

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



Schools Review Unit Review Report

**The Asian School
Juffair and Um Al Hassam (2 Branches)
Capital Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date of Review: 4-7 November 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 four days, by a team of 11 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		The Asian School													
School's type		Private													
Year of establishment		1983													
Age range of students		6-16 years													
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High					
		1-5				6-8				9-10					
Number of students		Boys	1075	Girls	1080	Total		2155							
Students' social background		middle income													
Classes per grade		Campus A				Campus B									
		Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
		Classes	8	7	7	7	7	6	6	5	5	4	-	-	
Town /Village		Campus A: Juffair Campus B: Um Al Hassam													
Governorate		Capital													
Number of administrative staff		12													
Number of teaching staff		94													
Curriculum		Indian Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)													
Main language(s) of instruction		English													
Principal's tenure		One week													
External assessment and examinations		CBSE – All India Secondary School's Certificate Examination (AISSE)													
Accreditation (if applicable)		NA													
Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification		Outstanding				Gifted & Talented				Physical Disabilities				Learning Difficulties	
		181				340				0				3	
Major recent changes in the school		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recently promoted principal was the deputy principal before her promotion this academic year The introduction of continuous and comprehensive evaluation (CCE) 													

Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	3: Satisfactory			
The school's capacity to improve	4: Inadequate			
	Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	3	3	2	3
Students' personal development	2	2	2	2
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	3	3	3	3
The quality of the curriculum implementation	3	3	3	3
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

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory because key aspects, such as students' standards and progress, are within expectations in the primary and middle schools, while good in the secondary school, particularly in English and mathematics. Most teachers possess good subject knowledge and embed positive values in lessons. However, there is very limited planning for differentiation and use of assessment results to meet students' different needs, without a leadership focus on improving this. Curriculum is satisfactory. Students develop awareness of their rights and responsibilities, are well-behaved, respect each other and feel safe, which contributes to their good personal development. Although the school responds satisfactorily to parents' and students' views and administrative routines run smoothly, it lacks sufficient self-evaluation, improvement planning and professional development. 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 expansion of the facilities with plans to move to another site and the introduction of CCE. The current facilities and procedures, however, are insufficient to support good teaching and learning. The school has significant deficiencies in leadership and management. 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 effectively on improvements in teaching across the school. Action planning is limited and there is insufficient monitoring of progress and review of priorities to ensure continuous improvement in all aspects of the school's performance.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Across the school, students make satisfactory progress attaining average standards, though for students in Grades 9 and 10 it is good. Grade 10 students in the CBSE conducted All India Secondary School Examination (AISSE) perform consistently well, particularly in English and mathematics. Students also perform well in internal examinations in the primary school. Results are generally satisfactory in the middle and secondary schools. In lessons and in routine work, the majority of students make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points. Progress is not good because too little account is taken of the students' differing abilities, especially from Grades 1 to 8.

In English, most students meet age-related expectations and have good listening, reading and speaking skills. They have well-developed cursive handwriting and use well-structured sentences and vocabulary when speaking. However, students' independent, creative and extended writing skills are not well developed.

Similarly in mathematics, most students' meet age-appropriate standards. Most primary school students show satisfactory arithmetical skills and adequate understanding of the place value of numbers and different units of length, whilst middle school students use correct units to measure area and perimeters. Most secondary school students demonstrate good knowledge of basic statistical and geometric concepts. They confidently present statistics in table formats and use tangents to solve mathematical problems. However, most students are less confident when applying problem solving skills, particularly in the primary and middle school.

Again in science, most students' standards are in line with age-related expectations. Most primary students have adequate understanding of key ideas, such as the causes and effects of water pollution. Most middle school students can describe basic concepts related to types of chemical reaction. Secondary school students show age-appropriate knowledge and understanding of, for example, types of flowering plants and the properties of carbon compounds. However, students' practical and investigative skills are insufficiently developed.

