



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

Schools Review Unit Review Report

**Askar Primary-Intermediate Boys School
Askar – Southern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date reviewed: 18 - 20 October 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 five Reviewers. During the review, the team 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: Boys

Number of students: 154

Age range: 6-15 years

Characteristics of the school

Askar Primary-Intermediate Boys School, founded in 1953, is located in the Southern Governorate. The age range in the school is from 6 to 15 years, and the number of students is 154 in total. Most students belong to middle to high-income backgrounds. The students are distributed across nine classes, one class for each Grade from 1 to 9. The school categorized 40 students as outstanding, 13 as talented and gifted, 21 as students with learning difficulties. The number of administrative and teaching staff is 30 members, including 27 teachers. The principal is in his third year at the school. The school is one of His Majesty King Hamad's Schools of the Future and Intermediate Education Development Project.

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 2 (Good)

The overall effectiveness of Askar Primary-Intermediate Boys School is good. It has outstanding aspects in its leadership and management, and in its capacity to improve. The school also gains outstanding satisfaction from parents and students.

The students' level of academic achievement is good. The majority of students achieve high success rates in most subjects, which are reflected in lessons. Most students acquire knowledge, concepts and skills due to the teachers' use of teaching strategies and techniques that inspire learning. Students also achieve notable progress in their proficiency of most mathematical skills such as the use of written proof and division of decimal numbers; in addition, skills in Arabic such as analysis and linkage are good. Students skills and competencies in science and modern technology in the second and third cycles of education are good, however, students' proficiency of some English skills varied in lessons, particularly writing skills in the third cycle. Most students make effective progress in the basic subjects and in their written work. Students' progress is also enhanced by various extra-curricular activities and enrichment programmes such as: the outstanding and talented students' activities; the tutoring programmes for low achievers; and the effectiveness of the programmes provided by the learning difficulties specialist. Moreover, in lessons, students reach levels of progress that are appropriate to their abilities as most teachers use various class strategies and activities that cater for students' individual differences; however, they were observed to be not consistently effective in a minority of English lessons.

Students' personal development is good. Most students are punctual in the morning and attend lessons on time. The vast majority of students attend the morning assembly and take part in various students' activities as they clearly show a sense of awareness and responsibility. Most of them effectively and enthusiastically take part in the majority of lessons and school activities, events and committees including the morning broadcast and activity lessons. Students enjoy their participation in school events and committees because they address their various interests such as the "Young Aider Group" and the sports soccer league, which enhance their personal development. Students also recently took part in drawing educational, cultural and social signs and posted them on the village lampposts. Recently the students analysed the coast water of Askar, Dur and Jaw villages in cooperation with the General Authority for the Protection of Marine Resources, Environment and Wildlife to the pride and satisfaction of their parents. A few students demonstrate their

effective development of leadership skills by, for example, running the morning assembly and leading some lessons. In addition, students can justify, explain, criticise and exercise sound judgements through the opportunities teachers give to them in lessons. Students' good behaviour in and outside the classroom generally reflects their awareness and responsibility. Students also show mutual respect for each other and their teachers. The prevailing atmosphere in the school is one of harmony, this contributes towards students feeling safe and secure in the school.

The effectiveness of teaching and learning processes is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use effective teaching and learning strategies that involve different categories of students in learning such as discussion, dialogue and problem solving. The school also adopts collaborative learning strategies in most lessons, which is well-reflected in the students' academic and personal progress. Also, good use of learning resources and modern technology is made such as the electronic interactive whiteboards (IWB), cassette recorders and computers. This effective use of technology helps to strongly motivate students towards their learning. Not all lessons, however, are sufficiently challenging for the development of their higher-order thinking skills. Students are assigned appropriate homework activities in which students' individual differences are met. Assignments are regularly followed up and marked; however, some students are not always given feedback. Most teachers use a variety of assessment methods such as formative, oral and written assessment methods in most lessons; in addition to computerised tests to measure how well students learn and acquire the required competencies.

