills in most lessons, especially in Arabic and English, without developing higher order thinking skills such as problem solving and criticism. An exception to that was in the good science lessons where most of the students were able to infer the characteristics of vertebrates and classify them into categories.

Class management in most lessons is ineffective in regulating student conduct and getting them engaged. This is attributed to the unattractive teaching methods and the brisk lessons' activities without ensuring students' understanding or providing support, especially among the low achieving ones. Most teachers reinforce the students morally and materially by giving gifts, star stickers as well as positive feedback. However, these did not effectively contribute in students' learning. Students are given little homework which does not consider their individual differences, especially in Cycle 1. Teachers correct the homework and use positive feedback, although the ones given in science are the best of all. Assessment methods vary in some lessons such as verbal and written individual and unified group assessment. However, most of these methods do not meet students' needs adequately as the time given is insufficient as a result of poor time management. Therefore, learning was not ensured.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Curriculum implementation focuses too narrowly on providing content from textbooks except some simplified enrichment notes, in science. Thus, the provided opportunities to enrich students' experiences and attract them to learning are reduced. Consequently this prevents students from acquiring the basic skills needed in their next stage of education. Links across subjects in most lessons are not achieved except in a few class teaching lessons in Grade 1.

The school's environment is used to enrich the curriculum through educational boards and classroom corners, such as the class libraries found in Cycle 1 classes. It is also enriched by

celebrating students' work and decorating the school yards by planting, which has made the school more attractive to learning.

Most of the students are provided with opportunities to participate in programmes and activities as 'The Little Scientist' committee. However, these activities are not diverse enough to include all student groups, thus limiting students' enthusiasm, self-confidence and experiences. The school promotes a spirit of community through festivals and field trips, such as visiting the Industries Improvement Centre, in addition to enriching the school's environment with drawings that inspire citizenship. The school has improved students' understanding of their rights and duties through committees such as the scouts. However, these activities have not adequately improved their behaviour.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The school inducts new students well. Additionally, Grade 3 students are well prepared to move to Grade 4. Visits are made to the neighbouring schools and exchange educational meetings with teachers from Imam Al Tabary School to discuss students' levels and behaviour are held. These contribute to preparing students' psychologically for their next stage of education.

The school performs diagnostic tests to identify students' learning needs. The Learning Difficulties' Specialist provides adequate support to students of learning difficulties category. However, the rest of the students were not provided effective programmes such as integrated and low achieving students. Besides, outstanding and talented students are not provided with adequate support and restricted to limited participation such as 'looking for world space' competition which affects negatively the students' need.

Efforts made to monitor and improve students' personal development are insufficient. Case studies for violating ones are not effectively determined. The school provides quiet limited guidance, such as health and awareness programmes, and lectures. The school communicates with parents through weekly meetings and the open days however, this does not contribute effectively to improving students' behaviour.

Safety and health risks are tracked. Such as maintaining facilities and giving evacuation drills. However, there is less supervision to students during the recess and at the end of school day that could potentially expose them to danger, especially that there are some mis-behaviours.

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 school vision is shared with the majority of affiliates and focuses on raising a creative generation. However, it is not adequately reflected in the educational practices or its outcomes. The school evaluates some of its departments' and committees' work but it does not assess the academic and the social guidance staff. The school's self-evaluation is not accurate or comprehensive enough. It was based on the previous review recommendations instead of a strategic plan. It does not include work priorities, especially those concerning students' conduct, which is a major challenge. Departmental action plans are not translated adequately. This has reduced its effectiveness and impact on the students' academic and personal achievement. The school does not have clear mechanisms to follow-up its work and responsibilities. It does activate the middle leadership role to evaluate and monitor the quality of the teaching and the learning processes. Additionally, it does not activate the school board to follow up the overall performance. The school focuses on monitoring the tasks and plans as procedures, without any authentic evaluation of their quality and effectiveness. This has a clear impact on overall performance.

The school's administration promotes positive relationships, but its inaccurate technique of inspiring leads to low performance and less motivation to improve. The school organised some workshops and internal training courses, such as 'Cooperative Learning' and 'Differentiated Teaching', to enhance teachers' proficiency. However, their impact did not affect the performance of the majority of the teachers.

The school has adequate equipment and material resources to serve different school sections. It uses facilities, such as class. It seeks students and their parents' opinions, via the students' and parents' councils, and responds to some of their suggestions, thus contributing to gaining the approval of students and their parents. The school has worked with some of the local community institutions and the police to organise events such as 'Together Against Violence'. However, the effectiveness of these programmes is not reflected in the students' academic achievement and personal development. The school has cooperated with school principals to discuss issues related to the implementation of the improvement project. Although the school has worked with an improvement partner since last year and it recently joined the school improvement project, the impact of the external support is not reflected in the required form.

The school's main strengths

- Students' computer skills
- School environment enriches the curriculum.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- develop students' positive conduct inside and outside the classrooms
- raise their academic achievement in the core subjects especially in Arabic and English
- develop senior leadership performance and activate middle leadership roles, especially in monitoring teaching and learning processes
- enhance school strategic plan based on an accurate self-evaluation with clear identification of priorities for action, including students' safety
- Enhance Teaching and Learning processes to include the following:
 - class and time management
 - effective assessment to meet the needs of different students' categories.