In Hindi, students' attainment in reading aloud and listening generally meets age-related standards across the school. Most primary students can identify the shapes and sounds of letters as well as form new words. They are able to construct simple sentences with fair accuracy. The majority of mother-tongue Hindi speakers in the middle school have better

speaking skills than primary and secondary school students. However, throughout the grades, students' independent and creative writing skills are not developed well enough.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 2 Good

Students' attendance is good and they are highly committed to arriving punctually to school and lessons. This is firmly influenced by consistent communication between school and home. Most students participate enthusiastically in school life, particularly around the school and in a variety of extra-curricular activities, for example they work well collaboratively in school events like National Day celebrations, the 'Talent Fest' and inter-school competitions. However, primary students participate less well, and fewer opportunities are given to them.

Middle school students are keenly involved in a wide range of activities during which they show self-confidence and a competitive spirit. Secondary school students concentrate well and show good self-control, promoted through weekly Yoga sessions. Grades 8 and 9 students, who are members of the Students' Council, enjoy leadership roles and show initiative when raising students' concerns to the school administration. However, students' skills in working independently and taking responsibility for their learning are limited and insufficient opportunities are provided.

A strong sense of safety and security prevails. This contributes to students' positive behaviour and cordial, respectful relationships with each other and teachers. Most students have good knowledge and a clear understanding of the culture and national heritage of Bahrain and they exhibit great respect for Islamic values, which are reinforced in most lessons.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Teachers mostly use their good subject knowledge to give clear explanations and appropriate examples to help students' understanding. The best teaching occurs in Grades 9

and 10, which results in students making better progress and achievement than in Grades 1 to 8.

In the significant number of less effective lessons in the primary and middle schools, inadequate modeling by teachers limits students' language acquisition, especially their pronunciation. Most teachers embed values and manage lessons to time. Clear expectations and well-established class routines ensure orderly lessons. However, very limited planning for differentiation results in not all students making expected progress. High achievers lack sufficient challenge and low achievers are not adequately supported. Almost all lessons are too heavily directed by the teacher and dependent on the content of textbooks. Except in the best lessons, students have too little opportunity to develop ideas. Frequent oral and written drills and regular homework assignments consolidate the acquisition of prescribed content and ensure students perform well in tests. In the few best lessons, teachers use role-plays, group-work and research projects effectively to allow students to learn from each other and external sources. Nevertheless, in most lessons students have few opportunities to work independently or in collaborative groups to enhance their learning and develop these skills. Occasionally, in secondary grades, teachers use good probing questioning to challenge students to reason and think creatively. This though is inconsistent throughout the school and the effective use of a range of teaching strategies is too limited. For instance, teaching in science lessons seldom focuses on the development of analytical and investigative skills and in language lessons, teachers provide very few opportunities for students to develop speaking and creative writing skills during independent and group activities.

In most lessons, teachers use the limited resources well. However, across the school, the insufficient resources restrict students' learning, especially their access to information and communication technology (ICT). Teachers mostly use oral assessment in lessons to evaluate students' acquisition of knowledge and sometimes their understanding. Students' work is regularly marked but seldom includes feedback on how they can improve. Written summative assessments are also conducted and test results are carefully recorded. However, the results of these assessments, both in lessons and in periodic tests, are not used to inform teaching to meet individual student needs.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The curriculum offers a broadly appropriate range of experiences to the majority of students; however computer lessons are optional, resulting in limited provision to develop ICT skills.

Curriculum implementation and delivery is less effective in meeting the needs of low and high achiever than the average range of students.

Annual review of the whole curriculum does not go far enough as it only focuses on syllabus distribution and textbook evaluation, with input from subject teachers. Insufficient additional planning is made to ensure relevance and modifications, which address students' different learning needs. Incidental and occasional links are made with students' real-life experiences. However cross-curricular links, to enable students to make connections and apply learning between subjects, are too limited. Students are adequately prepared academically for the next grade with a focus on examination-related content.

