



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

Schools Review Unit Review Report

**Al-Andalus Primary Girls School
East Riffa – Central Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date reviewed: 2 – 4 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 six 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, pupils and parents. This report summarises their findings and recommendations.

Information about the school

Gender of students: Girls

Number of students: 624

Age range: 6 - 12 years

Characteristics of the school

Al-Andalus Primary Girls School, founded in 1987, is one of the Central Governorate's schools and is located in East Riffa. It caters for students aged between 6 and 12 years. There are 624 students. The students are distributed across 24 classes (four classes for each grade of the first and second cycles). Most students come from limited-income backgrounds. The school categorised 176 of the students as outstanding, 44 as talented and gifted and 37 as having learning difficulties. The Principal is in her third academic year in the school. There are 66 teaching staff. The school has no senior teachers for the second cycle, except for science and a co-senior teacher for social studies.

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 3 (Satisfactory)

The overall effectiveness of Al-Andalus Primary Girls School is satisfactory. Parents and students are very satisfied with the school.

The students' level of academic achievement is satisfactory. Students achieve high success and proficiency rates in most subjects. Their level of performance varied in lessons, however, between satisfactory and good in the first cycle lessons. While students make appropriate progress in some good lessons where their abilities are challenged and individual differences taken into account, the lecturing style of teaching in the remaining lessons holds back their progress. The remedial programmes for students with learning difficulties help them make some progress, and talented and outstanding students achieve satisfactory levels of progress through their participation in some internal and external programmes and activities.

Students' personal development is satisfactory. Most students are punctual and respect class timings. Students are given opportunities to take on leadership roles through the Students' Council. Most second cycle students enthusiastically participate in a number of activities and committees, which increases their self-confidence; similar levels of enthusiasm and motivation were not evident in observed lessons, however, except in some good ones. While students' analytical thinking skills are developed in some good lessons, the remaining lessons focus on simple thinking skills. Most students enjoy good relations with fellow students and teachers, and they feel safe and secure in the school. Although there is little bad behaviour in the school a number of students behave inconsiderately during breaks.

The effectiveness of teaching and learning processes is satisfactory. Most teachers have subject knowledge that is particularly reflected in the teaching strategies in some good lessons, where students' abilities are challenged. A lecturing style of teaching is commonly used, however, and affects students' enthusiasm and motivation. Students have some opportunities to work collaboratively but lesson objectives and clear roles are not determined in some lessons to enable students to learn from each other. In good lessons, teachers use a number of assessment techniques such as oral and written questions; assessment results are not often used, however, to help students develop or to meet their learning needs. Students are assigned homework activities that teachers follow up, but students' individual differences are not taken into account when setting this work.

The provision and enrichment of the curriculum is satisfactory. The school promotes students' sense of citizenship appropriately through participation in national occasions and events. Some extra-curricular activities are provided, but only for second cycle students. The school develops students' basic skills in Arabic, English and numeracy to a satisfactory level; their IT skills are better developed. Links between subjects are made in some good lessons in the first cycle but effective linking does not take place in other lessons. The school displays drawings, posters and celebrations of students' work. This contributes to making the school a stimulating learning environment.

The quality of support and guidance given to students is satisfactory. Class teachers induct new students appropriately and hold introductory sessions for their parents. Students are less well prepared for the next phase of their education; this preparation is limited to giving some advisory lectures and guidelines in classrooms. The school assesses and meets students' personal and educational needs adequately and provides some extra-curricular activities, remedial programmes and tutorial classes. Support for students in most lessons, however, was insufficient and did not address individual differences. The school communicates adequately with students' parents. Although the school monitors aspects of security and safety, some safety-related issues were observed during the Review: there was insufficient control of students in the school yard and one of the school's gates was left open most of the day.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is satisfactory. The school has a shared vision and mission statement that focuses on achievement and is reflected in some good practices in the school. The school has developed a three-year strategic plan based on an assessment of its current position. School managers oversee the development of action plans but a lack of accurate performance indicators and regular follow-up mechanisms limit the plans' effectiveness. The school has worked hard to develop self-evaluation methods but the results of self-evaluation are not used effectively to develop plans and programmes that improve the school performance, except in some areas such as the school environment. The school's managers encourage and motivate some teaching and administrative staff to work very effectively. They organise departmental activities appropriately. Although the school uses its educational resources appropriately, insufficient use is made of the learning resource centre. The school seeks parents' views but only responds to some of their suggestions; one example of this is the provision of shaded areas for students in the school yard.

□ Does the school have the capacity to improve?

Grade: 3 (Satisfactory)

The school has a satisfactory capacity to develop and improve. It has developed a three-year strategic plan based on an assessment of its current position. It uses self-assessment techniques that have had an impact on the improvement of the school environment and on some good lessons. The school has also managed to co-ordinate the development of action plans and organise the departments' activities. It still faces challenges such as the need to use self-assessment results to improve school performance and to raise students' academic achievement. The school also has staff shortages.

The school's main strengths and areas for development

Main Strengths

- Success rates in most subjects
- Attendance and punctuality
- Meeting personal needs
- Developing a sense of citizenship
- Students' relationships with each other
- Use of the school environment
- Extra-curricular activities in the second cycle.

Areas for development

- Lack of performance indicators in strategic and action plans
- Recognising individual differences in teaching and learning strategies
- Analytical thinking skills
- Making use of assessment results
- Acquisition of basic skills in Arabic, English and Mathematics
- Collaborative learning
- Links between subjects in the first cycle
- Security and safety procedures.

What the school needs to do to improve

In order to improve further, the school should:

- Develop a strategic plan which is based on self-evaluation results and includes clear and measurable performance indicators
- Develop teaching and learning strategies that focus on:
 - Developing basic skills in Arabic, English and Mathematics
 - Developing students' analytical thinking skills
 - Challenging students' abilities
 - Giving students more opportunities to learn and work together
 - Linking between subjects in the first cycle.
- Make use of assessment results in lesson planning
- Cater for individual differences in activities and homework assignments
- Monitor security and safety procedures to provide a healthy and safe environment for students.

Overall judgements

Aspect	Grade: Description
The school's overall effectiveness	3: Satisfactory
The school's capacity to improve	3: Satisfactory
Students' academic achievement	3: Satisfactory
Students' progress in their personal development	3: Satisfactory
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	3: Satisfactory
The quality of the curriculum delivery	3: Satisfactory
The quality of guidance and support for students	3: Satisfactory
The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management	3: Satisfactory