The provision and enrichment of the curriculum are good. Students are proud of their sense of citizenship and school environment. Most students are keen to wear traditional uniforms and decorate classrooms with murals and cultural designs and displays. The school provides students with sufficient opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities and programmes and committees that foster their experience and various interests such as the English Language Club, the Holy Qur'an Tajweed – perfecting the recitation of Qur'an – the use of the Askar scientific and artistic presentation tent and their effective contribution to the morning assembly. Curricula are also enriched by a number of programmes and activities and well-used educational facilities such as e-Learning classes, students' clubs, laboratories and workshops. Most students acquire basic skills such as reading and writing in Arabic, numeracy and computer skills. This is due to the optimal use of learning resources and modern technology in computerised lessons which focus most students on the acquisition of such skills; however, this is less evident in English. Subjects are well-linked in most lessons as students acquire knowledge in basic subjects, especially in the first cycle.

The quality of support and guidance given to students is good. Induction programmes, reception activities and educational festivals along with the organisation of cultural and awareness competitions for new students help them easily settle into school. Most students are also well prepared for the next phases of education: the school ensures that they acquire

the basic skills and knowledge they need. Students achieve levels of progress that are consistent with their abilities as the school takes the necessary procedures to determine the students' levels at the beginning of the academic year through diagnostic tests. In addition, the school well supports different categories of students in lessons. It also uses varied methods to keep the parents informed of their children's levels of progress – a point which is praised by all parents. Teachers are vigilant in ensuring that the environment is safe through their precise follow-up of all matters relating to health and safety, and this further enhances students' feelings of safety and security.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding. The school staff seeks to implement its vision that is based on quality, excellence and enhancement of the sense of citizenship, and this is mirrored in teachers' practices in most lessons and activities. The school determines its priorities based on an accurate self-evaluation, and translates its general and special educational objectives into comprehensive practices and procedures, that are effectively reflected in performance of all the school staff.

The school monitors its performance and the self-evaluation team assesses its educational provision based on an accurate and systematic mechanism. It also sets a clear policy to develop the teachers' performance through the diagnosis of needs and regular class visits, in the light of which it organises training workshops. One product of this effective programme of continuous professional development is the teachers' understanding of the different learning needs of all students. The school inspires and motivates its staff through its adoption of shared decision-making, which is reflected in staff cooperation and flexibility. The resources and educational facilities of the school are used effectively. The school managers also take part in community events to enhance their relations with the community and, in turn, the students' parents take part in the school's events.

□ Does the school have the capacity to improve?

Grade: 1 (Outstanding)

The school has an outstanding capacity to develop and improve. The school has effective leaders and managers who work hard to enrich the school activities with their experience and ability to set up strategic plans and conduct an accurate self-evaluation of all teaching and learning practices. The school has a group of competent teachers who are keen to improve and develop. The school's leaders have also managed to bring about improvements in the school's environment and teaching and learning processes based on qualitative projects and programmes. These schemes enhance teachers' performance and meet the students' needs in many ways. Some of these include the organisation of various students' committees and activities and the localisation of training and professional development.

The success of these measures is evidenced in the majority of teachers' performance and improvement of students' achievement and personal development.

The school's main strengths and areas for development

Main Strengths

- Leadership and management
- Students' standards
- Basic skills in Arabic, numeracy and modern technology skills
- Teaching and learning strategies
- Considering individual differences in activities and homework assignments
- Students feel safe and secure in the school
- Students' self-confidence and behaviour generally reflects their awareness and responsibility
- Communication with parents
- Learning environment that motivates learning
- Similar social backgrounds of students.

Areas for development

- English language skills
- Students' levels of progress that are appropriate to their abilities in some lessons
- Challenge and development of students' abilities in some lessons.

What the school needs to do to improve

In order to improve further, the school should:

- Help students acquire basic skills in English to a greater extent
- Make use of excellent practices, particularly in Science, Mathematics and class teaching to develop teaching and learning strategies that focus on:
 - Developing the students' higher order thinking skills
 - Challenging students' abilities.

Overall judgements

Aspect	Grade: Description
The school's overall effectiveness	2: Good
The school's capacity to improve	1: Outstanding
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	1: Outstanding