The school successfully develops students' awareness of their rights and responsibilities as members of the community, such as developing respect for each other, sharing resources and contributing to school life through the student council and as prefects. An adequate range of extra-curricular activities is provided which gives students opportunities to extend their skills and enhance their school experiences, especially for middle and secondary school students. There is limited use of local resources and curriculum-related field trips to enrich the curriculum. However, students' work is celebrated in all classrooms and in hallways.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Students are well-inducted which helps them settle quickly and easily. They are introduced to staff on their first day and taken on a tour around the school. Class teachers maintain individual logs of students' overall performance and personal behaviour, but the school does not effectively monitor students' academic progress so that their needs can be met to a good standard. Students are well supported and sensitively helped if they have problems. This includes counselling to resolve personal concerns, and financial support. They are also supported through remedial lessons during recess and additional practice before participating in quizzes. However, the impact of this support is not significantly affecting their academic achievement in lessons. Students receive helpful information that enable them to make well-informed personal and educational decisions. Pastoral support is caringly provided for students with special educational needs, but there is limited provision to meet their academic learning needs. Parents are well informed about their children's progress, through regular parent-teacher meetings, diaries and report cards. Rare incidents of misbehaviour are quickly controlled and cultural harmony is well promoted. Though generally safe, the school does not consistently carry out risk assessments and lacks some safety procedures such as regular fire drills, an evacuation plan, adequate medical facilities and sufficient fire extinguishers.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Senior leaders and teachers successfully share encouraging and respectful relationships together with a determined commitment to care for and develop all-round students. Lack of job descriptions for senior and middle management contributes to insufficient guidance about the responsibilities of their roles, and supports neither their professional development nor accountability for their performance.

Whilst school routines are administered efficiently and staff record and analyse students' performance data, leadership and management at all levels have important weaknesses. Self-evaluation lacks rigour and does not include sufficiently structured mechanisms to monitor all aspects of provision and performance. Results of self-evaluation are not used to guide prioritised strategic improvement planning. Short-term action planning is very limited. There is no recording of identified targets, actions to achieve these targets or assigned responsibilities, and no structure to monitor and recognise progress or achievement of goals. Brief minutes of meetings are not adequate substitutes and have little impact on improving the school.

Teaching staff are efficiently deployed and teacher evaluations appropriately include middle and senior leaders. Nevertheless, teachers' evaluations insufficiently identify areas to help teachers improve the quality of their teaching and its impact on students' learning. Evaluation provides limited on-going monitoring of teaching to acknowledge and support changes and progress. Although occasional training is provided, such as lead teachers providing model lessons for their colleagues, there is insufficient focused professional development that is closely linked with the results of lesson observations and addresses both individual teacher and whole-school teaching needs.

The school is proposing to relocate to a new campus by 2015. On the existing campuses, facilities and equipment are insufficient to support good quality teaching and learning throughout the school, in particular, library provision, access to appropriate science laboratories and equipment, ICT access for all students and classroom reference materials.

Parents are welcomed by the school and receive positive responses to their feedback and when voicing concerns, for example regarding extension of student transportation to an area not previously served. There is, however, no strategy to seek the views of all parents and only older students are able to give input through their council. Limited links are in place with the local community. Members of the board respect their role, which involves discussion and providing advice and support to senior leaders. Limited accountability for educational standards is maintained through regular discussions between the director and the licence holder.

The school's main strengths

- Students' academic performance in the high school
- Students' personal development, which is well-supported by the values embedded in teaching and around the school
- Good communication with parents about their children's progress.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- develop leadership and management at all levels through:
 - rigorous and structured self-evaluation which includes mechanisms to monitor all aspects of provision and performance and which guides prioritised strategic improvement planning, including health and safety
 - action planning with recorded identified priority targets and actions to achieve these targets, as well as systematic structures to monitor progress
 - regular professional development which is closely linked to the results of lesson observations and targets individual and whole-school teaching improvement needs.

- improve teaching and learning by:
 - identifying and sharing best teaching practices, with clear referencing to external benchmarking standards
 - increasing the range and effective use of teaching and learning strategies in order to support and meet the different abilities of all students, including students with special educational needs
 - more effective use of the results of assessment during lessons, as well as the results of formative and summative tests to inform teachers' planning.

- raise students' academic achievement and standards in all grades, particularly Grades 1-8.